

Determinants of Participatory Intention in Autism Volunteer Work for Improving Quality of Life of Persons with Autism (PWA) and their Caregivers

*Naffisah Mohd Hassan¹, Siti Noorsuriani Maon¹, Nur Athirah Sumardi¹, Tengku Zetty Maztura Tengku Jamaluddin², Nik Mohamad Baslan Faiz Md Sukri³, Hairil Rashmizal Abdul Razak⁴

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Bandar Puncak Alam Selangor, Malaysia

²Department of Medical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

³Pusat Terapi Al-Nur, Bandar Baru Nilai, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

⁴Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

naffi885@uitm.edu.my*, sitinoor123@uitm.edu.my, athirahsumardi@uitm.edu.my, tengkuzetty@upm.edu.my, nikmohamadbaslanfaiz@gmail.com, H.Abdul-Razak@exeter.ac.uk

Corresponding Author: Naffisah Mohd Hassan

Abstract: Evidence-based psychosocial interventions can enhance communication and social abilities, leading to a favorable effect on the overall welfare and quality of life for individuals with autism and those who care for them. Despite the importance of volunteers in supporting individuals with autism and their families, there is limited research on the factors influencing individuals' decisions to participate in autism-related volunteer work. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the various factors that shape individuals' intentions to participate in volunteer activities related to autism. A cross-sectional study design with a purposive sampling technique was conducted. Data obtained from a survey questionnaire polled ninety-nine university students' attitudes regarding the factors influencing their participatory intention in autism volunteer work. Descriptive statistics show that the participation intention level among university students was high ($M=4.47$, $SD=0.52$). There was a statistically significant strong and moderate relationship between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy and religiosity toward participation intention. The regression analysis revealed that subjective norms, perceived behavior control and religiosity affected participatory intention. This study provided practical implications for designing and implementing effective interventions and programs to recruit and retain volunteers, as well as to promote positive social change and inclusion for people with autism.

Keywords: *Person with Autism, Volunteer Work, Quality of Life, Community Support System, Participatory intention.*

1. Introduction and Background

Volunteerism is essential in fostering community well-being and facilitating development across various sectors. It is deeply embedded in societal frameworks, evidenced by its robust connection with communities and its adaptability in response to crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the dynamic nature of volunteerism, with a significant shift toward virtual engagement (Lachance, 2020). This adaptability has been crucial in managing crises, as highlighted by Chow et al. (2021), who examined the importance of volunteerism among frontline workers during the pandemic. Moreover, volunteer involvement is essential in public affairs management, contributing to the progress of civil society and local communities (Pevnaya et al., 2020).

Volunteering offers numerous benefits, both at the community and individual levels. Research by Eberl and Krug (2020) indicates that volunteer work can positively impact individuals' earnings, providing economic advantages. Additionally, studies have revealed that volunteering enhances general well-being and physical health, while also strengthening social connections and reducing the need for government welfare spending (Grönlund et al., 2023). These findings emphasize the multifaceted significance of volunteerism in fostering social resilience and well-being.

Given the global prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which affects approximately 1 in 100 children worldwide (World Health Organization, 2023), the role of volunteerism becomes even more critical. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Health has reported a steady increase in ASD diagnoses among children, with 589 new cases in 2021, up from 562 in 2020 (Codeblue, 2022). This rise is attributed to better recognition and understanding of the condition by the public and healthcare professionals. Autism, a complex

neurodevelopmental disorder, presents unique challenges that necessitate community support and intervention.

Volunteers play an essential role in supporting autism-related initiatives, particularly in countries like Malaysia, where non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in establishing early intervention programs (Sidique et al., 2022). These programs support children with ASD and their families, who benefit significantly from community engagement and volunteer efforts (Jominol et al., 2022). However, there is a notable gap in research concerning the factors that influence individuals' decisions to participate in autism-related volunteer work.

The prevalence of autism in Malaysia is about 1.6 in 1000, highlighting the importance of community support and volunteer efforts (Codeblue, 2022). Engaging the community, including individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, educators, and allied health professionals, is crucial in setting research priorities and ensuring the relevance of research outcomes (Clark & Adams, 2020). This evidence highlights the need for volunteers to actively engage with the autism community and contribute to research initiatives. It underscores the importance of volunteer work in supporting parents and individuals with autism in navigating service systems and advocating for their needs. In Malaysia, there is a need to increase knowledge and understanding of autism among the public, as many individuals may have heard about autism but do not fully comprehend the nature of children with autism (Azmi et al., 2022). Despite the importance of volunteers in supporting individuals with autism and their families, there is limited research on the factors influencing individuals' decisions to participate in autism-related volunteer work.

Understanding these factors is vital for effectively recruiting and engaging volunteers, thereby enhancing support for the autism community. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the determinants of participatory intention in autism volunteer work among the student cohort. By exploring these factors, the research seeks to contribute to the development of strategies that can better mobilize volunteer efforts, ultimately benefiting individuals with autism and their families.

Utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the research examined how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, along with sociodemographic characteristics, self-efficacy, and religiosity, impact volunteer participatory intentions. The research findings highlighted critical psychological and social motivators and barriers, contributing to the literature by extending TPB with additional factors relevant to the Malaysian context. The insights gained have practical implications for promoting and enhancing autism volunteer work among youth, addressing a significant gap in the existing research.

2. Literature Review

Community Support System Through Volunteering

Community support systems play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for families with autism, and volunteering serves as a powerful mechanism for fostering this support. Engaging in volunteer activities allows families to connect with others facing similar challenges, creating a network of understanding and shared experiences. This social interaction is crucial, as it can significantly reduce feelings of isolation and stress often experienced by caregivers of individuals with autism (Ault et al., 2021).

Volunteering also promotes skill development and empowerment (Rubel et al., 2024). Families can participate in programs that not only benefit the community but also provide valuable resources and training tailored to their needs. Through these activities, parents and caregivers can gain insights into effective strategies for supporting their children, thereby enhancing their confidence and competence in managing autism-related challenges.

Moreover, the act of giving back can instill a sense of purpose and fulfillment, which is beneficial for mental health. Research indicates that volunteering is associated with increased happiness and reduced depression, making it a dual benefit for both volunteers and the communities they serve. Correale et al., (2022) highlight that by participating in community service, one can help families with autism improve their quality of life while contributing positively to society, thus reinforcing the interconnectedness of community support and

individual well-being.

Quality of Life of Caregivers of PWA

Quality of life is influenced by mental health, environment, and social relationships (Rojas, 2024). In Malaysia, support for caregivers of children with autism remains insufficient (Isa et al., 2021). Caregivers face increased stress, anxiety, and poor family functioning, which lowers their quality of life compared to families without autistic children (Liu et al., 2021). Good mental health, family relationships, and coping strategies are crucial for families with an autistic member. The Malaysian National Health System Study emphasizes the need to consider caregivers' input to improve services for children with special needs (Jawahir et al., 2021).

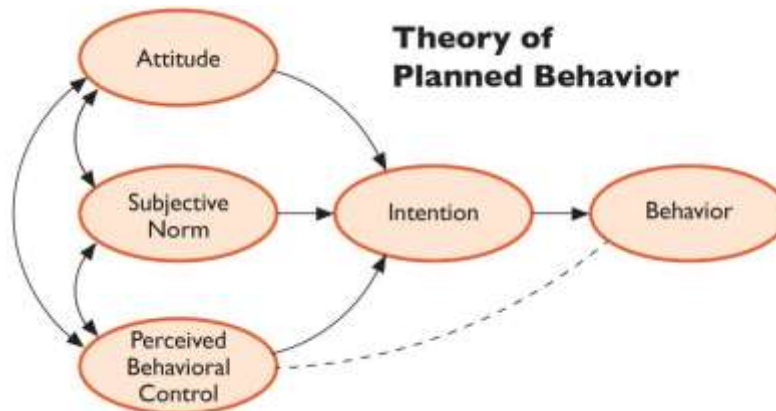
Participatory intention in autism volunteer work

To understand the factors influencing participation in autism volunteer work, it's important to examine motivational and organizational aspects. Studies show a strong link between volunteer motivation and the intention to continue volunteering. For example, Fruchtmann et al. (2022) found that participation efficacy predicts the intention to stay with an organization, while Nov et al. (2021) emphasized that collective motives significantly influence contribution intentions. Zhang et al. (2020) demonstrated that motivation and job satisfaction predict ongoing service intentions among volunteer parents. Additionally, satisfaction from previous experiences and factors like skill enrichment and social benefits (Agustin, 2021) drive future engagement. Inclusive opportunities are vital, as Annabi & Locke (2019) highlight the importance of integrating individuals with autism into volunteer work. Addressing these factors is crucial for sustaining participation.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

An underlying theory helps to answer the research questions or test the study's hypotheses. It also helps to connect the study to the existing knowledge and literature in the relevant field. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was applied in the study. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behavior. The theory maintains that three core components, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, shape an individual's behavioral intentions. In turn, a tenet of TPB is that behavioral intention is the most proximal determinant of human social behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior



Attitudinal: Attitudinal factors, which include cognitive, affective, and behavioral qualities, significantly shape an individual's attitudes and beliefs, influencing decision-making, social interactions, and responses to stimuli. These factors encompass value-relevant, impression-relevant, and outcome-relevant dimensions that affect attitude formation and expression (Zunick et al., 2017). Understanding attitudinal factors is essential for addressing behaviors in various domains, including health, politics, and education.

Studies reveal a complex relationship between attitudinal factors and volunteer intentions. Nov et al. (2021) found that active volunteers are more motivated by collective goals, while passive volunteers are driven by community identification. Beckman et al. (2021) highlighted the indirect link between volunteering motivations and continued participation, mediated by attitudes toward volunteering. Cho et al. (2020)

emphasized the role of management in shaping volunteer intentions, while Agustin (2021) noted engagement's influence on future volunteering. Aseanty et al. (2022) underscored the impact of volunteer training on commitment, and Kim et al. (2020) explored the role of psychological contract fulfillment in volunteer satisfaction and intention. These findings illustrate the importance of understanding the diverse attitudinal and psychological drivers of volunteer participation.

H₁: A significant relationship exists between attitudinal and volunteer participatory intentions.

Subjective Norms: Subjective norms in psychology refer to perceived social pressures that influence one's intention to perform a specific behavior (Trafimow & Finlay, 1996). This study examines the subjective norms of students involved in an autism volunteer program, a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors. Research highlights a positive relationship between volunteer satisfaction and the intention to continue volunteering (Cho et al., 2020). Structured training programs also strengthen community ties and commitment, impacting continued participation (Aseanty et al., 2022). Additionally, values and beliefs, particularly regarding environmental conservation, significantly affect sustained volunteer involvement (Rahman, 2022). The interplay of psychological resilience, personal norms, and self-interested values further shapes volunteer intentions (Han et al., 2020). Collectively, these studies underscore the influence of satisfaction, skills, social factors, and values on volunteer participatory intentions. These factors shape individuals' commitment and intention to sustain their involvement in volunteer activities.

H₂: A significant relationship exists between subjective norms and volunteer participatory intention.

Perceived Behavior: The relationship between perceived behavior control and volunteer participatory intention is complex and varies across contexts. Studies indicate that perceived behavior control, self-efficacy, and moral norms significantly predict intentions, particularly in volunteer and professional settings (Lee & Kim, 2017; Mouloudj & Bouarar, 2023). External factors, such as perceived structural support, can further influence this relationship (Otchengco & Akiate, 2021). However, conflicting findings suggest that perceived behavioral control's impact on intention may differ based on specific situations (Ilmiyah et al., 2022). Moreover, moral obligations can moderate this relationship, particularly in re-intentions to volunteer (Liang & Wu, 2023). These findings underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of how various factors shape individuals' intentions to participate in volunteer activities.

H₃: A significant relationship exists between perceived behavior and volunteer participatory intention.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that learning occurs in a social context and that individuals learn from observing others' behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes. Bandura (1986) emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy, a core concept in SCT, in determining how people behave. In the context of volunteering, SCT can help explain how observational learning, social modelling, and reinforcement shape volunteer intentions and actions.

- **Observational Learning:** Individuals often develop intentions to volunteer after observing others who model volunteer behaviors, especially in socially supportive environments.
- **Self-Efficacy:** SCT underscores the importance of self-efficacy in driving behavioral intentions. As noted in TPB, higher self-efficacy leads to stronger intentions to volunteer.

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks, is crucial in motivation and personal achievement. It is influenced by mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states, and varies across situations. In this study, self-efficacy specifically refers to students' confidence in participating in an autism volunteer program. Research shows that self-efficacy significantly impacts volunteer participatory intention and satisfaction. Studies have found that it moderates the relationship between role clarity and volunteer satisfaction, making it a stronger predictor of future volunteer behavior than perceived behavioral control (Lee & Kim, 2017; Bang et al., 2022). Furthermore, self-efficacy influences engagement in various volunteer activities, such as health volunteering and community service, underscoring its broad relevance (Kang & Kahar, 2022). The literature consistently demonstrates the critical role of self-efficacy in shaping volunteer intentions and experiences, making it an essential factor in understanding volunteer behavior across diverse contexts.

H₄: A significant relationship exists between self-efficacy and volunteer participation intention.

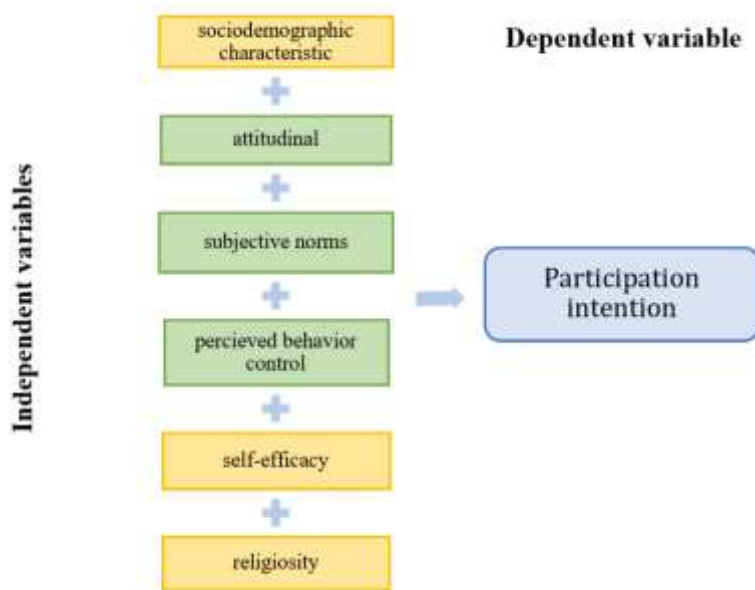
Religiosity: Religiosity, defined as a person's involvement in religious practices, significantly impacts psychological well-being and behavior, including moral judgments and volunteer participation. Various studies have examined this relationship. Sallam et al. (2018) found that higher religiosity positively correlates with volunteering intentions among Malaysian Muslim students, while Yeung (2018) noted that public religiosity more strongly predicts participation in voluntary services than private religiosity. Grönlund et al., (2023) explored the role of religious affiliation and spiritual fulfillment in volunteering, highlighting the importance of religion in daily life. Jang et al. (2023) emphasized the bi-directional relationship between religiosity and volunteering, suggesting that volunteering may also increase religiosity. Polson (2018) found that sect-like religiosity affects congregational and non-congregational volunteering differently. These insights underline the complex, bi-directional relationship between religiosity and volunteering, suggesting that religiosity not only influences volunteering but may also be shaped by it. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for grasping the broader implications of religiosity on social behavior.

H₅: A significant relationship exists between religiosity and volunteer participatory intention.

Integrating Theories

By combining TPB with SCT, this study aims to create a robust framework for understanding volunteer participatory intentions. TPB provides the foundation for linking beliefs to behavior, while SCT offers additional perspectives on how social learning influences volunteering. This integrated approach offers a comprehensive view of the complex factors driving volunteer participation, particularly in an autism volunteer program.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study



A conceptual framework clearly explains the variables, relationships, and assumptions underpinning this study (Fig.2). The factors that affect participatory intention using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as the underlying framework is portrayed. TPB is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behavior and posits that three core components, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, shape an individual's behavioral intentions and actions. This study develops an integrated theoretical framework combining the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to examine volunteer participatory intentions in an autism volunteer program. This approach provides a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing volunteer behavior, addressing the limitations of using a single theory.

3. Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative research design and a cross-sectional approach to investigate the factors influencing the intention to participate in autism volunteer work. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to students at universities. A purposive sampling technique ensured that participants with relevant experience were included. The questionnaire comprised various sections to gather demographic information and assess factors such as attitudinal and subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and religiosity. A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondents' agreement with various statements, while a five-point Semantic Differential scale was used to evaluate attitudes towards autism volunteer work. Both primary and secondary data were collected, with primary data obtained through self-administered questionnaires and secondary data through a desktop study. Before completing the survey, the study's participants signed an informed consent form detailing all aspects of the investigation and were assigned a unique identifier. These procedures were implemented to safeguard personal information and ensure the protection of participants' rights. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, with 97 valid responses obtained, resulting in a response rate of 81%. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 23, enabling a comprehensive examination of the relationships between the independent variables and participatory intentions.

Reliability is associated with the accuracy of a measure. To ensure this, each survey question is designed to yield similar or closely related outcomes. This technique allows researchers to assess the consistency and stability of the data. In this study, SPSS was utilized to conduct the reliability test by evaluating Cronbach's alpha score, where a score of 1 represents the optimal result. All variables have Cronbach's alpha values higher than the threshold value of 0.7 as suggested by Kaur and Paruthi (2019), indicating the items are reliable for measuring the intended variables. The Cronbach alpha value ranges between .848 to .925.

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis	No. of Item
Attitude	0.85	-0.34	-0.39	6
Subjective Norms	0.87	-1.22	1.41	4
Perceived Behaviour Control	0.89	-0.26	-0.23	6
Self-efficacy	0.92	-0.16	-0.08	8
Religiosity	0.89	-0.58	-1.09	11
Intended participation	0.85	-0.55	-0.68	4

The study findings showed that skewness values between -0.157 and -1.224 and kurtosis values between -0.230 and 1.414. The skewness for all variables was found to be between -3 and +3, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. The kurtosis for all variables was found to be between -10 and +10, indicating that the distribution was heavier-tailed compared to the normal distribution (Brown & Greene, 2006).

4. Results and Discussion

This section summarizes the characteristics of the sociodemographic profiles. According to Table 2, the majority of respondents were under 25 years old (n=67, 67.8%), while only one respondent (1%) was aged 41 years or older. Regarding gender, 75 respondents (77.8%) were male, and 23 respondents (23.2%) were female. Most respondents were Malays, with 96 individuals, and most were single, totalling 88 respondents (88.7%). Given that the university is situated in urban areas, most respondents currently reside in urban settings (n=55, 53.5%), followed by those in sub-urban areas (n=34, 34.3%), and a smaller group in rural areas (n=12, 12.1%).

Table 2: Sociodemographic Information of Volunteer (N=97)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 25 years old	65	67
	26 – 30 years old	17	17.5
	31 – 35 years old	10	10.3
	36 – 40 years old	4	4
	41 years old and above	1	1
Gender	Female	23	23.7
	Male	74	76.3
Marital Status	Married	11	11.3
	Single	86	88.7
Race	Malay	94	96.9
	Others	3	3
Place of Stay	Urban	53	54.6
	Sub-urban	34	35.1
	Rural	10	10.3

Table 3 reports the participation level in volunteering work. The study found that the mean scores ranged from 4.38 to 4.53 and SD scores between 0.595 to 0.695 were obtained from participatory intention (PI). These results indicate a high level of concordance among respondents with the items related to participatory intention (PI).

Table 3: The level of participatory intention (N=97)

Variable	Item(s)	M	SD
Participatory Intention (PI)	PI1 Like to volunteer.	4.47	0.59
	PI2 Plan to participate as a volunteer.	4.49	0.61
	PI3 Like to recommend family/friends to participate in volunteering.	4.39	0.70
	PI4 Like to participate in autism volunteering.	4.52	0.61

Cohen (1988) classifies the strength of relationships between variables using Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) as follows: strong (± 0.5), moderate (± 0.3), and weak (± 0.1). According to Table 4, all five independent variables—attitude ($r=0.538$), subjective norms ($r=0.472$), perceived behavior control ($r=0.545$), self-efficacy ($r=0.456$), and religiosity ($r=0.548$)—show a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable, participatory intention in autism volunteer work ($p<0.01$).

Table 4: Correlation analysis (N=97)

Variables	M	SD	p-value	Coefficient (r)
Attitude	4.29	0.56	0.000	0.54 (High)
Subjective norms	4.54	0.54	0.000	0.65 (Moderate)
Perceived behavioral control	3.88	0.72	0.000	0.59 (High)
Self-efficacy	4.18	0.56	0.000	0.46 (Moderate)
Religiosity	4.55	0.45	0.000	0.55 (High)

This indicates that higher values in these variables correlate with increased intention to participate in volunteer work. Specifically, attitude and religiosity show a strong positive correlation, while subjective norms and perceived behavior control also show strong correlations. Self-efficacy has a moderate positive correlation with participation intention. Overall, as these independent variables increase, so does the intention to participate in autism volunteer work.

Multiple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the extent to which, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and religiosity significantly could predict the level of intention to participate in autism volunteer work. The regression analysis revealed that the overall regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.614$, $F(5, 91) = 28.964$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that the intention to participate in autism volunteer work explained approximately 61% of the variance in subjective norms, perceived behavior control and religiosity.

Based on Table 5, it was found that subjective norms ($\beta = .038$, $p < 0.00$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.00$) and religiosity ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) had positive effects on participation intention level. Meanwhile, attitude ($\beta = .008$, $p = 0.29$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.01$, $p = 0.88$) did not affect participation level in autism volunteer work.

Table 5: Regression analysis (N=97)

Variable	β	SE	Beta	t	p	%CI
Attitude	0.08	0.08	0.09	1.06	0.29	[-0.07,0.24]
Subjective norm	0.38	0.08	0.39	4.88	0.00	[0.22,0.53]
Perceived behavior control	0.25	0.07	0.35	3.68	0.00	[0.12,0.39]
Self-efficacy	-0.01	0.09	-0.01	-0.15	0.88	[-0.18,0.16]
Religiosity	0.24	0.09	0.20	2.58	0.01	[0.05,0.42]

This means that, for every one-point increase in subjective norms, the predicted participatory intention level increased by approximately 0.379, for every one-point increase in perceived behavioral control, the predicted participatory intention level increased by 0.251; and for every one-point increase in religiosity, the predicted participatory intention level increased by 0.237.

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing Result

Hypothesis	Statement(s)	Results
H ₁	There is a significant relationship between attitudinal and volunteer participation intention.	Reject
H ₂	There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and volunteer participation intention.	Accept
H ₃	There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and volunteer participation intention.	Accept
H ₄	There is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and volunteer participation intention.	Reject
H ₅	There is a significant relationship between religiosity and volunteer participation intention.	Accept

Discussion

As reported, most of the respondents have a high level of participatory intention level in volunteering work related to autism. Regarding the relationship between variables, correlation Pearson Analysis was applied. Variables of attitudinal, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, self-efficacy and religiosity had strong and moderate significant relationships on participation intention in autism volunteers. Meanwhile, for the factor impacting participatory intention level, multiple regression analysis was applied. As reported, variables such as place of stay (sociodemographic characteristics), attitude, perceived behavior control and religiosity were good predictors of participatory intention in autism volunteer work.

University students exhibit a high level of intention to participate in autism volunteer work, a finding consistent

with recent. Research (Halverson & Lowmaster, 2024). Zhang et al. (2020) emphasized that volunteer motivation and a sense of community positively impact the intention for continued service. Nov et al. (2021) found that collective motives are strongly linked to volunteering intentions across various groups. Cho et al. (2020) observed that satisfaction from past experiences motivates future volunteer engagement. Hsieh (2022) demonstrated that perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) enhance volunteer intentions. Additionally, Jominol et al. (2022) reported that knowledge of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) predicts a stronger motivation to volunteer, particularly for supporting children with ASD.

Correlational analysis reveals that attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and religiosity have a significant impact on participatory intention in autism volunteer work. Attitudes have a strong, positive relationship with participatory intention. Studies by Kuźmiński et al. (2019) indicate that a better understanding of autism correlates with more positive attitudes and acceptance. Cage et al. (2018) emphasize that addressing dehumanization and stigma toward autism can improve attitudes and enhance volunteer engagement.

Subjective norms show a moderate positive correlation with participatory intention. Cho et al. (2020) suggest that volunteer satisfaction is crucial for sustaining participation. Aseanty et al. (2022) highlight the role of training in building community and commitment, which influences volunteers' intention to continue. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is strongly correlated with participation intention. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) often uses PBC to predict volunteer behavior. Mouloudj & Bouarar (2023) found that PBC significantly predicts volunteer willingness. However, Wu et al. (2022) noted that attitude and subjective norms may be stronger predictors than PBC in health-related volunteer contexts. Lee & Kim (2017) argue that self-efficacy might be a more robust predictor than PBC for future volunteer intentions.

Self-efficacy has a moderate, positive impact on participation intention. Research shows that self-efficacy affects volunteer satisfaction and future intentions. Studies by Gulliver et al. (2022) and Bang et al. (2022) confirm that self-efficacy positively influences volunteer engagement. Self-efficacy often surpasses PBC in predicting volunteer behavior (Lee & Kim, 2017), and it is linked with higher motivation and satisfaction in volunteering. Religiosity has a strong positive correlation with participatory intention. Xie et al. (2020) found that religious beliefs enhance students' inclination toward volunteerism. Gazley et al. (2022) highlight that religious affiliation drives civic engagement, while Kim and Dew (2019) associate religious practices with improved social behaviors and volunteering. This indicates that religiosity significantly influences individuals' willingness to volunteer.

Multiple regression analysis reveals that perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and religiosity significantly impact participatory intention in autism volunteer work. In analyzing the relationship between attitude, self-efficacy, and intention to volunteer, the regression results indicate that neither attitude nor self-efficacy significantly predicts participation intention. Specifically, a one-point increase in attitude raises participation intention by .0279, but this increase is not statistically significant. Similarly, self-efficacy, often considered a strong predictor of behavior, does not significantly influence the intention to volunteer in this analysis.

The lack of significance for both attitude and self-efficacy suggests that other factors may play a more critical role in shaping an individual's intention to volunteer. While self-efficacy is typically associated with an individual's belief in their ability to successfully engage in a behavior, this belief alone may not be sufficient to drive the decision to volunteer. External motivations, social influences, and situational factors could have a more substantial impact on volunteering intentions. Moreover, these findings indicate that improving attitudes or enhancing self-efficacy alone may not be enough to increase volunteer participation. It highlights the complexity of volunteer behavior and the need to consider a broader range of factors when developing strategies to boost volunteer engagement.

An increase in perceived behavioral control raises participatory intention by .266. Higher perceived control enhances confidence, self-efficacy, and the ability to act on volunteer intentions (Son & Wilson, 2021). This highlights the importance of perceived control in fostering volunteer participation. For every one-point increase in religiosity, participatory intention rises by .260. Higher religiosity strengthens motivation, trust,

and access to volunteer opportunities (Valente & Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2021). This indicates that religious commitment significantly influences volunteer intentions.

In summary, the findings reveal that urban residency, positive attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and religiosity are key factors influencing participatory intention in autism volunteer work. These insights underscore the multifaceted nature of volunteer engagement and the importance of addressing these factors to enhance participation levels, hence, contribute to the betterment of caregivers and families of PWA's quality of life.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The study's implications extend to volunteerism theory, student behavior, and education. It could enhance volunteer programs for autism by identifying key factors influencing university students' participation, allowing for targeted interventions to boost motivation and retention. Insights into students' attitudes and beliefs about autism can foster positive social change and reduce stigma, particularly if religiosity is a significant factor. Additionally, the study may highlight how volunteering impacts students' skills, career prospects, and personal growth, revealing how living conditions affect their willingness to volunteer. Understanding these factors can help in designing effective support systems and incentives for student volunteers. An important implication of this study is its potential to improve the quality of life for caregivers of individuals with autism. Increased volunteer participation in autism-related programs could provide much-needed support and respite for caregivers, alleviating some of the burdens they face. By enhancing the quality and availability of volunteer services, the study could contribute to better outcomes for both caregivers and those they care for.

The study's limitations include restricted generalizability, validity, and causality. Generalizability is limited due to the focus on university students, who may differ from other populations, and potential selection bias among volunteers. Validity issues arise from reliance on self-reported data, which may be affected by social desirability and recall bias. Causality is constrained by the cross-sectional design, which cannot determine the direction or strength of causal relationships and potential confounding factors like personality and past experiences. Acknowledging these limitations is essential for transparency and guiding future research improvements.

Future research on autism volunteer work should focus on increasing participation intention by targeting factors like location, attitude, perceived control, and religiosity through education, incentives, and collaborations with religious groups. To enhance study validity and reliability, incorporating diverse methods such as interviews or observations and using validated scales like the Participatory Behaviours Scale is recommended. Additionally, extending the research to explore other influencing factors, such as personality or values, and comparing actual behavior with intentions through longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights. Replicating the study across different populations or settings can also broaden its applicability.

Conclusion

This study examined factors affecting university students' intention to volunteer for autism-related programs using a quantitative approach. It revealed that high participatory intention is associated with factors such as proximity to urban areas, positive attitudes towards autism, confidence in volunteering abilities, and religiosity. The findings contribute to the literature on volunteerism by highlighting these key determinants, which can help in designing strategies to recruit and retain volunteers effectively. Importantly, the study underscores the potential of volunteerism to improve the quality of life for caregivers and families of persons with autism by fostering social inclusion and support. By understanding and leveraging these factors, efforts can be better directed to enhance both volunteer engagement and the well-being of those affected by autism, promoting meaningful social change.

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