Introduction

Pro social Behavior Definition

Pro social behavior is voluntary behavior intended to benefit another. Thus, it includes behaviors such as helping, sharing, or providing comfort to another. Pro social behavior is evident in young children but changes in frequency and in its expression with age. Individual differences in pro social behavior are caused by a combination of heredity, socialization, and situational factors. Pro social behaviors can be preformed for a variety of reasons, ranging from selfish and manipulative reasons (e.g., helping get something in return) to moral and other-oriented reasons (e.g., helping because of moral principles or sympathy for another’s plight). Pro social behavior that is not performed for material or social rewards (e.g., rewards, approval), but is based on concern for another or moral values, is usually labeled “altruism.”

A topic of attention in the social psychological literature is whether there is true altruism—that is, if people ever help others for reasons that are not really selfish. Although people sometimes assist others even when they receive no social or material benefits, some psychologists argue that there is always a selfish reason underlying altruistic motives. For example, they argue that people actually help because of the psychological merging of the self with another, the desire to elevate one’s own mood or to avoid negative feelings or a negative self-evaluation (for not helping). People sometimes help others to alleviate their own feelings of distress when dealing with someone else in distress or need, or primarily because of personal ties to needy others. Nonetheless, C. D. Batson has provided evidence that people often assist for other-oriented sympathy, and there is likely at least some selfless motivation for some types of prosocial actions.

Prosocial Behavior Importance

Prosocial behavior is relevant to both the quality of close interpersonal relationships and to interactions among individuals and groups without close ties. People, as individuals or as members of a group, often assist others in need or distress, as well as others whose needs are relatively trivial. Charities and societies depend on people helping one another. In addition, prosocial behavior has benefits for the benefactor. For example, children who are more prosocial tend to be better liked by peers, and adults who engage in helping activities tend to have better psychological health.

Personal Characteristics Associated with Prosocial Behavior

As is evident in everyday life, some people are more prosocial than others. Prosocial children and adults tend to be prone to sympathize with others. They also are more likely to understand others’ thoughts and feelings and to try to take others’ perspectives. In addition, people who tend to assist others often hold other-oriented values (e.g., value others’ well-being) and tend to assign the responsibility for actions such as helping to themselves. Prosocial children tend to be positive in their emotional expression, socially competent, well adjusted, well regulated, and have a positive self-concept. In both childhood and adulthood, people who reason about moral conflicts in more mature ways (e.g., use more abstract moral reasoning, with more sophisticated perspective taking and a greater emphasis on values) are also more likely than their peers are to help others. Of particular note, preschool children who engage in spontaneous, somewhat costly pro social behaviors (e.g., sharing a toy they like) engage in more pro social behavior as adolescents and tend to be sympathetic and pro social as adults. Thus, there appears to be some continuity in pro social responding from a fairly early age.

Situational Factors and Pro social Behavior

Even though some people are more prone to help than are others, situational factors also can have a powerful effect on people’s willingness to help. For example, people are less likely to help when the cost of helping is high. They also are more likely to help attractive people and to help if they are the only ones available to help (e.g., there are no other people around who see an individual who needs assistance). People in good moods are likely to assist others more than are people in neutral moods, although sometimes people in bad moods seem to help others to raise their moods. People also are more likely to help if they are exposed to models of prosocial behavior. Moreover, the interaction of situational factors with personality characteristics of potential helpers is important; for example, sociable people seem more likely to provide types of helping that involve social interaction whereas shy individuals often may tend to help in situations in which they do not need to be outgoing or socially assertive.

Origins of Pro social Behavior

Pro social behavior is a complex behavior affected by numerous factors, both biological and environmental. Findings in twin studies support the view that heredity plays a role: Identical twins (who share 100% of their genes) are more similar to each other in pro social behavior, as well as sympathetic concern, than are fraternal twins (who share only 50% of their genes). Heredity likely affects aspects of temperament or personality such as self-regulation, emotionality, and agreeableness, which contribute to people engaging in higher levels of pro social behavior.

Considerable evidence also indicates that individual differences in pro social behavior also are linked to socialization. For example, adults are more likely to help others if, as children, their parents were models of pro social behavior. Warm, supportive parenting, especially if combined with the use of positive discipline (e.g., the use of reasoning with children about wrongdoing), has also been linked to pro social tendencies in children, whereas punitive parenting (e.g., parenting involving physical punishment, the deprivation of privileges, or threats thereof) has been inversely related. Parents who help their children to attend to and understand others’ feelings tend to foster pro social tendencies in their offspring. Appropriate levels of parental control , when combined with parental support, pro social values, and behaviors that help children to attend to and care about others’ needs, seem to foster pro social responding.

Age and Sex Differences in Pro social Behavior

Even very young children, for example, 1-year-olds, sometimes help or comfort others. However, the frequencies of most types of pro social behavior increase during childhood until adolescence. It currently is unclear if pro social tendencies increase or not in adulthood. This increase in pro social behavior with age in childhood is likely caused by a number of factors, including increased perspective-taking skills and sympathy, internalization of other-oriented, pro social values, greater awareness of the social desirability of helping, and greater competence to help others.

There also are sex differences in sympathy and pro social behavior. In childhood, girls tend to be somewhat, but not greatly, more likely to engage in pro social behavior. Girls also are more empathic or sympathetic, albeit this sex difference is small and depends on the method of assessing empathy or sympathy. Women are perceived as more nurturant and pro social, although they likely help more only in certain kinds of circumstances. Indeed, men are more likely to help when there is some risk involved (e.g., interactions with a stranger on the street) or if chivalry might be involved.

Development of Prosocial Behavior

Although prosocial development has long been studied, and general age-related increases have been reported from infancy through early adulthood (see Eisenberg et al. 1998; Crocetti et al. 2016), only a few longitudinal studies have examined changes in prosocial behavior across a broad age range in adolescence (i.e., Carlo et al. 2015; Luengo Kanacri et al. 2013). Yet, there is considerable evidence that several physical, cognitive, and relational changes occur during adolescence that impact social functioning. First, adolescents’ physical maturity and increasing autonomy may allow them to engage in a wider variety of prosocial actions (Carlo et al. 2012; Fabes et al. 1999). Second, advances in perspective taking (e.g., Van der Graaff et al. 2014) may facilitate higher-stage moral reasoning, which in turn should promote prosocial behavior (Blasi 1980; Eisenberg and Spinrad 2014; Kohlberg 1969). Third, increased frequency of peer interactions and interest in intimate and romantic relationships develop alongside an increase in social competence (Steinberg and Morris 2001) and may also foster adolescents’ other-oriented behavior (Fabes et al. 1999; Wentzel 2014). However, other changes during adolescence may negatively impact the development of adolescents’ prosocial tendencies. For instance, changes in affective processing and brain maturation might challenge emotion regulation in mid-adolescence (see Crone and Dahl 2012), which may temporarily diminish adolescents’ ability to direct their attention to others’ emotional needs and therefore decrease prosocial tendencies (e.g., Eisenberg et al. 1996, 2000; Padilla‐Walker and Christensen 2011). Thus, conceptually, mean levels of prosocial behavior can be expected either to increase during adolescence or to show a temporary decrease.

Moreover, the development of prosocial behavior may be different for boys and girls. According to gender socialization theorists, girls are socialized to show nurturance and caring, whereas boys are socialized to inhibit these kinds of prosocial behavior (Brody 1999). During adolescence, gender-specific socialization pressures are thought to strengthen and boys and girls may increasingly adhere to gender stereotypes (Alfieri et al. 1996; Hill and Lynch 1983), which may result in gender-specific developmental trends in prosocial behavior. Moreover, previous research revealed gender specific developmental trends in moral reasoning (Eisenberg et al 1991), empathic concern and perspective taking (e.g., Carlo et al. 2015; Van der Graaff et al. 2014). Given the conceptual connection between these constructs and prosocial behavior (e.g., Hoffman 2000; Staub 1978), it is important to investigate gender differences in the development of prosocial behavior as well.

Results from the few previous longitudinal studies on prosocial development in adolescence are inconclusive. Whereas increases were found in prosocial behavior towards strangers between age 13 and 16 (Carlo et al. 2015), and in helping behavior between age 15 and 18 (Eisenberg et al. 2005), other studies found non-linear growth between age 12 and 14 (Caprara et al. 2015), stable levels in self-reported prosocial behavior between age 10 and 14 (Nantel‐Vivier et al. 2009), and even decreases between age 13 and 18 (Carlo et al. 2007; Luengo Kanacri et al. 2013). Regarding gender differences, all of these studies revealed boys to report lower levels of prosocial behavior than girls, but the issue of potential gender differences in developmental patterns has received surprisingly little attention. Only two of the studies investigated gender moderation, of which one revealed no significant gender moderation (Carlo et al. 2015) but the other found a decrease in prosocial behavior that was stronger for boys than for girls (Carlo et al. 2007).

Given the inconsistencies in the literature, and the relative dearth of comprehensive studies on this topic, the aim of the current study is to expand our understanding of prosocial development in adolescence. To our knowledge, this six-wave longitudinal study is the first to investigate age trends and gender differences from early to late adolescence (i.e., between ages 13–18 years). The comprehensive design of the current study allows for a thorough investigation of potentially complex and gender-specific growth patterns, which may help explain inconsistencies between previous studies.

Longitudinal Links between Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking, and Prosocial Behavior

Empathy is generally deemed a multidimensional construct, involving affective as well as cognitive processes (see Davis 1996; Decety and Jackson 2004). Affective empathy refers to the vicarious experience of emotions consistent with those of the observed person and often results in empathic concern, which involves feelings of sorrow or concern for another. Cognitive empathy, or perspective taking, can be defined as the awareness and understanding of another’s emotion (Davis 1983). A previous study on the mean-level development of empathic concern and perspective taking showed that both traits are still subject to change during adolescence (Van der Graaff et al. 2014). Empathic concern and perspective taking may both facilitate prosocial behavior (Batson 1991; Hoffman 2000), although there is some debate about the relative importance of “feeling” vs. “understanding” in predicting such actions, and longitudinal studies looking at the role of both empathic concern and perspective taking in prosocial behavior are scarce.

Regarding empathic concern, feelings of sorrow for someone else are thought to be an important motivation to alleviate others’ distress, and thus, to show helping or caring behavior towards others (Batson 1991; Batson et al. 1989; Eisenberg and Miller 1987). Previous research provides empirical support for a positive association between adolescents’ empathic concern and prosocial behavior, although the evidence mainly comes from cross-sectional studies (e.g., Berger et al. 2015; Caravita et al. 2009; Eisenberg and Miller 1987; Eisenberg et al. 2001). However, a recent study showed empathic concern also to predict prosocial behavior 1 year later during early to middle adolescence (Carlo et al. 2015).

Regarding perspective taking, individuals who have a high tendency to imagine the other’s psychological point of view are likely to be other-oriented and to be aware of others’ needs. Therefore, they can be expected to be better at finding ways to help others than are individuals low in perspective taking (Eisenberg et al. 2015). However, it has been suggested that although perspective taking may facilitate positive behavior, it can also be used to manipulate or take advantage of others (Hawley 2003; Sutton et al. 1999). Thus, perspective taking, in and of itself, may not directly predict prosocial behavior. However, instead perspective taking may affect prosocial behavior indirectly through empathic concern. That is, individuals who tend to take others’ perspectives become more likely to experience feelings of concern for those others and may subsequently show prosocial behavior (Batson et al. 1989; Eisenberg et al. 2001), although a previous study (using latent variables) showed that perspective taking did not predict empathic concern between ages 14 and 17 years (Van Lissa et al. 2014). Results of previous empirical studies on the link between perspective taking and prosocial behavior are indeed mixed (see Carlo et al. 2010a, for a meta-analytic review). For instance, whereas a cross-sectional study revealed no significant association between perspective taking and defending bully victims (Caravita et al. 2009), a longitudinal study revealed that higher levels of perspective taking did predict a higher willingness to intervene in bullying (Espelage et al. 2012). Further, higher perspective taking was directly related to higher prosocial behavior (Carlo et al. 2010b), and adolescents high on prosocial behavior were found to score high on both perspective taking and empathic concern (Berger et al. 2015). However, another cross-sectional study showed the association between perspective taking and prosocial behavior to be indirect through empathic concern rather than direct (Eisenberg et al. 2001).

Taken together, there is consistent support for empathic concern as a predictor of prosocial behavior, although evidence mainly comes from cross-sectional research. However, regarding the role of perspective taking in adolescents’ prosocial behavior both the theoretical and empirical literature is mixed. Therefore, this longitudinal study aims to clarify how empathic concern and perspective taking are related to prosocial behavior throughout adolescence.

Prosocial Behavior Predicting Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking

Although previous studies have mainly focused on empathic concern and perspective taking as predictors of prosocial behavior, it is likely that the associations are bidirectional. First, engaging in prosocial behaviors provides adolescents with opportunities to show concern for others and to take others’ perspectives (Malti et al. 2009). Second, prosocial actions often evoke positive feedback from adults and peers, which may strengthen adolescents’ image of themselves as a caring and understanding person, and may reinforce them to behave accordingly (Carlo and Randall 2001; Crocetti et al. 2016). Indeed, the possible reciprocal relations between prosocial behavior, emotions, and cognitions likely result in a more integrated sense of moral self, which may account for strong moral identity (Carlo et al. 2015; Hardy and Carlo 2005). Despite these conceptual foundations, the few previous studies that examine reciprocal effects of prosocial behavior on empathy have not included perspective taking, though they do provide initial support for reciprocal relations between prosocial behavior and empathic concern (Carlo et al. 2015; Eisenberg et al. 1999). Thus, the current study is the first to investigate bidirectional relations across adolescence in the links among prosocial behavior and both empathic concern and perspective taking.

Gender Differences in Longitudinal Links

As noted previously, gender and moral socialization theorists posit gender specific socialization experiences that orient girls towards nurturing, expressive, and caring behaviors. In contrast, boys are typically socialized towards masculine-typed behaviors that include instrumentality, assertion, and competitiveness (Eagly and Crowley 1986; Leaper 2015). Gender stereotypes and gender-specific socialization practices may not only result in differences in mean levels of prosocial behavior, but may also affect its links with empathic concern and perspective taking. For instance, previous research suggests that the cognitive process of perspective taking is a stronger motivator to show prosocial behavior for boys, whereas empathic concern may play a more important role in girls’ prosocial behavior (Eisenberg et al. 2001). Moreover, girls may receive more positive feedback when engaging in prosocial behavior than boys (Brody 1999; Eisenberg et al. 2006), which may result in stronger predictive effects of prosocial behavior on perspective taking and empathic concern for girls. Although previous studies provide some support for gender differences in the associations between perspective taking, empathic concern and prosocial behavior (Caravita et al. 2009; Eisenberg et al. 2001), this issue has not yet been studied thoroughly across adolescence.

THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Our understanding of pro-social behaviour benefits from several broad of theoretical perspectives, for example, an evolutionary approach suggests that a predisposition to help is part of our genetic, evolutionary heritage. A socio-cultural perspective emphasizes the importance of social norms that dictate when we should help people in need. A learning approach proposes that people learn to be helpful, following basic principles of reinforcement and modelling. A decision making perspective focuses on the influence judgment about when help is needed; it also emphasizes the weighting of costs and benefits in the decision to give help. Finally, attribution theory highlights the idea that our willingness to help depends on the ‘merits’ of the case and, in particular, whether the person is deserving of assistance (Smith & Mackie, 2000: 373).

The first insight was provided by the biologist W.D. Hamilton (1964), who recognised that, from an evolutionary point of view, the actions of an individual are designed not so much to ensure that the individual will survive as to ensure that the genes making up that individual will do so (Tooby & Cosmides, 2005, cited Kenrick et al, 2007: 297). Hamilton (1964) however, proposed inclusive fitness, as a likelihood that one’s own genetic makeup will be preserved not just in one’s own offspring, but also in the offspring if any relatives. The distinction is a profound one for understanding and predicting when helping will occur because it implies that people may willingly accept personal risks and loses if, in the process, they increase their inclusive fitness – the chance that their genes will survive (Kenrick et al, 2007: 297).

Rushton (1989) goes even further and proposes a genetic determinism model. He believes that we do not mate with random strangers but that we seek out lovers and spouses who are more genetically similar to ourselves. It then follows that we are more likely to help those whom we perceive as genetically similar to ourselves, because we have inherited our ancestors’ assumption that this would be the most effective guarantee that similar genes would survive. Of course, those with most genetic similarity are our immediate family, followed by close relatives, and it is these whom we make it out priority to help before others. Support for this view is provided in a study by (Burnstein, Crandall & Kitayama performed in 1994). Not surprisingly they found that when in a situation such as fire, people reported that they were much likely to help relatives than non – relatives. The study by (Burnstein et al, 1994) can be evaluated as having strength in that their result can be generalised because they studied males and females and their studies were carried out in both Japan and America (Rushton 1989, cited Clarke D, 2003: 16-17).

A number of traditional explanations have been proposed which suggest that pro-social and anti-social behaviour is either part of genetic composition or it is learned. This of course, is the nature and nurture debate. Specific explanations of pro-social behaviour have been provided by psychologists. Those advocating social explanations believe we all internalise a set of norms from the society that we share with everyone else. Those arguing for the cognitive stance can be divided into two groups, some psychologists emphasise the role of emotional arousal, whereas others such as Latane and Darley argue that we make a number of decisions about whether or not to help. Also another cognitive approach suggests we weigh up the costs and benefits and helping in the result of logically reasoned decision – making process (Clarke D, 2003: 10-11).

Although some social psychologists disagree with evolutionary approaches to pro-social behaviour, they share the view that altruistic behaviour can be based in self-interest. Social exchange theory argues that much of what we do stems from the desire to maximize our rewards and minimize our costs. The difference from evolutionary approaches is that social exchange theory doesn’t trace this desire back to our evolutionary roots; nor does it assume that the desire is genetically based (Homans, 1961; Lawler & Thye, 1999; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, cited Aronson, Wilson, & Akert 2007: 347).

Smith & Mackie (2000: 373) stated that whether or not a person receives help depends in part on the ‘merits’ of the case. For example, people in a supermarket would prefer to give needy person money to buy milk than cookie dough, presumably because milk is healthier than cookies. A teacher might spend more time helping a student who missed classes because of a death in the family than helping a student who took a vacation to a ski resort.

Attribution theory also affects our emotional reaction to the person in need, i.e. Darren George (1992) studied actual incidents of help giving among college friends and found out student felt more sympathy and les anger towards a friend who had an academic problem that was outside his or her own control than a friend who was personally responsible for his or her own academic difficulties (Smith & Mackie 2000: 373).

‘The bystander effect on decision to help, others can affect the decision to provide assistance in three ways, first, others serve as sources of potential aid; therefore, with more observers present, any one of them will feel less personal responsibility for providing that aid, thereby reducing helping. Second, others can serve as sources of information about whether aid is called for, therefore, when others seem passive in the face of a possible emergency, the situation is frequently assumed to be a nonemergency and no one helps. Third, others can serve as sources of approval or disapproval for an aid’ (Kenrick et al, 2007: 305).

With regards to gender and help, a number of studies have shown that this is true. In one variation of their studies involving drivers and hitchhikers, Pomazal and Clore (1973) found that male drivers were much more likely to stop for a woman than for a man. In another study by Przybyla (1985), which seemingly placed women in a potentially dangerous situation, showed male participant sexually explicit videotapes and then noted whether they were more likely to help a male or female needing help; as might be expected, they were much likely to help the woman. On the other hand, when female participant were shown sexually explicit videotapes they spent less time helping anyone, whether male or female needing help Clarke D, (2003: 49). On the other hand, most people view women as the more helpful sex; they are rated as kinder, more compassionate, and more devoted to others’ welfare than men (Ruble, 1983; Spence & Helmriech, 1978, cited Kenrick et al 2007: 297). According to Bierhoff, H. 2002: 27-18), the explanation of gender difference in pr-social behaviour may be based on analysis of the content of gender roles. The social roles of men and women differ, i.e. men are more likely to be firemen, policemen, or soldier, while women are likely to do the house work. Therefore, the distribution of men and women in different social roles is far being equal

Our self image is influenced by how we think of ourselves. In a survey by Elizabeth Midlarsky and Robin Nemeroff (1995) they found out that after 50 years of the fact, the self esteem of people who had be rescuers during the Holocaust was still being elevated by the help they had provided. Because pro-social behaviour can affect how we view ourselves, we can use it to manage self-image (self concept). Our self images are sometimes influenced by the characteristics of the groups which we belong. Certain of these groups have code of conduct that encourages pro-social action. All the great religion of the world, for example, includes concern and scarifies for others as important moral principles. We might expect, therefore, more helping on the part of individuals who define themselves as religious (Kenrick et al 2007: 312).

LITERATURE REVIEWS:

•Gender difference in pro social behavior

Authors: IA Abdullahi, P Kumar

Published: 2016

The study on gender Differences in Pro social Behavior was conducted to total of 60 students (N = 60, 30 Males and 30 Females) participated in the study from Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. The Pro social Personality Battery (PSB) consisting seven dimensions including social responsibility (SR), emphatic concern (EC), perspective taking (PT), personal distress (PD), other oriented moral reasoning (O), mutual concern moral reasoning (M) and self report altruism (SRA) has been used in the study to collect the data. The results suggest that males and females are both almost equal on most of the pro social behavior dimensions. However, in case of perspective taking and mutual concern moral reasoning females are on higher side suggesting that they have better understanding of others’ mental state and they are more concerned about morality in the society

•Authors: Krishna Priya and Subhiksha Mahalakshmi

Published: 2017

They measured internet usage in altruism in adolescence of age 17-19 their result finding was that with increase in the internet usage there was increase in the level of altruism

•Authors: Bryant and Brophy (1976) reported that 11 years old girls helped a younger child with a task significantly more than 11 years old boys did and found the gender difference. S. Karin & Moely,(1976) found the effect of gender on altruistic behavior of 192 males and females and found that females generally obtained higher altruism scores than males

•Hoffman, (1977) did a study on altruism and gender difference which indicates that females do indeed appear to be more empathic than males. It was also proved that females may have a great tendency to imagine themselves in the other’ place, whereas males have more of a set toward instrumental ameliorative action.

•Infants' preference for pro social behaviors

Authors: Hamlin, Wynn, and Bloom

Published: 13th Nov 2016

The study revealed that infants as young as 6 months were capable of social evaluation, displaying an early preference for agents performing a pro social behavior. Since then the development of early social abilities to judge other's behavior has been the topic of a growing body of research. The study was conducted between 2007 and 2015 that experimentally examined infants' social evaluation abilities by testing their preference for agents acting pro socially. They performed a detailed analysis of a corpus of 16 research studies including 59 experimental results, scrutinizing their methods and findings, and identifying their convergent and divergent features. The result showed that a preference for agents who perform pro social behaviors (as opposed to antisocial or neutral) was present in a majority of infants, but some conflicting results have also been reported. The rich interpretation that infants are endowed with mature socio-moral evaluation abilities has not really been sufficiently discussed.

•Automatic Influences of Priming on Pro social Behavior

Authors: Costanza Scaffidi Abbate, Stefano Ruggieri, Stefano Boca

Published: 30th August 2013

The study of automaticity of social behavior indicates that, in some circumstances, priming a concept automatically activates related behavioral schemas. Previous research studies have used priming techniques to increase willingness to help, but most of those studies have simply measured intention to engage in pro social behavior rather than real helping behavior. The study was investigated the effect of priming the concept of pro social behavior on real helping behavior. After priming pro sociality through a scrambled sentences test, participants were shown to increase their donation rate after a direct request coming from an experimenter's confederate and to spontaneously help to a greater extent a girl whose books had fallen on the floor. The result was that the implicationsof the automatic behavior priming effect has an influence on automatic effect of social perception on pro social behavior.

•Religion and pro social behavior

Authors: Philip J Grossman and Matthew B Parrett

Published: 16th December 2010

Religious people are thought to be more pro social than nonreligious people. This study examined the relationship between religion and pro social behavior using data from a context-rich, naturally occurring field experiment that closely resembles the dictator game – tipping in restaurants. Customers were surveyed as they left a set of restaurants in Richmond, Virginia, in the summers of 2002 and 2003. The findings reveal no evidence of religious pro sociality.

•MIMICRY AND PROSOCIAL

Authors : Rick B. van Baaren , Rob W. Holland, Kerry Kawakami, Ad van Knippenberg

Published: 1st Jan 2004

The study has shown that mimicry occurs unintentionally and even among strangers. They studied the consequences of this automatic phenomenon in order to learn more about the adaptive function it serves. In three studies related to mimicry and pro social, they consistently found that mimicry increases pro-social behavior. Participants who had been mimicked were more helpful and generous toward other people than were non-mimicked participants. These beneficial consequences of mimicry were not restricted to behavior directed toward the mimicker, but included behavior directed toward people not directly involved in the mimicry situation. The results suggest that the effects of mimicry are not simply due to increased liking for the mimicker, but are due to increased pro social orientation in general.

•Sympathy through affective perspective taking and its relation to prosocial behavior in toddlers.

Authors: Vaish, A, Carpenter, M , and Tomasello M

Published: 2016

In the current study, the authors asked whether young children could also sympathize with a person to whom something negative had happened but who was expressing no emotion at all. They showed 18- and 25-month-olds an adult either harming another adult by destroying or taking away her possessions (harm condition) or else doing something similar that did not harm her (neutral condition). The “victim” expressed no emotions in either condition. Nevertheless, in the harm as compared with the neutral condition, children showed more concern and subsequent pro social behavior toward the victim. The results suggest that the children's concerned looks during the harmful event were positively correlated with their subsequent pro social behavior.

•Understanding Prosocial Behavior: The Impact of Empathy and Gender Among African American Adolescents

Authors: Panel Susan D. McMahonPh.D .Jamie Wernsman ,M.A .Anna L. ParnesB.A.

Published: 15th June 2006

Although pro social behavior in adolescence is associated with many positive outcomes, few studies have examined the factors that contribute to the development of pro social behaviors. This study examined the empathy and gender as predictors of pro social behavior among African American early adolescents. Results revealed a significant main effect for empathy, as well as an interaction between empathy and gender in predicting pro social behavior. In general, youth with more empathy reported more pro social behavior, and this effect was more pronounced for males than females. These findings suggest that the ability to understand another’s perspective may be important in the development and expression of pro social behaviors, particularly among males

•Gender differences in patterns of association between pro social behavior, personality, and externalizing problems

Authors : Gwen R.Pursell, BrettLaursen, Kenneth H.Rubin, CathrynBooth-La ForceLinda, Rose-Krasnor

Published: 22nd June 2007

This study examined whether pro social behavior and personality have independent or overlapping associations with adolescent externalizing problems. A total of 128 female and 103 male early adolescents (M = 13.6 years old) completed personality inventories. Pro social behavior was assessed by peer nominations (N = 663). Composite aggression and delinquency scores were derived from maternal and self-reports. Path analyses indicated gender differences in patterns of association. For girls, links between pro social behavior and both aggression and delinquency were fully mediated by agreeableness and partially mediated by conscientiousness. For boys, pro social behavior, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were independently and negatively associated with aggression and delinquency. The findings suggested that personality and pro social behavior are uniquely related to boys’ behavior problems but cannot be readily disentangled when it comes to girls’ behavior problems.

NEED FOR STUDY:

The purpose of this study is to determine whether people who witnessed another person in need of help, would react in a positive way by helping them or would just walk off as if nothing happens. In today’s world even if a person is willing to help someone, the people around them and the environment influence them the most. Their attitude towards pro social behavior differs from individual to individual. In the end of this research study I think at least 50% of them will think about their past mistakes that they would have done or even they will not think about making the same mistake again. As for deciding who and when to help, humans have a tendency to help those close to them and worry less about outsiders; there is more personal benefit in helping a friend or relative. However, there are still some individuals who might be motivated to perform helping behaviors out of religious or spiritual reasoning. This leads to the controversial question of whether or not there is such a thing as a truly selfless act. Helping should not be based on gender or by the way a person looks and in the end of the research study I think it will motivate people to help more without any expectations.

Altruistic behavior tends to decline in early adolescence, partly in relation to hormonal and other physiological events of puberty, but then recovers. A new form of selfless civic engagement and volunteering, emerges as adolescents become more socially independent. Participating in church groups, playing or coaching sports, and involvement in school clubs, which require maintenance of altruistic activity over time, contribute to a sense of agency, that one’s acts can make a difference in the lives of others, and the development of identity. Volunteering in adolescence is linked to later civic engagement.

Adults have access to more material resources, knowledge, independence, and, particularly with older and retired adults, more time, than in other stages of life. Exceptional individuals become moral exemplars, demonstrating exceptional moral commitment or heroic sacrifice. However, classic social psychology research on phenomena such as bystander effect, wherein adults in a crowd are less likely to help, show that adults are not automatically more pro social than children and adolescents.

Being a parent or caregiver is an important context of pro sociality, although one that is seldom recognized in the research literature. Beyond helping others directly, parents, teachers, and caregivers also attempt to socialize pro sociality in children, with explicit reference to moral expectations and through facilitating children’s cooperation in family and societal life, closing the loop on pro social development across the lifespan.

Aim:

To study the gender difference in altruistic behavior among young adults

Objective:

To identify the gender difference in altruistic behavior among young adults

HypothesIs :

There will be significant gender difference in Altruism

Constitutional definitions:

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In an extreme case, altruism may become a synonym of selflessness which is the opposite of selfishness.

In a common way of living, it doesn't deny the singular nature of the subject, but realizes the traits of the individual personality in relation to the others, with a true, direct and personal interaction with each of them. It is focusing both on a single person and the whole community. In a (not only) Christian practice, it is the law of love direct to the ego and his neighbour.

(Hunter & Hunter, 1980). He derived it from the Italian altrui, which in turn was derived from Latin alteri, meaning "other people" or "somebody else".

(Steinberg, 2010) Altruism can be distinguished from feelings of loyalty, in that whilst the latter is predicated upon social relationships, altruism does not consider relationships. Much debate exists as to whether "true" altruism is possible in human psychology. The theory of psychological egoism suggests that no act of sharing, helping or sacrificing can be described as truly altruistic, as the actor may receive an intrinsic reward in the form of personal gratification. The validity of this argument depends on whether intrinsic rewards qualify as "benefits".

The term altruism may also refer to an ethical doctrine that claims that individuals are morally obliged to benefit others. Used in this sense, it is usually contrasted with egoism, which claims individuals are morally obligated to serve themselves first.

Operational definition :

Participants

Participants consisted of young adults from 18 to 35 years of age. This age group was included

since individuals start to develop psychologically more and will able to understand the need to

help others. Total of 100 participants out of which 50 males and 50 females were selected .

Procedure:

Primary data was collected by survey method using “Adapted from the Self Report Altruism Scale”. Convenient

sampling was done to categorize the participants amongst the interpretations . All responses were

taken.

Measures:

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Adapted from the self -report altruism scale demographic information consisted of the

individuals’ name, age, gender.

Tool:

Adapted Self-Report Altruism Scale

Instrument is called as the Adapted from the Self-Report Altruism Scale (Rushton, 1981)

The Scale/Subscale Name is Adapted Self-Report Altruism Scale. The information is cited and

adapted by the CYFAR Life Skills Project, Youth Development. Initiated by the Texas A&M

University. The Developers are P. C. Rushton (original), Peter Witt and Chris Boleman (adapted

version). The year the original scale was published in 1981 (original), 2009 (adapted). Target

Audience(s) are the youth. The tool is available only in English. The original

instrument is widely used with adults and has a reliability of .84.

Description: This 14-item scale assesse

Psychometrics:

Information on reliability and validity are provided below. If information on a particular

psychometric was not found, it is indicated as “no information provided.” It should be

noted that this is not necessarily an indication of a lack of reliability or validity within a

particular scale/instrument, but rather a lack of rigorous testing, for various reasons, by

the developers or other researchers.

Reliability: A correlation of at least .80 is suggested for at least one type of reliability as

evidence; however, standards range from .5 to .9 depending on the intended use and

context for the instrument.

Internal Consistency: No information provided

Inter-rater reliability: No information provided

Test-Retest: No information provided

Validity: The extent to which a measure captures what it is intended to measure.

Content/Face Validity: No information provided

Criterion Validity: No information provided

Construct Validity: No information provided

Reference:

Rushton, P. C., R. (1981). The altruistic personality and the self-report altruism scale.

Personality and Individual Differences, 2(4), 293-302.

CONSTRUCT: Altruism

Scale Name: Adapted Version of the Self-Report Altruism Scale

Developers: P. C. Rushton (original), Peter Witt and Chris Boleman (adapted version)

Scale:

0=Never

1=Once

2=More than once

3=Often

4=Very often

Scoring:

 Sum all item ratings together.

 A higher score indicates greater altruism.

**Statistical Analysis**

The data was analyzed using Excel

 Independent Sample t test was used , to analyse the altruistic behavior data collected from

18 to 35 year olds

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 Interpretation between male and female participants

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Gender | Total raw score | Level of altruism |
| Altruism | Male | 986 | LOW |
|  | Female | 1439 | HIGH |

The study identified that female participants are high in altruism than male participants. It was an

expected hypothesis. Hence the above result also proves that being altruistic is going to improve

an individual‘s well-being. To break the myth of today‘s world, lacks well-being has been

broken. Taking into consideration to prove the point that ample NGO‘s have a great number of

youngsters who do their part to the society, they in turn gain a sense of self-satisfaction which

helps in their well-being. The altruistic nature has been a great personality trait in our current

generation of youngsters. They have come to terms with the fact that in helping each other there

can be a great increase of satisfaction in their day to day life. This in turn reflects in the general

well-being of an individual. We have learnt to thrive not only for ourselves but also for our

companions for a better life. Whether or not there are gender differences in altruistic behaviour

in Dictator Game experiments has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Earlier studies

found by (Pablo Brañas-Garza & Ericka Rascón Ramírez, 2018) women to be more altruistic

than men. However, this conclusion has been challenged by more recent accounts, which have

argued that gender differences in altruistic behaviour may be a peculiarity of student samples and

may not extend to other groups. It studied the gender differences in altruistic behavior and,

additionally, in expectations of altruistic behaviour, in a sample of Amazon Mechanical Turk

crowd workers living in the US. In Study 1, it reported a mega-analysis of more than 3, 500

observations and showed that women are significantly more altruistic than men. In Study 2, it

showed that both women and men expect women to be more altruistic than men. From table 1.1

it is very clear that females are high in altruism just ike how the study has explained. A study

by (Rosemary S. L. MillsJan PedersenJoan E. Grusec, 1989) examined sex differences in the

resolution of prosocial dilemmas involving self-sacrifice. Women and men between 17 and 68

years of age were presented with hypothetical situations necessitating a choice between self and

other, and asked to decide what they would choose to do. In addition, participants were asked

why they made the choices they did and how they felt about them. Participants usually made the

self-sacrificing choice, with no differences found between women and men in the distribution of

self and other choices. Choices were justified on the basis of the respondents' own needs or those

of the other person, conflict was minimized, or reasons were offered that involved stereotyped

statements, interpersonal concerns, empathy, internalized affects and values, or a judgment about

the capacity to help. Modes of reasoning differed somewhat between the sexes, with women

using more empathic reasoning than men with other choices, and attributed their self choices

more to minimal conflict and less to concern for the other's interests. There were also sex

differences in participants' self-reported feelings about the choices they made. Specifically, there

was evidence that women experienced more conflict than men about other choices and had more

positive feelings than men did about their self choices.

Table 1.2 TTEST tabulation of adapted self- report altruism scale

Mean scores and the level of significance of the variable

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | Standard deviation | tvalue |
| Altruism | Male | 50 | 19.72 | 5.45 | 0.00 |
|  | Female | 50 | 28.78 | 8.29 |  |

Independent sample ‗t‘ test was used to compare the differences between females and

males in all the variables. There is significant gender difference among young adults in Altruism

On that note there has been a clear and a definitive answer that, being altruistic solely depends on

an individual with regards to gender. Given the situation and the surroundings of a person, the

level of being altruistic can vary, but has something to do with being a particular gender. It is

a unique trait that will definitely differ from every individual. Thus the hypothesis stating "There

will be significant gender difference in Altruism.

Significance of the study :

From the present study it is evident that altruism contributes the most in an individual’s life.

Therefore being altruistic will improve the general well-being of an individual. When there is a

Great increase in the altruistic behavior of a community on the whole, it naturally helps each one

for a better and a prosperous life. And on a personal level, altruism will increase the credibility

of a person and give them a better perspective for any situation they are in.

Limitations and Suggestions

* A larger sample size can be used for a better replicability and generalization.
* The sample is limited only to Chennai. Better representation from various districts and states can be done

# References

Hunter, K. I., & Hunter, M. W. (1980). Psychosocial differences between elderly volunteers and non volunteers . *The Interntional Journal of Aging and Human Development*.

Pablo Brañas-Garza & Ericka Rascón Ramírez. (2018). Gender differences in altruism on Mechanical Turk: Expectations and actual behaviour. *Research gate* .

Rosemary S. L. MillsJan PedersenJoan E. Grusec. (1989). Sex differences in reasoning and emotion about altruism. *Sex roles : A journal of research* .

Steinberg, D. (2010). Altruism in medicine : its definition , nature and dilemmas . *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics.*