Understanding Volunteer Commitment through Self-Eficacy and Altruisme: Insight from the Indonesian Philanthropy Sector

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Abstract

*Volunteers are a vital resource for sustaining philanthropic and non-profit organizations, yet not all maintain long-term engagement. High volunteer commitment is critical to ensuring continuous operations and impact. This study investigates the role of **self-efficacy** and **altruism** in shaping volunteers' commitment, focusing on the Berdikari Foundation, an Indonesian community-based philanthropy active in the education sector. Using purposive sampling, 60 volunteers with a minimum of two years' service and active event involvement participated in the survey. Data were analyzed using SEM-PLS. Findings reveal that both self-efficacy and altruism positively and significantly predict volunteer commitment, offering a multidimensional model that integrates these psychological factors. This research extends existing literature, which has largely focused on motivation and satisfaction, by highlighting self-efficacy and altruism as critical determinants of sustained engagement. Practical implications include designing volunteer management strategies that foster confidence, empathy, and prosocial values. Limitations include the single-organization sample, suggesting the need for broader studies across diverse philanthropic settings in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Volunteers' commitment; self-efficacy; altruism; philanthropy*

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are an indispensable resource for the sustainability of philanthropic and non-profit organizations (Ilyas et al., 2020).They form the backbone of these institutions, enabling their operations and expansion worldwide by contributing their time, skills, and expertise to causes beyond personal interest (Wu, 2011). Volunteerism is a universal practice found in every society and plays a pivotal role in fostering peace and development (Forner et al., 2024). Its impact is particularly significant in sectors such as healthcare, education, environmental conservation, and community services, where volunteers also help strengthen the economic and social fabric of their communities (Wu, 2011).

In Indonesia, volunteerism has been deeply embedded in social life since the pre-independence era, becoming more institutionalized in the post–World War II period (Adha et al., 2019). Remarkably, Indonesia accounts for 53% of the global volunteer population—outpacing other large nations such as the United States (39%) and China (7%) (Gallup, 2017). This high rate reflects the nation's strong culture of empathy and collective responsibility, which inspires broad participation in volunteer activities (Fiqri & Widiyanti, 2023). From 2018 to 2024, Indonesia was ranked as the most generous country in the world by the World Giving Index, published by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). While non-profit organizations, including philanthropic institutions, lead most volunteer programs, the expansion of philanthropy over the past two decades extending to global humanitarian work—has amplified volunteer participation. Although some organizations now employ professional staff, volunteers remain a cornerstone of their operations, and their dedication is critical to organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

Despite its many benefits, volunteering presents substantial challenges (Mangold, 2012). Volunteers not only dedicate time, energy, and expertise but also often bear personal financial costs. Many volunteer initiatives address complex, multidimensional issues in social, economic, environmental, health, and educational domains—problems that demand long-term commitment, significant funding, and considerable personal sacrifice. Some volunteers devote years to these causes, investing their own resources and even risking personal safety in high-risk environments. Such extensive contributions have drawn scholarly interest toward understanding what drives individuals to volunteer and sustain their involvement. Given the complexity and evolving nature of these motivations, it is essential to examine the underlying psychological factors that encourage sustained volunteer commitment.

Existing research on volunteer commitment tends to emphasize structural and contextual influences, often overlooking individual psychological elements. This leaves a

gap in understanding commitment from a multidimensional perspective. For example, (Vecina et al., 2012) explored the relationship between volunteer commitment, engagement, satisfaction, and retention but gave limited attention to psychological mechanisms such as self-efficacy and altruism. Similarly, (Clary & Snyder, 1999) examined motivations for volunteering without fully addressing how intrinsic traits like altruism interact with efficacy beliefs to shape long-term commitment. To address this gap, the present study integrates self-efficacy, altruism, and commitment into a unified framework. By combining these factors, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological drivers behind sustained volunteer engagement, thereby advancing both theoretical insights and practical strategies for volunteer management.

In Indonesia, philanthropic organizations operate across diverse sectors and structures, including religious, community-based, governmental, corporate, and family-run initiatives. Community-based organizations, such as the Berdikari Foundation, have experienced particularly rapid growth. Established in 2017, the Berdikari Foundation relies heavily on volunteer service to deliver programs in education, health, economic empowerment, and social welfare. Volunteers play a crucial role in fundraising, networking, and program implementation, with many having served since the foundation's inception. This study focuses on identifying factors that influence volunteer commitment within such organizations, with particular attention to self-efficacy and altruism as central motivators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteerism and Philanthropy

Volunteerism takes many forms, with its meaning and significance shaped by cultural, social, and organizational contexts. In some settings, individuals engaged in voluntary activities may not even identify themselves as "volunteers," particularly when their contributions are deeply rooted in long-standing cultural or religious traditions (Wilson, 2012). In such contexts, volunteer work is often perceived less as a discretionary choice and more as a moral obligation or communal duty. Motivations for engaging in volunteerism typically emerge from a combination of personal ethics, social responsibility, and a sense of belonging, with participation driven by intrinsic willingness rather than external compulsion (Hustinx et al., 2010). Public perceptions of volunteering can also vary considerably ranging from admiration and prestige to skepticism or even stigma depending on the nature of the activity, the social status of participants, and the broader socio-political environment (Snyder & Omoto, 2008)

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Volunteering is commonly classified into two categories: formal—structured through organizations, nonprofits, or public institutions—and informal, where assistance is provided directly between individuals without organizational mediation (United Nations Volunteers [UNV], 2018). However, at the community level, this distinction is often blurred, as many initiatives combine elements of both formal and informal engagement.

Volunteerism and philanthropy are intrinsically linked. Philanthropy, broadly defined as voluntary action for the public good, depends heavily on the commitment and participation of volunteers to achieve its goals (Payton, 2008). Volunteers form the backbone of philanthropic endeavors, devoting their time, skills, and resources to support individuals and communities in need. These *philanthropic volunteers* work with the intention of generating meaningful social change, contributing not only physical labor but also expertise, knowledge, and, in some cases, material resources (Salamon, L. M et al., 2017). Their efforts are vital in addressing complex societal challenges across diverse sectors such as education, health, environmental protection, poverty reduction, and disaster response. In partnership with nonprofit organizations, charitable foundations, and other social institutions, philanthropic volunteers play an essential role in designing, implementing, and sustaining initiatives that enhance community well-being.

Volunteering Commitment

Volunteering refers to the engagement in unpaid work, often performed by individuals who may have some connection to those benefiting from the service, although this is not always the case (Gilbert et al., 2017). Omoto and Snyder (1995) identify four key characteristics of volunteering: it is intentional and planned, tends to be long-term, takes place within an organizational context, and is undertaken without a sense of obligation to the organization. In recent years, alongside traditional and collective forms of volunteering, there has been a noticeable shift toward *episodic volunteering*, which involves short-term or temporary activities (Gilbert et al., 2017). The primary driver of episodic volunteering is the desire to contribute (Dunn et al., 2016), though the need for social interaction is also a significant motivator (Gilbert et al., 2017). Hyde et al. (2016) further identify five overarching motivations for volunteering: supporting a cause, enhancing psychological or physical well-being (individually or collectively), socializing, developing knowledge or skills, and having a personal connection to the cause (Hyde et al., 2016).

Gilbert (2016) categorizes the factors influencing volunteer commitment into three broad areas: emotional factors (a personal, heart-driven desire to volunteer), project-related outputs and outcomes (goal-oriented engagement, guided by the head), and contextual

commitment (hands-on involvement in the work). Given the voluntary nature of this work, organizations often have limited direct control over volunteers, making commitment a critical determinant of retention. Hyde et al. (2016) note that organizational commitment significantly contributes to the retention of episodic volunteers, with some transitioning into medium-term roles (2–4 years) and others maintaining long-term involvement (5–6 years).

Allen and Meyer (2001) conceptualize commitment in three dimensions. Affective Commitment refers to an individual's emotional attachment to, and identification with, the organization, leading them to remain because they *want* to. Continuance Commitment arises from an individual's awareness of the costs associated with leaving, prompting them to stay because they *need* to. Normative Commitment reflects a sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization, where individuals stay because they feel they *ought* to (Meyer & Allen, 2001) .

Volunteers' Self-efficacy

To fully understand volunteering, it is essential to examine the psychological factors that shape behavior and sustain long-term commitment and engagement. One influential framework for understanding such factors is Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes *triadic reciprocity*—the dynamic and interdependent relationship between three elements: the individual, the environment, and behavior (Bandura, 1977). Each factor continuously influences and is influenced by the others. Within this framework, self-efficacy emerges as a central determinant of human behavior (J.-W. Wang et al., 2011). Defined by Bandura (1977b) as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute actions necessary to achieve specific goals, self-efficacy strongly predicts behavior and behavioral intentions, particularly in challenging or uncertain contexts (Morris, 2017).

In the context of volunteerism, self-efficacy refers to a volunteer's confidence in their ability to perform tasks effectively under varying circumstances (J.-W. Wang et al., 2011). Higher levels of self-efficacy are linked to greater motivation, persistence, and resilience in fulfilling volunteer roles (Harp et al., 2017). Volunteers with strong self-efficacy tend to approach challenges with confidence, adapt more effectively to difficulties, and maintain better overall well-being. They also report lower levels of burnout and higher job satisfaction (Caricati et al., 2020).

Bandura (1977b) further explains that efficacy expectations vary across three dimensions, each with implications for performance (Bandura, 1977). Magnitude refers to the level of difficulty a person feels capable of managingsome may feel confident only with simple tasks, while others extend their confidence to moderately or highly complex challenges. Generality relates to whether efficacy beliefs are tied to specific situations or can

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be applied broadly across contexts. Strength describes the resilience of these beliefs; weaker efficacy expectations are more easily undermined by setbacks, whereas stronger beliefs foster persistence even when confronted with contradictory experiences.

Altruism as intrinsic motivation

Altruism is generally understood as a selfless concern for the well-being of others, motivated by the desire to help without expecting personal gain. Many scholars regard altruism as an intrinsic motivator that often underpins an individual's decision to engage in volunteer activities (Batson, 2011). Individuals who volunteer because their personal values align with the principles of volunteerism are more likely to develop stronger and longer-lasting commitments compared to those driven primarily by external incentives.

However, the relationship between altruism and volunteer motivation remains a subject of debate. Burns et al. (2006) note that, while many individuals cite altruistic reasons for volunteering, they often also anticipate personal benefits from their involvement (Burns et al., 2006). These may include skill development, social connections, or career advancement. This suggests that volunteerism, even when altruistically motivated, frequently incorporates personal goals alongside prosocial intentions.

A critical question, therefore, is the extent to which altruistic intentions translate into sustained commitment particularly in the philanthropic sector, where volunteers face numerous challenges, external pressures, and rapidly changing circumstances. While altruism may spark initial involvement, the durability of such motivation over time requires further exploration.

From a behavioral perspective, altruism can be observed and measured through specific, perceptible actions. Myers identifies five dimensions of altruistic behavior that help assess an individual's level of altruism. First, empathy, the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others enables individuals to connect deeply with those they help (Bierhoff et al., 1991). Second, belief in a just world the conviction that one's good deeds will ultimately be rewarded influences a person's willingness to assist others, based on a moral sense of reciprocity (C. Wang et al., 2023). Third, social responsibility felt obligation to help those in need—forms a core driver of altruistic action. Fourth, internal locus of control—the belief that one's actions stem from personal agency encourages individuals to take responsibility for initiating help. Finally, low ego the tendency to prioritize others' needs over one's own—supports selfless acts by minimizing self-interest (Enelamah & Tran, 2020).

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
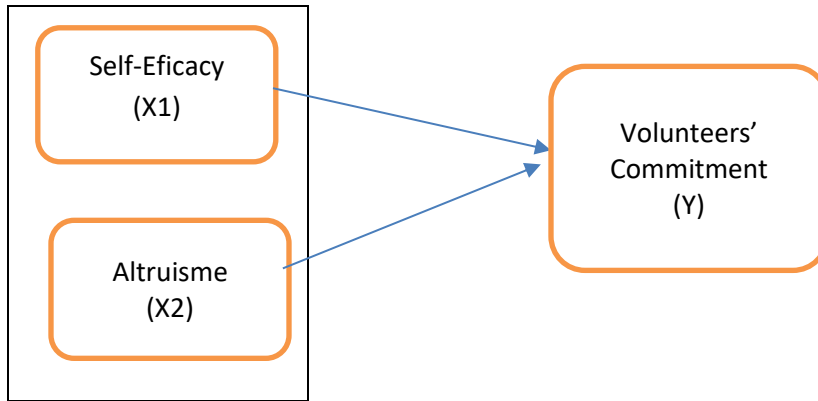
RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Procedure

The study sample consisted of 60 volunteers from the Berdikari Foundation. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific criteria: (1) a minimum of two years of service as a volunteer at the Berdikari Foundation, and (2) active involvement as an organizer in the foundation's programs. Of the foundation's 73 volunteers, 60 met these criteria and were included in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via the Google Forms platform

Measurement

All measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales and modified to fit the context of volunteer work, in line with established research practices in volunteer studies (Tidwell, 2005). The questionnaire comprised 52 items covering three variables: self-efficacy, altruism, and volunteer commitment. Self-efficacy and altruism were treated as independent variables, while volunteer commitment served as the dependent variable. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

To measure variables, the indicators are adjusted to the characteristics of the sample from previous studies.

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Figure 2 Variabel Operational

Variables	Dimensions	Indicators
Volunteer Commitment Allen & Meyer's Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990)	Affective Commitment	emotional attachment to the organization
	Continuance Commitment	awareness of the costs of leaving the organization
	Normative Commitment	perceived obligation to remain with the organization
Self-Efficacy Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) particularly the concept of *self-efficacy*, defined as the belief in one's capabilities to execute actions required to achieve goals.	Magnitude	belief in ability to handle tasks of varying difficulty.
	Generality	extent to which efficacy beliefs transfer across tasks/situations.
	Strength	resilience of efficacy beliefs in the face of setbacks.
Altruism Batson's Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (Batson, 2011) – altruism as selfless concern for others, driven by empathy.	Empathy	capacity to understand and share others' feelings
	Belief in a Just World	belief that good deeds will be rewarded, bad deeds punished
	Social Responsibility	sense of moral obligation to help those in need.
	Internal Locus of Control	belief that personal actions stem from one's own agency
	Low Ego	prioritizing others' needs over self-interest.

Hypothesis

Self-Efficacy and Commitment

Research by Fakhar et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy significantly influences the organizational commitment of volunteers. The higher a volunteer's self-efficacy, the stronger their commitment to the organization. Volunteers who believe they bring value to others, possess the necessary competencies to complete their tasks, and can perform their duties effectively are more likely to work with confidence and align their efforts with the institution's expectations. These findings are supported by Aryati and Armanu (2023), who identified self-efficacy as one of the key factors affecting organizational commitment. Similarly, Asih and Dewi (2017) reported a positive relationship between self-efficacy and organizational commitment, and Dewi (2020) demonstrated that self-efficacy positively impacts organizational commitment among employees of The Rich Jogja Hotel.

Based on these findings, Hypothesis 1 of this study is:

H1: *Self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on volunteers' organizational commitment.*

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Altruism and commitment

Altruism plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's commitment to volunteering. Individuals with high levels of altruism are driven by a genuine passion for helping others and engaging in volunteer activities without expecting any form of reward. Altruistic behavior serves as the foundation of helping actions—voluntary, selfless acts aimed at improving others' well-being (Niculescu et al., 2019). Volunteers who channel their energy and dedication toward the success of volunteer initiatives often base their commitment on the intrinsic value and meaning of the activity itself.

Based on this reasoning, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Altruism is positively associated with volunteering commitment.
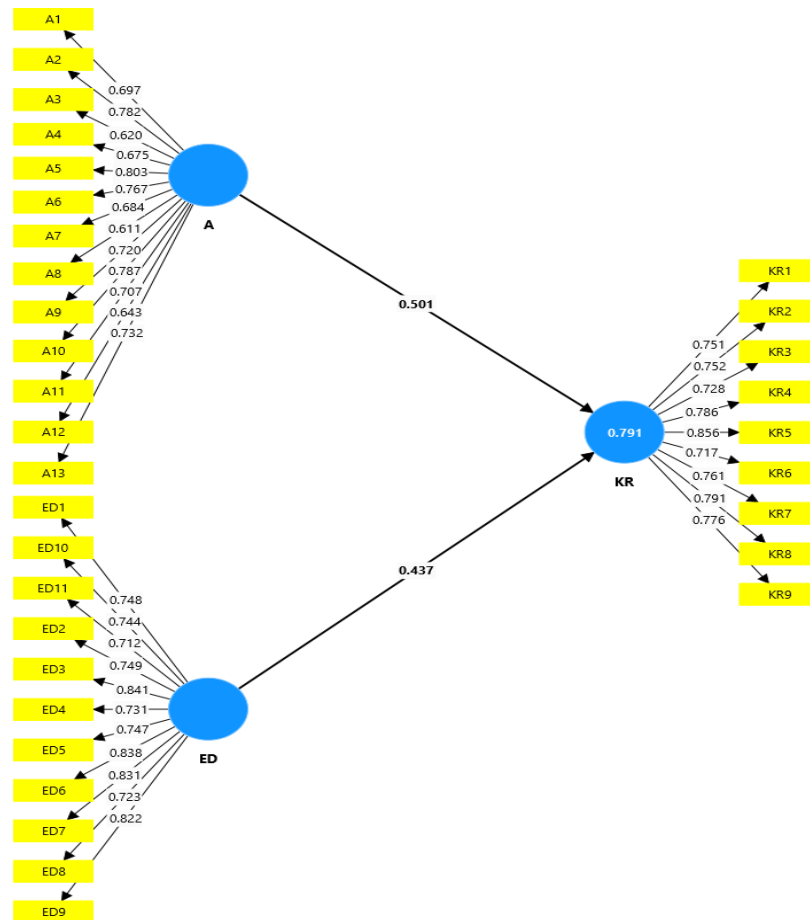
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary Analysis

The initial analysis began with an assessment of validity test and scale reliability, followed by a factor analysis of the items within their respective theoretical constructs. This process ensured that the scales employed were unidimensional.

Validity Test

1. Convergent Validity

Model of Convergence Validity Test

The chart above shows that all indicators are valid so that the model meets the validity of convergence because the value *of the loading factor* of the four variables is above 0.6.

2. Validity of Discrimination

Tabel 1. Discrimination Validity Test

	A	ED	KR
Altruism			
Self-efficacy	0,837		
Volunteers' commitment	0,890	0,878	

From the table above, it can be seen that the validity of the discrimination is valid because *the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) value obtained is less than 0.9.

Reliability Test

Tabel 2. Reliability Test

	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Altruism	0,928	0,919
Self-efficacy	0,937	0,932
Volunteers' commitment	0,920	0,914

From the table of reliability test results above, it can be concluded that the results *of composite reliability* and *Cronbach's alpha* from the three variables, namely altruism and self-efficacy towards volunteer commitment, are declared reliable because the value is more than 0.7.

R-*Square*

Table 3. R-Square Results

	R-*Square*	R-*Square Adjusted*
Volunteers' commitment	0,791	0,783

Based on the table above, the value of the R-square obtained is 0.791 which can be stated that the construct on the volunteer commitment is declared strong because it > 0.75.

Validating the Model

Tabel 4. *Goodness of Fit*

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	Q² Predict
Volunteers' commitment	0,748

The value of Q² (*predictive relevance*) obtained is 0.748 which shows that the relevance of the model's prediction is relatively strong because it has a value of > 0.

Hypothesis test

Table 5. Result of Hypothesis test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Altruism -> Volunteers' commitment	0,501	0,495	0,133	3,778	0,000
Self-efficacyi -> Volunteers' commitment	0,437	0,450	0,137	3,192	0,001

Based on the *path coefficient* table above, it can be seen that the findings from the testing of all the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

1) **Hypothesis Testing 1**

H01 : There was no effect between altruism (X1) and volunteer commitment (Y).

Ha1   : There is an influence of altruism (X1) on volunteer commitment (Y).

Conclusion: The altruism variable obtained a statistical t-value of 3.778 > 1.96 or a *p-value* of 0.000 < 0.05. So, Ha1 is accepted and H01 is rejected, which means that the altruism variable affects the volunteers' commitment.

2) Hypothesis Testing 2

H02: There is no effect between self-efficacy (X2) and volunteer commitment (Y).

Ha2   : There is an effect between self-efficacy (X2) and volunteer commitment (Y).

Conclusion: The self-efficacy variable obtained a statistical t-value of 3.192 > 1.96 or a *p-value* of 0.001 < 0.05. So, Ha2 is accepted and H_{02} is rejected, which means that the self-efficacy variable affects the volunteers' commitment.

DISCUSSION

Self-efficacy and volunteers' commitment

Based on the findings of this study, it can be seen that self-efficacy affects volunteer commitment as shown in the statistical t-value of 2.345 > 1.96. This is consistent with study conducted by(Fakhar et al., 2022) which states that self-efficacy has an influence on volunteers' organizational commitment. Individuals with strong self-efficacy exhibit confidence in managing the challenges they encounter. Self-efficacy represents an optimistic sense of self-assurance, reflecting a belief in one's ability to complete demanding tasks or handle various difficulties faced in life. Those with high self-efficacy are goal-oriented, persistent in their efforts, resilient when confronting challenges, and capable of recovering from setbacks. This trait highlights an individual's resilience and influences subsequent behaviors. Self-efficacy is particularly significant for volunteers in philanthropic sector. Volunteers often have to balance time between work, family, and volunteer activities. Time constraints can be a big challenge to maintain a long-term commitment. Dealing with difficult situations, such as helping disaster victims or people who are suffering, can have a severe emotional impact on volunteers. Sometimes, the tasks assigned to volunteers are too heavy or unclear, so they feel overwhelmed or don't know what to do. Volunteers with high self-efficacy are able to manage various difficult tasks and know what to do to complete these difficult tasks. Volunteers must trust their ability to execute social missions effectively and address challenges such as fundraising and distributing aid fairly and appropriately. Their self-efficacy plays a crucial role in shaping behaviors, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities successfully.

The belief in the ability to carry out various volunteer tasks of volunteers in philanthropic organizations directly will strengthen and increase their commitment to continue to be volunteers. By functioning self-efficacy in individual volunteers, they grow their self-esteem as volunteers and also as valuable and needed people. Thus, self-efficacy will directly or indirectly

have an influence on the volunteers' commitment to survive and stay together in the organization. The higher the self-efficacy possessed by the volunteers, the higher the volunteer's commitment. The results of this study also show that the average Berdikari Foundation volunteers have self-efficacy, one of which is found in the ED3 questionnaire item, namely volunteers continue to try to complete tasks despite difficulties. When volunteers have a high level of self-efficacy, then they will be willing to make a great effort to complete their tasks (Chan, 2020).

Altruism and volunteers' commitment

Based on the findings of this study, altruism was found to significantly influence volunteer commitment, as indicated by the statistical result t=2.816>1.96t = 2.816 > 1.96t=2.816>1.96. This aligns with research by Rabun et al. (2020) showing a positive relationship between altruism and commitment among student volunteers . Altruism defined as a selfless concern for the welfare of others has been shown to be a crucial determinant of organizational commitment, particularly in social-based or philanthropic contexts (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Individuals with high altruistic tendencies are intrinsically motivated to participate in organizational activities, prioritizing shared values and mission alignment over material rewards. This intrinsic motivation strengthens emotional attachment to the organization, even when volunteers receive little or no financial compensation (Yuan & Zhao, 2025)

Altruism also fosters emotional resilience, enabling volunteers to cope with challenges such as working in disaster-affected areas, facing limited resources, or enduring physically and emotionally demanding conditions (Carlile et al., 2014). Such individuals remain committed because they believe their efforts create a positive social impact. This belief strengthens identification with the organization's vision and mission, deepening loyalty and attachment. Moreover, altruistic volunteers often promote harmonious relationships, enhance teamwork, and contribute to a positive organizational culture factors that further reinforce commitment (Snyder & Omoto, 2008).

In the present study, Berdikari Foundation volunteers demonstrated strong altruistic behaviors, particularly in deriving satisfaction and happiness from helping others. This is reflected in indicator A11, where the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that assisting others brought them personal satisfaction. Such satisfaction has been shown to be a source of organizational commitment (Syihabudhin et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of altruism, self-efficacy, and transformational leadership on volunteer commitment, using Berdikari Foundation volunteers as respondents. The findings revealed that altruism and self-efficacy significantly contribute to strengthening volunteers' commitment. Theoretically, these results suggest that organizational commitment in philanthropic contexts can be better understood by examining these two psychological constructs. Practically, altruism and self-efficacy emerge as essential characteristics that should be nurtured and developed among volunteers to optimize their contributions.

These findings provide valuable recommendations for philanthropic organizations in designing policies and operational strategies that reinforce volunteers' self-efficacy and altruistic tendencies. Initiatives such as informal training sessions, collaborative meetings, and activities fostering confidence, empathy, and mutual trust can cultivate these qualities, ultimately enhancing long-term commitment.

However, this study is limited by its focus on a single organization with a relatively small sample size. The generalizability of the results should be validated through further research employing larger and more diverse samples across various philanthropic institutions. Future studies are also encouraged to explore additional determinants of volunteer commitment, particularly in faith-based philanthropic organizations, where aspects of religiosity and spirituality may play a pivotal role.

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