

Awareness of Inclusive Education Association with Students Willingness to Volunteer

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Article

Submitted: 12-01-2025

Reviewed: 25-01-2025

Accepted: 13-10-2025

Published: 05-12-2025

DOI:

10.32509/wacana.v24i2.4969



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Volume : 24
No. : 2
Month : December
Year : 2025
Page : 373-384

Abstract

Inclusive education promotes equitable learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities. Although Indonesia has established legal frameworks supporting inclusion, such as UU No. 19/2011 and UU No. 8/2016, practical implementation remains hindered by infrastructural and sociocultural barriers. This study investigates how university students' awareness of inclusive education influences their willingness to volunteer in inclusive initiatives, employing the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as the analytical framework. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 468 undergraduate students across 65 universities in the Greater Bandung area and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that awareness significantly influences attitudes ($\beta=0.233$), subjective norms ($\beta=0.626$), and willingness to volunteer ($\beta=0.260$), with subjective norms exerting the strongest effect on willingness ($\beta=0.462$). Furthermore, awareness indirectly enhances willingness through subjective norms. These findings underscore the critical role of social influence and informed understanding in fostering inclusive engagement, suggesting that universities should strengthen awareness-building and peer-based initiatives to promote inclusive education.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education; Awareness; Willingness to Volunteer; Theory of Reason Action; University Students*

Abstrak

Pendidikan inklusif mempromosikan kesempatan belajar yang adil bagi semua siswa, termasuk mereka yang berkebutuhan khusus. Meskipun Indonesia telah menetapkan kerangka hukum yang mendukung inklusi, seperti UU No. 19/2011 dan UU No. 8/2016, implementasi praktisnya masih terhambat oleh hambatan infrastruktur dan sosial budaya. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana kesadaran mahasiswa tentang pendidikan inklusif memengaruhi kesediaan mereka untuk menjadi sukarelawan dalam inisiatif inklusif, menggunakan Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) sebagai kerangka analisis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 468 mahasiswa sarjana di 65 universitas di wilayah Bandung Raya dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) melalui SmartPLS 4. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran secara signifikan memengaruhi sikap ($\beta=0,233$), norma subjektif ($\beta=0,626$), dan kesediaan untuk menjadi sukarelawan ($\beta=0,260$), dengan norma subjektif memberikan efek terkuat pada kesediaan ($\beta=0,462$). Lebih lanjut, kesadaran secara tidak langsung meningkatkan kemauan melalui norma-norma subjektif. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi peran penting pengaruh sosial dan pemahaman yang terinformasi dalam mendorong keterlibatan inklusif, yang menunjukkan bahwa universitas perlu memperkuat inisiatif pembangunan kesadaran dan berbasis rekan sejawat untuk mendorong pendidikan inklusif.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Inklusif; Kesadaran; Kesediaan Relawan; Theory of Reason Action; Mahasiswa Universitas*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has gained significant global attention as it promotes equal opportunities for all students, particularly those with disability; ensuring student with all backgrounds and needs can participate in shared learning environments (UNICEF Regional Office Europe & Asia, 2017). International frameworks like the CRPD (United Nation, 2006), and SDGs, specifically Goal 4 (SDGs), calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2015), which prompted and reinforced nations initiatives to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream education settings (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020). As a signatory of the CRPD, Indonesia has ratified its commitment through laws such as UU No.19 Tahun 2011, Permendikbud No.70 Tahun 2009, and UU No. 08 Tahun 2016, which mandate inclusive education, ensuring accommodations for students with disabilities (Badan Standar Kurikulum, 2022). These efforts are critical, considering that 22.97 million people, or 8.56% of Indonesia's population, live with disabilities (Biro Humas Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2020).

However, despite all, Indonesia remains far from achieving inclusivity. Multiple structural and sociocultural barriers—such as insufficient infrastructure, cultural stigmatization, limited teacher training, and low community acceptance—continue to impede implementation (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023; Nabiela & Ulfatin, 2023; Sowiyah & Perdana, 2022; Suhendri, 2020). These challenges illustrate that inclusive education is not only a policy issue but also a matter of collective communication and social understanding, where perceptions, attitudes, and interpersonal interactions significantly shape implementation. Further emphasize the concept of inclusive education as a shared responsibility; where realizing the ideal system hinges not only on government policies, but also the active engagement of educators, school administrators, parents, and peers (Drazdowski et al., 2024; Putri & Gracia, 2025; Rusmono, 2020; Subban et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022; Ydo, 2020).

Peers play a significant role in inclusive education, influencing both the academic success and social life of students with disabilities (Dalcin, 2022; Drazdowski et al., 2024; Golsteyn et al., 2021). Their involvement represents an interpersonal communication process where understanding, empathy, and acceptance are expressed through daily interactions. Studies show that peer involvement positively impacts social skills and emotional development in students with disabilities (Muqoddam & Hendriani, 2020). In university settings, strong peer relationships and attachment to university life are associated with improved adjustment (Maunder, 2018). Additionally, volunteering in inclusive settings not only benefits those receiving support but also enriches the volunteers' experience, gaining new skills, and nurturing empathy and social responsibility (Chung et al., 2021a; Khasanzyanova, 2017; Nichol et al., 2023). Through these communicative and participatory experiences, volunteers not only act as supporters but also as social influencers who shape campus norms of inclusion. This reciprocal relationship is further supported by findings that students with special needs can positively influence the academic and personal growth of their volunteer peers (Dalcin, 2022; Yuwono, 2021).

To understand the behavioural intentions behind such voluntary engagement, this study employs the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a widely applied framework for explaining how individuals decide to perform certain behaviours. TRA argue that behavioural intention is the strongest predictor of actual behavior and is shaped by two main determinants: attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). From a communication standpoint, TRA highlights how attitudes and social norms are constructed and reinforced through information exchange, persuasion, and observation of others' behaviours—processes central to communication and social influence.

Although TRA originally focused on attitudes and subjective norms, it acknowledges that background factors such as knowledge, experience, or awareness may indirectly influence these determinants (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Accordingly, this study integrates awareness into the TRA framework as a foundational element that shapes beliefs about inclusive education, thereby influencing attitudes and perceived social expectations. Incorporating awareness strengthens the explanatory capacity of TRA, particularly in contexts such as volunteering for inclusive education,

where informed understanding is essential for behavioral intention. Empirical evidence supports this integration, indicating that higher awareness of disability and inclusion correlates with more favorable attitudes and greater willingness to engage in inclusive practices (Albaum et al., 2022a; Kusumastuti et al., 2019; Scior, 2011; Sheridan & Scior, 2013a). Awareness-building programs in educational institutions have been found to enhance empathy, attitudes, and readiness to volunteer (Miller et al., 2003; Pingle, 2015). Moreover, awareness has been employed as a predictor of behavioral intention in TRA-based models addressing ethical and social issues such as data privacy and health behaviors (Akther & Nur, 2022; Dinev & Hu, 2007).

Despite increasing attention to awareness of inclusive education, existing research primarily focuses on teachers and preservice educators (Chary & Perumal, 2022; GÜLAY & ALTUN, 2023; Rendon et al., 2023; Wahyuno et al., 2021). Few studies, however, explore how university students' awareness—shaped through communication and peer influence—affects their willingness to volunteer in inclusive education contexts. This study therefore aims not only to examine these relationships but also to identify what can be done to enhance students' willingness to volunteer by understanding the factors that influence it within the TRA framework.

In line with the TRA model, the main variables in this study are defined to show how they interact in shaping students' willingness to volunteer. Awareness refers to students' understanding of inclusive education, disability knowledge, and related legal provisions, consistent with De Quincey's (2006) view of awareness as knowing, realizing, and recognizing importance (De Quincey, 1862; Jati et al., 2019). Awareness provides the cognitive basis that influences both attitudes and perceived norms. Attitude is an individual's favorable or unfavorable evaluation of inclusive education in university contexts (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Subjective norms represent perceived expectations from peers, lecturers, or institutions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Opoku et al., 2020). Intention, or willingness to volunteer, denotes readiness to engage in voluntary activities without financial gain (Clary et al., 1998; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Giancaspro & Manuti, 2021; Omoto & Snyder, 2002). Together, these variables form a pathway showing how awareness can enhance willingness through positive attitudes and supportive social influence.

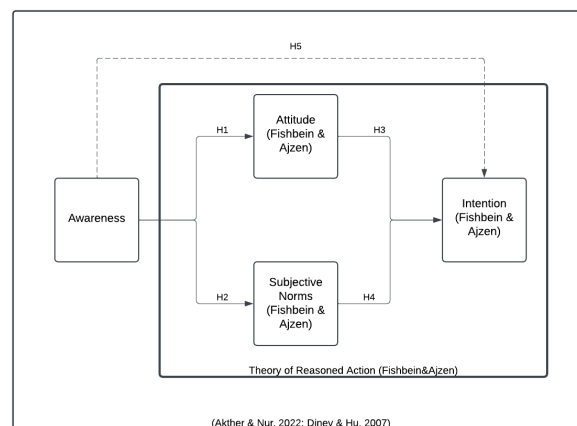


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
(Source: Author, 2025)

Based on the framework in Figure 1, the following hypotheses are proposed for this research:

H1: Awareness has a positive influence on Attitude.

H2: Awareness has a positive influence on Subjective Norms.

H3: Attitude has a positive influence on Intention.

H4: Subjective Norms have a positive influence on Willingness.

H5: Awareness has a direct positive influence on Willingness.

H6: Attitude mediates the relationship between Awareness and Willingness.

H7: Subjective Norms mediate the relationship between Awareness and Willingness.

These hypotheses collectively aim to examine not only the direct and indirect pathways linking awareness to willingness but also to identify practical strategies to strengthen students' willingness to volunteer through improved awareness, attitudes, and social communication.

METHOD

The study use a quantitative approach provided numerical data for statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Takona, 2024). The population consisted of undergraduate students in the Greater Bandung Area who had heard of Inclusive Education. Purposive non-probability sampling was used for efficiency and due to unknown population size (Firmansyah, 2022; Takona, 2024).

Data were collected via a Google Forms questionnaire, divided into five sections: screening (3 items), demographics (age, gender, education, prior exposure), Awareness (12 items), Attitude (3), Subjective Norms (4), and Willingness to Volunteer (11). Responses used a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Firmansyah, 2022; Takona, 2024). The questionnaire was distributed from October to December 2024 via Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter.

Data analysis used SmartPLS 4 for PLS-SEM, suitable for complex relationships and non-normal distributions (Ringle et al., 2024). Reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (>0.70) (Chin & Dibbern, 2010). Analysis followed a stepwise approach: (1) Reflective Measurement Model—assessing indicator validity/reliability (Outer Loadings >0.70, AVE >0.50, Fornell-Larcker and HTMT for discriminant validity), (2) Structural Model—testing multicollinearity (VIF <5), path coefficient significance ($p < 0.05$), effect size (F^2), and mediation effects (Upsilon V), and (3) Model Fit—evaluating R^2 , Q^2 , and SRMR (J. Hair et al., 2022; J. F. Hair et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study 468 respondents whose data were used for analysis came from 65 universities across Greater Bandung, representing 112 different majors. Based on gender, 261 respondents (55.77%) were female, 203 respondents (43.16%) were male, and 5 respondents (1.07%) chose not to mention their gender. More than half of the respondents (254 individuals or 54.27%) reported having people with to disability around them, while 214 respondents (45.73%) had no such experience. This balanced dataset provides a well-rounded perspective on students' backgrounds and their familiarity with inclusivity, making it a strong foundation for further analysis

The distribution of information sources about Inclusive Education reveals notable trends in how individuals' access and engage with this topic. Social media is identified as the most prevalent source, with 51.92% of respondents obtaining information through various platforms. This is followed by traditional educational channels, where teachers and lecturers contribute 21.15% to the dissemination of knowledge. Additionally, friends (13.03%) and university programs (9.83%) play significant roles in spreading information. Other sources, such as internet browsing, articles, parents, organizations, and direct experience, collectively represent a smaller percentage. In examining the specification of social media platforms, it is noteworthy that 37.39% of respondents reported to have not encounter inclusive education content. Among those who did, Instagram is the most used (26.50%) followed by TikTok (21.15%) and Twitter (9.62%).

Continuing, in processing the data collected, model construct of the variable is assess trough **Reflective Measurement Model** with the previously mentioned criteria in the methods. The following Table 1 view all the constructs to meet the reliability ($CR > 0.7$) and validity criteria ($AVE > 0.5$). Willingness shows the highest reliability, while Awareness, Attitude, and Subjective Norms also demonstrate acceptable measurement quality.

Table 1 Result of Reflective Model Construct

Variable/Item/Indicator	Item Reliability	Convergent Validity		
	Outer Loading > 0.7	CR > 0.7	AVE > 0.5	Alpha > 0.7
Awareness		0.875	0.583	0.821
AW1. Understanding Inclusive education ensures equal access.	0.724			
AW3. Understanding Inclusive education removes learning barriers.	0.788			
AW8. Recognizing disability effects need proper support.	0.754			
AW11. Recognizing disabled students deserve special assistance.	0.767			
AW12. Recognizing disabled student rights to have accessible learning material.	0.783			
Attitude		0.810	0.588	0.650
AT1. Attitude after understanding the concept of inclusive education	0.740			
AT2. Attitude after recognizing disability types and needs	0.741			
AT3. Attitude after knowing legal instrument of inclusive education	0.817			
Subjective Norms		0.841	0.569	0.747
SN1. Peers' expectation to value awareness of diverse learning needs.	0.762			
SN2. Peers' expectation to supports disabled students.	0.773			
SN3. Lecturers' expectation appliance of inclusive education.	0.704			
SN4. Lecturers' expectation in understanding legal rights for disabled students.	0.777			
Willingness		0.953	0.648	0.946
W1. Intention to volunteer after understanding the concept of inclusive education	0.780			
W2. Intention to volunteer after knowing the concept of inclusive education	0.784			
W3. Intention to volunteer after understanding the importance of inclusive education	0.775			
W4. Readiness to volunteer in supporting accessibility for disabled students.	0.816			
W5. Readiness to volunteer in advocating education rights for disabled students.	0.836			
W6. Readiness to volunteer as a supporting peer.	0.770			
W7. Disposition to volunteer in accommodating needs of disabled students.	0.812			
W8. Disposition to volunteer removing barriers for disabled learners	0.830			
W9. Disposition to volunteer implementing inclusive education policies	0.817			
W10. Disposition to volunteer in creating inclusive, friendly learning environments.	0.783			
W11. Disposition to volunteer to remove barriers for special-needs students.	0.845			

Source: Research Result, 2025

Discriminant Validity Evaluation was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria. Shown in Table 2, The Fornell-Larcker results indicate that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded the inter-construct correlations (Attitude=0.767, Awareness=0.763, Subjective Norms=0.755, Willingness=0.805), confirming adequate discriminant validity. Similarly, HTMT values were all below 0.90, supporting discriminant validity.

Table 2 Result of Discriminant Validity Construct

Variables	Attitude	Awareness	Subjective Norms	Willingness
Discriminant Validity: Fornel-Larcker Criterion				
Attitude	0.767			
Awareness	0.233	0.763		
Subjective Norms	0.104	0.626	0.755	
Willingness	0.279	0.537	0.609	0.805
Heterotrait-Monotrait Criterion (< 0.9)				
Attitude				
Awareness	0.316			
Subjective Norms	0.148	0.796		
Willingness	0.354	0.605	0.723	

Source: Research Result, 2025

Structural Model Evaluation shown in Table 3 was evaluated by examining VIF values, R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2 . All VIF values were below 5, indicating no multicollinearity. The hypothesis testing results (Table 4) show that all seven hypotheses (H1–H7) were supported, with path coefficients ranging from 0.183 to 0.626 and p-values below 0.05. The highest direct influence was found between Awareness and Subjective Norms ($\beta=0.626$, $p<0.01$).

Table 3 Hypothesis Testing / Structural Model Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient β	P Value	95% Confidence Interval & Coefficient Value		Sig?/ Supported	VIF	f^2 / Upsilon
			Lower limit	Upper Limit			
Direct							
H1. Awareness \rightarrow Attitude	0.233***	0.008	0.072	0.412	Significant	1.000	0.057
H2. Awareness \rightarrow Subjective Norms	0.626***	0.008	0.492	0.723	Significant	1.000	0.646
H3. Attitude \rightarrow Willingness	0.183***	0.000	0.055	0.319	Significant	1.061	0.057
H4. Subjective Norms \rightarrow Willingness	0.462***	0.002	0.355	0.572	Significant	1.651	0.232
H5. Awareness \rightarrow Willingness	0.260***	0.000	0.069	0.328	Significant	1.726	0.044
Mediated							
H6. Awareness \rightarrow Attitude \rightarrow Willingness	0.043***	0.000	0.008	0.095	Not-Significant	-	≈ 0.0018
H7. Awareness \rightarrow Subjective Norms \rightarrow Willingness	0.289***	0.058	0.197	0.386	Significant - Medium	-	≈ 0.083

*sig 5%, ** sig 1%, *** sig < 1%

Source: Research Result, 2025

The evaluation of the **Fit Model (Table 4)** is good (SRMR=0.056 < 0.08). R² values were 0.703 for Attitude, 0.426 for Subjective Norms, and 0.449 for Willingness. Q² values indicated predictive relevance: Subjective Norms (0.389), Willingness (0.285), Attitude (0.027).

	R ²	Q ²
Attitude	0.703	0.027
Subjective Norms	0.426	0.389
Willingness	0.449	0.285
Model Fit	SRMR	
	0.056	

Source: Research Result, 2025

Finally, as illustrated in Figure 2, the structural model shows all relationships between latent variables are significant with p-values <0.05. Subjective Norms have the greatest influence on Willingness with a coefficient of 0.462, followed by Awareness with 0.206, and Attitude with 0.183. The relationship between Awareness and Attitude is also significant with a coefficient of 0.233. The fit model shows adequate fit; therefore, this model (Figure 2) effectively describes the relationship between Awareness, Subjective Norms, and Attitude towards Willingness.

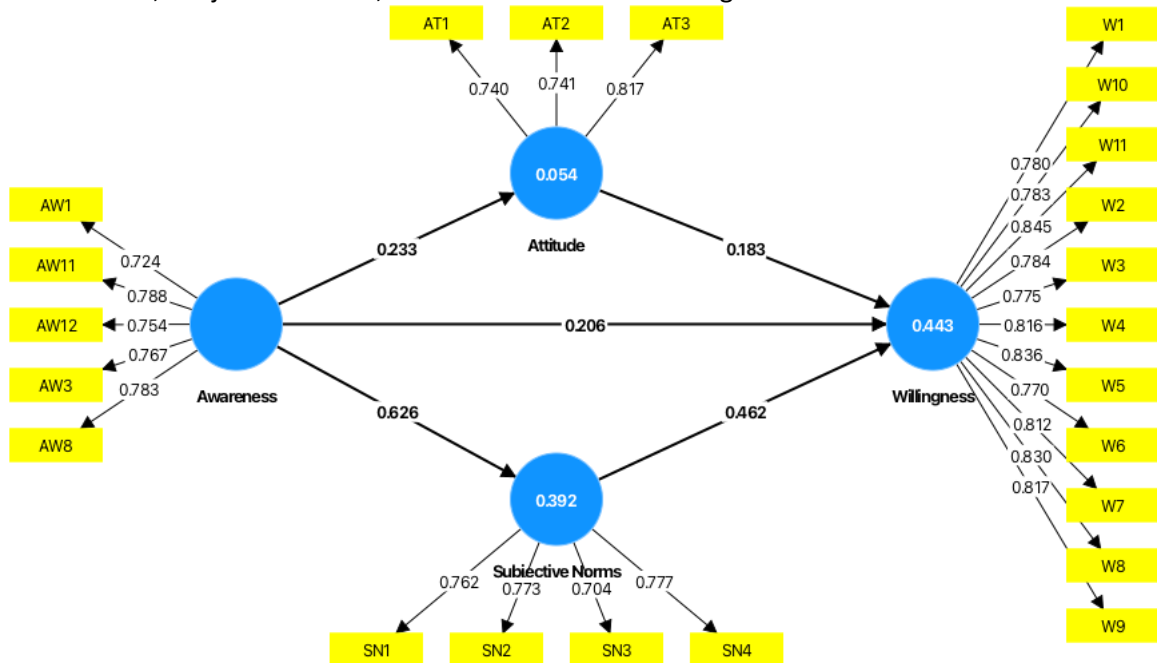


Figure 2 Path Coefficient and P-Value – Final Model (Source: Research Result, 2025)

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the importance of awareness as a key factor in promoting inclusive education and students' willingness to volunteer within higher education settings. As highlighted in the introduction, inclusive education is not solely a policy concern but a shared social process that relies on collective understanding and participation among stakeholders, including peers and university communities (Rusmono, 2020; Subban et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022; Ydo, 2020). Consistent with this, the results demonstrate that awareness significantly influences both cognitive and social aspects of volunteering behavior, aligning with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) framework that emphasizes the interplay between individual attitudes and subjective norms in shaping behavioral intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The acceptance of Hypothesis 1 (H1) indicates that awareness significantly shapes students' attitudes toward inclusive education ($\beta=0.233$, $p<0.05$), even though the structural effect is small ($f^2=0.057$). This supports the idea that cognitive understanding of inclusive principles contributes to the development of positive evaluations and empathy toward students with disabilities (Muqoddam & Hendriani, 2020). While the effect is modest, the result suggests that awareness-raising initiatives can foster favorable attitudes that, in turn, support inclusion and volunteering intentions (Albaum et al., 2022; Scior, 2011; Sheridan & Scior, 2013).

A stronger relationship is observed in Hypothesis 2 (H2), where awareness exerts a substantial influence on subjective norms ($\beta=0.626$, $p<0.05$; $f^2=0.646$). This finding underscores that students who are more aware of inclusive education tend to perceive stronger social expectations to engage in inclusive or voluntary actions. This aligns with the communicative and social nature of inclusion described by previous studies, in which awareness spreads through peer interaction, observation, and mutual influence (Dalcin, 2022; Drzdowski et al., 2024; Golsteyn et al., 2021). Therefore, awareness not only builds individual understanding but also strengthens collective norms that encourage participation.

The results of Hypotheses 3 (H3) and 4 (H4) further emphasize the relational dynamics between internal and external factors in the TRA model. While attitude has a smaller yet significant effect on willingness ($\beta=0.183$, $p<0.05$; $f^2=0.057$), subjective norms show a stronger influence ($\beta=0.462$, $p<0.05$; $f^2=0.232$). This difference suggests that social influence may be more decisive than personal evaluation in shaping volunteering intentions. In the context of universities—where peer relationships play a central role in social belonging and value formation (Maunder, 2018)—fostering supportive social environments may therefore be more effective in enhancing students' willingness to volunteer (Dalcin, 2022; Rendon et al., 2023).

In Hypothesis 5 (H5), awareness is shown to have a direct positive effect on willingness ($\beta=0.260$, $p<0.05$; $f^2=0.044$). Although this direct effect is smaller than its indirect influence through subjective norms, it still demonstrates that awareness contributes independently to students' readiness to engage in voluntary acts related to inclusion. This finding supports prior evidence that informed understanding enhances empathy, attitudes, and readiness to act (Kusumastuti et al., 2019; Pingle, 2015). Therefore, awareness can serve as both a direct motivator and a foundation for strengthening social influence mechanisms.

The mediation effects identified in Hypotheses 6 (H6) and 7 (H7) provide deeper insights into how awareness operates within the TRA structure. Attitude mediates the link between awareness and willingness, though its contribution is limited ($\beta=0.043$, $p<0.05$; indirect effect ≈ 0.0018). Conversely, subjective norms serve as a stronger mediator ($\beta=0.289$, $p\approx 0.058$; indirect effect ≈ 0.083), indicating that the influence of awareness on willingness is largely channeled through perceived social expectations. This outcome reflects the inherently social nature of inclusive education, where collective behavior, communication, and peer approval play crucial roles in motivating voluntary engagement (Dalcin, 2022; Yuwono, 2021).

Overall, all seven hypotheses confirm the interconnected pathways proposed in the TRA-based framework (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Awareness emerges as the foundational driver that shapes both attitudes and subjective norms, which in turn influence willingness to volunteer. Among these, subjective norms have the most substantial effect, highlighting that students' readiness to participate in inclusive initiatives is strongly dependent on the social climate and peer influence within the university. This finding aligns with the broader understanding of inclusive education as a collective responsibility requiring active participation from educators, institutions, and peers (Rusmono, 2020; Subban et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022; Ydo, 2020).

This study also provides important practical implications, especially for higher education institutions. Integrating inclusive education into the curriculum can increase students' awareness of the importance of inclusion in the academic environment. Additionally, social campaigns promoting the values of inclusion and strengthening student communities, such as peer-based mentorship, can

enhance social norms that support inclusive behavior. Structured training programs for volunteers can also increase students' readiness to support students with disabilities, reinforcing mutually beneficial relationships for both volunteers and students with special needs (Chung et al., 2021; Nichol et al., 2023).

Therefore, the discussion suggests that efforts to enhance students' willingness to volunteer in inclusive education should prioritize two mutually reinforcing strategies: strengthening awareness through educational and communicative programs; and fostering supportive subjective norms through peer-led and institutional initiatives. Together, these approaches can help establish an inclusive academic culture in which understanding and social influence work hand in hand to sustain long-term engagement in inclusive practices.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that university students' awareness of inclusive education significantly influences their attitudes, subjective norms, and intention (willingness to volunteer) in supporting students with disabilities. Students who are more aware of inclusive education principles tend to develop positive attitudes and are more inclined to respond to social expectations, fostering a willingness to engage in volunteer activities. Among these factors, subjective norms have the strongest impact, indicating that the encouragement and expectations of peers, lecturers, and academic institutions are crucial in shaping students' readiness to volunteer. These findings highlight the need for targeted efforts to enhance awareness and strengthen social norms to cultivate a supportive environment for inclusive education.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that universities integrate comprehensive inclusivity education into their curricula to build awareness and empathy among students. Awareness campaigns, peer mentorship programs, and structured volunteer training can further enhance students' willingness to participate in inclusive initiatives. It is also recommended to conduct research using a qualitative approach to deepen the direct understanding of awareness levels and the intention to volunteer. Furthermore, future research could explore a broader geographical scope and examine additional factors such as empathy and prior experience with individuals with disabilities to improve strategies for promoting inclusivity in higher education environments.

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