



Impact of Religious Orientation on Prosocial Behavior of Undergraduate University Students: Emotional Expressivity as Moderator

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study is to find out the impact of religious orientation on the prosocial behavior of undergraduate university students. The sample consisted of 528 undergraduate students (279 female, 249 male), who were purposefully selected with an age range of 17 to 24 years. Three scales were employed: the Religious Orientation Scale (Urdu) developed by Khan, Ghous, and Malik (2016), the Prosocial Tendency Measure (PTM-R) by Carlo and Randall (2002), and the emotional expressivity scale (Urdu) developed by Fahd and Hanif (2019). SPSS (22.0) is used to draw the results. This study provides important insights into the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior and highlights the role of emotional expressivity as a moderator in this relationship. The results suggest that individuals who are more religious and also score highly on emotional expressivity may be more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors. This has implications for understanding the mechanisms underlying the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior and may inform interventions aimed at promoting prosocial behavior.

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1. Introduction

Prosocial behavior is supportive behavior that may give benefit others without any explicit benefit for the act and indeed, might even lead to the risk for the act (Baron & Byrne, 2005). Prosocial behavior is usually affected by religiosity, empathy, responsibility, and genetic effect (D. G. Myers & Twenge, 2012). The prosocial behavior may occur as (i) event attention (ii) interpretation of an individual's event (iii) responsibility to action (iv) acquired skills, training to give help and skills, and (v) the helping decision. It is also associated positively with psychological improvement in adolescents i.e. warding off the invasion, decreasing the issues of mental health like depression as well as anxiety, and enhancing academic performance (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Haroz, Murray, Bolton, Betancourt, & Bass, 2013; Sebanc, 2003). Psychological research in prosocial behavior was initiated in the late 1950s leading to attention to why individuals offer to help or avoid help (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). The prosocial behavior's topic was initially introduced by psychologists after the case of the murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964 in New York, through which thirty-eight persons endorsed her death and nobody interfere or called for cooperation (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2017). The current situation leads to a sound degree of interest in the prosocial behavior area. Further, a more current accident in 2011 follows a similar approach, where an infant named "Wang Yue" had run over two vehicles and the eighteen crowds had not stopped to help the victim (Fischer-Lokou, Martin, Guéguen, & Lamy, 2011).

The prosocial behavior pattern might be treated as a tradition, family or personal value, convention, social need, and genetic effect but generally it is intrinsic. There are numerous witnesses which indicate that helping or prosocial behavior is present in animals and insects as well (Wilson, 2000). It may be regarded as a planned or managed action to help other people,

neglecting the motives of the helper. It affects sincere support that is wholly motivated by self-interest. The activities of prosociality are any planned or assisted action to help other individuals without any expectations in return (Afolabi, 2013). It also involves assistance as well as attention towards other individuals or affection (service, love, and loyalty) that has been given to others without the expectation to gain something else in return (D. Myers, 1994). The perfect kinds of prosocial behavior can be motivated by a selfless interest and altruism in helping the other person. The chances mostly to invoke altruism is empathy for a person in need, or a very close relation between recipient and benefactor (Santrock, 2007).

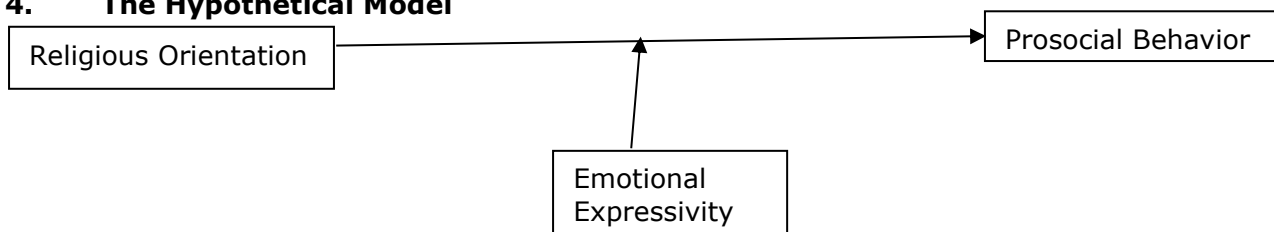
2. Relationships Between Religious Orientation and Prosocial Behavior

Religiosity has been accepted as a main factor of prosocial behavior and is described as participation and commitment in a structure of religious beliefs inclusive of practices or rituals explored in worship places (Zullig, Ward, & Horn, 2006). Religiosity also attributing to spirituality and beliefs and hence difficult design to explore the due to the fluctuation of how much various references are recognized separately (Idler et al., 2003). Basic research relies on prosocial behavior and religiosity have been assisted and it is uncertain still whether religion demonstrates prosocial affairs (Smith, 2013). Prosocial behavior development is also associated positively with the religion because values of religion focus on the liability to care and help for others (Colbert & Chan, 2020). The core values of all religions are the same for example, antiviolence, forgiveness, peace, and mutual help. All the religions in the universe teach peace and kindness. Islam taught us compassion, Christianity taught us to love, Buddha emphasizes simplicity and Confucianism focused on wisdom (Hanafi et al., 2021). Hence, the researchers have agreed that religion is a fundamental determinant for constructing adolescent prosocial behavior. Early childhood or the late teens is a transition period as well as the search for social identity. They have a strong passion to understand the worth of beliefs and values. Many researchers suggested that religiosity is crucial in the development of prosocial behavior in teenagers. People who accept sharia tend to survive adequately escape from premarital sex, avoid drugs and alcohol and are pleased to cooperate and help others (Palamar, Kiang, & Halkitis, 2014).

3. Current Study/Rationale of the Study

Studies on pro-social activities demonstrate that (i.e. activities deliberate to help people) have been an influential area of research for the past few years (Nt Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). It is considered essential that socially acceptable behaviors should be understandable, exceptionally some interventions which are currently accessible to the study of pro-social behaviors, especially in higher education students. Although some interventions do exist, they are usually defined by the conceptualization of pro-social behaviors as a universal concept. Nevertheless, researchers have demonstrated that there are various pro-social behavior types and that these kinds relate to logically related constructs in various ways (Batson, McCabe, Baun, & Wilson, 1998; Nt Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Staub, 1978). People's life has meaning because of religion (Baumeister, 1991). It is associated with a sense of well-being, upholds a clear definition of right and wrong, and aids those who have exhausted their resources (Pargament, 2002). It influences beliefs and actions on bias, assistance, integrity, sexuality, politics, and peace (Donahue & Nielsen, 2005). A variety of pro-social behavioral studies have been performed on children in elementary and secondary schools, while work on preschool children is becoming more common. Many researchers have considered the practice of faith, sharing, moral thinking, and religious experiences for promoting prosocial behavior as a broad range of actions that search for the advantages of one or many people. Further, there are many reasons to believe that people are concerned, trustworthy, and generous which shows their self-esteem (Hardy & Carlo 2005). Therefore, religiosity and self-esteem can be considered a predictor of prosocial behavior. So, this study relies specifically on the religiosity and self-esteem effects of the prosocial behavior of students. This psychological mechanism can hypothesize to enhance the prosocial behavior in newly entered university students.

4. The Hypothetical Model



5. Method

5.1. Participants

A total of 528 undergraduate students (279 female, and 249 male) were recruited from different universities in Punjab, Pakistan. The participants were between 17 to 25 years of age. The mean age was 20.56%, and the standard deviation of the age was 1.54. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were also informed that they could quit this survey whenever they wanted. The participants were selected based on the item ratio of the instruments. (Hair *et al.*, 2018).

5.2. Measures

5.2.1. Religious Orientation

Allport and Ross (1967) developed this scale 1967. It is a 14-item Likert-type scale. It is consisting of two subscales measuring an individual's orientation towards religion. Items range from 1 =strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree Kirkpatrick (1989) suggested subdivisions of extrinsic orientation, namely socially orientated extrinsic (Es), and personally oriented extrinsic (Ep). The reliability of intrinsic religious orientation was .83 and the reliability estimated for extrinsic personal/extrinsic social, extrinsic personal and extrinsic social were .65, .58, and .57 respectively. The scale is adapted and translated into Urdu by Khan *et al.* (2016).

5.2.2. Prosocial Tendency Measure

The measure of pro-social inclinations (Carlo & Randall, 2002). This measure consists of 23 items with scoring on a five-point scale (describes me well =5, Describes me well =4, Somewhat Describes me =3, Describes me a little =2, and does not describe me at all =1). The reliability of PTM is 0.60 (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

6. Result and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Undergraduate University Students (N=528)

Demographic	Features	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	249	47.2 %
	Female	279	58.8 %
Residence	Hostelize	440	83.3 %
	Day scholars	88	16.7 %
Year in the university	1 st	223	42.2 %
	2 nd	175	33.1 %
	3 rd	76	14.4 %
	4 th	54	10.2 %

Table No 1 shows the respondents' demographics including gender, residence, and year of study at the university. The results showed that 47.2% of the sample was female students and 58.8% were male students, most respondents were living in the hostels (83.3%), while 16.7% of the whole sample was day scholars. Most of the study sample belongs to the first year (42.2%) of study in the university.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of student's religiosity and prosocial behavior (N=528)

Variable		Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious Orientation	Intrinsic Religious Orientation	21.93	5.01
	Extrinsic Religious Orientation	33.97	5.5
Prosocial Tendency Measure	Public	13.96	3.9
	Emotion	16.05	2.7
	Altruistic	15.4	5.2
	Dire	11.92	2.4
	Complaint	8.21	1.5
	Anonymous	20.0	3.4

Table No 2 exhibits the mean and standard deviation of students' religiosity and prosocial behavior. The above results depict that the mean score of intrinsic religious orientation is low as compared to extrinsic motivation. That means that students are more prone to extrinsic religious motivation as compared to intrinsic religious motivation. Similarly, the prosocial tendency has

more in Anonymous, Emotion, Altruistic, Public, and Dire as compared to the complaint. That shows more prosocial behavior.

Table 3: Correlational Analysis of student’s religiosity and prosocial behavior (N=528)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
PBT	1									
D	.646**	1								
Com	.577**	.566**	1							
Alt	-.018	-.474**	-.314**	1						
Emo	.680**	.599*	.499**	-.376**	1					
Pub	.402**	.119**	-.014	-.284**	.110*	1				
Anon	.685**	.688**	.610**	-.473**	.619*	.085*	1			
RO	.377**	.307**	.320**	-.203**	.387**	.191**	.316**	1		
IRO	.348**	.361**	.353**	-.179**	.440**	-.048*	.388**	.833**	1	
ERO	.259**	.125**	.156**	-.149**	.174**	.381**	.111**	.784**	.316**	1

Note. PBT= prosocial behavior total, D= dire, com=complaint, alt= altruism, emo= emotional, pub= public, anon= anonymous, RO= religious orientation, IRO=intrinsic religious orientation, ERO=extrinsic religious orientation. *p<.05, **p<.01

Table No 3 depicts the association between religious orientation dimensions and prosocial behavior. Overall religious orientation was related at a moderate level with prosocial behavior (r= .37, p< .05). IRO and ERO were related significantly to prosocial behavior at a small but definite relationship level (r = .34, p< .05), and (r= .25, p< .05). These findings demonstrate all variables are correlated positively with prosocial behavior. Therefore, an increase in intrinsic religious orientation and extrinsic religious orientation will increase their prosocial behavior. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4 Correlational Analysis of student’s religiosity and prosocial behavior (N=528)

	R ²	R ² Change	β	T
Step1	.14	.14	.359	9.325**
Religious Orientation				
Step 2	.16	.02	.003	3.985**
Religious Orientation Emotional Expressivity				
F	86.96			
Df	1,526			
Sig	.000			
Durbin-Watson	2.04			

Notes: * p< .05

Table 4 shows the findings of emotional expressivity has a moderating effect on religious orientation and pro-social behaviour. An R² value of 0.16, which shows that 16% of changes in the religious orientation variable have a significant impact on pro-social behavior, is shown in the model summary table (R²>15). According to the results table, there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable and moderator at a significance level (p< .05).

By following the control of moderating variable, the inclusion of the independent variable, which is religious orientation, into the regression model predicted up to 2% of the additional variance (R squared change = 0.2) in the dependent variable. Therefore, adding emotional expressivity to a hierarchical multiple regression model has a significant on prosocial behavior (R²>.16). The Durbin-Watson value 2.04 falls within the permitted range of 1.50 ± 2.50, and the independence error assumptions are not broken. This shows that the presumption of independence of error terms is not violated.

Moreover, when moderating variables that are emotional expressivity and the independent variable that is religious orientation interact with each other, their results will be supposed significant [F (1,526) = 86.96, p<05]. Emotional expressivity (moderating variable)

beta value was also significant ($\beta = .003$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .05$) and it will consider the remarkable significant moderator between the independent variable and prosocial behavior. Religious orientation is a remarkably significant independent variable with a value of large beta ($\beta = .35$, $t = 9.325$, $p < .05$). Hence, this study's hierarchical multiple regression models:

$$\text{Prosocial behavior} = +.003\text{emotional expressivity} + .35 \text{ Religious orientations}$$

This study's findings revealed that the independent variable (religious orientation) has a remarkable impact on Results of this study showed that religious orientation has a significant impact on prosocial behaviors of students who are enrolled in an undergraduate program. The study's results demonstrate that Positive beta values are connected with higher levels of religious orientation and prosocial student conduct. Moreover, emotional expressivity which is moderating variable has higher effects on prosocial behaviors.

7. Discussion

The bond between religious orientation and prosocial behavior has been the subject of much research, with various studies exploring how religious beliefs and practices can influence an individual's behavior. The impact of religious orientation on prosocial behavior is particularly relevant for undergraduate university students, who are at a crucial stage of development and are forming their adult identities. In this context, understanding the role of emotional expressiveness as a moderator of the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior is crucial. Religious orientation has been widely studied as a predictor of prosocial behavior, with some research suggesting that more religious people tend to engage in more prosocial behaviors. However, the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior is complex and may be influenced by individual differences such as emotional expressivity. This study aimed to investigate the impact of religious orientation on the prosocial behavior of undergraduate university students and to explore whether emotional expressivity acted as a moderator in this relationship.

Studies have found that religious individuals tend to engage in more prosocial behaviors, such as volunteering and donating to charity, compared to those who are not religious (Hoge, 1972). However, other factors, such as emotional expressiveness, may also play a role in shaping prosocial behavior. Research suggests that emotional expressiveness, or the extent to which individuals express and experience emotions, can moderate the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior (Paloutzian & Park, 2014). The present study found that religious individuals, who are high in religiosity, also tend to show more prosocial behavior, and emotional expressiveness moderates the relationship between these two, among undergraduate university students. These findings are supported by empirical studies from the past (Cnaan et al., 2012).

The study used a sample of undergraduate university students and measured religious orientation using a standardized questionnaire, prosocial behavior using a self-report measure, and emotional expressivity using a standardized scale. Results showed that religious orientation was positively related to prosocial behavior and that emotional expressivity moderated this relationship. Specifically, the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior was stronger for individuals who scored high on emotional expressivity compared to those who scored low.

The results of this study are consistent with past research that shows the positive relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior (Nancy Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983; Underwood & Teresi, 2002), and the role of emotional expressivity as a moderator in this relationship (Nancy Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983). Therefore, more studies are necessary to replicate these findings and it will help to the applicability of these findings to the whole population.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of religious orientation on the prosocial behavior of undergraduate university students is likely to be influenced by several factors, including emotional expressiveness. Further research is needed to fully understand the complex relationship between religious orientation, emotional expressiveness, and prosocial behavior. Understanding this relationship can help individuals, educators, and policymakers to better

support the development of prosocial behavior in students and promote the well-being of the wider community. This study may also add to the existing literature on religious orientation and prosocial behavior, and highlights the importance of emotional expressivity as a moderator in this relationship.

Future Recommendations

The findings have future recommendations and implications for understanding the mechanisms underlying the relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior and may inform interventions aimed at promoting prosocial behavior. Moreover, it is recommended to future research add different dimensions to see the prosocial behaviors of the general population.

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