



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Prosocial behavior, empathy, type A and type B personality among college students

Subbiksha Ravikumar ^{1,*} and Cynthia Sara James ²

¹ *Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore, India.*

² *Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore, India.*

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 22(02), 336–341

Publication history: Received on 25 March 2024; revised on 04 May 2024; accepted on 06 May 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.22.2.1397>

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the relationship between Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality and to investigate significant differences in Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality between males and females. The sample selected for the study is young adults, age range from 18-25. A Convenient sampling method is used. Samples were collected from Bangalore and other cities in Tamilnadu. Data was collected from 242 college students both males and females. (100 males and 142 females) The mode of data collection was through online mode. In this study, the correlational research design is used. The tools used are the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA) developed by Caprara et al (2005), A/B Behavioral Pattern Scale (ABBPS) developed by Upinder Dhar and Manisha Jain (1983). The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire developed by Spreng et al (2009). The data was studied using Spearman correlation and the Mann-Whitney u test. The results show that Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A and Type B personality have a significant relationship with each other. Prosocial behavior and Empathy have significant differences in males and females. The conclusion is that individuals with Type B personality had higher Empathy than individuals with Type A personality.

Keywords: Prosocial behavior; Empathy; Type A personality; Type B personality

1. Introduction

Prosocial behavior involves voluntary acts such as helping, sharing, and offering emotional support to those in need. It is defined as "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another" (Eisenberg, 1986). Young children exhibit it the most, yet as people become older, its frequency and expression alter. Moral beliefs or self-serving reasons might lead to prosocial behavior. Altruism is a form of prosocial behavior driven by moral convictions and cares for the well-being of others. It is essential for creating deep connections and encouraging amicable exchanges between various social groupings. Prosocial conduct has wide-ranging effects on communities, nonprofit organizations, and people's well-being. Empathy, empathy, and perspective-taking are personal qualities that encourage prosocial behavior by enabling people to react with compassion and understanding. According to Colman (2015), empathy in psychology is broadly defined as the capacity to comprehend, feel, and accept the perspective of another person. Fletcher-Watson and Bird (2020) give a great summary of the difficulties in identifying and researching empathy. They contend that there are four steps involved in developing empathy, i) Recognizing and assessing an individual's emotional condition, ii) Understanding that emotional state correctly, iii) "Experiencing" the same feeling, and iv) Handling the feeling. Empathy can be experienced in three ways: affective empathy, somatic empathy, and cognitive empathy. Type A personalities exhibit aggressiveness, impatience, and a competitive drive for success, leading to fast-paced lifestyles and a focus on work. Type B personalities are laid back and easygoing, with less emphasis on success demands. The type A pattern has implications for task assignment and relationships in the workplace, which is why organizational psychologists are interested in it. The purpose of the study is to find the personality type that most frequently demonstrates prosocial behavior as well as the relationship between prosocial behaviors, empathy, and personality.

* Corresponding author: Subbiksha Ravikumar

A few research publications look at gender variations in prosocial behavior, empathy, and type A and B personality. Abdullah et al. (2020) explored how empathy influences gender variations in prosocial conduct in economic games, and discovered that common personality traits such as empathy lead to gender differences in prosocial behavior. Van der Graaff et al. (2017) explored gender differences in prosocial behavior development, finding that males maintained consistent levels until age 14 while females increased levels until age 16. Empathic concern is regularly linked to prosocial behavior, whereas perspective-taking has an indirect influence. Dedha and Sharma (2023) explored the gender disparities in prosocial behavior among college students. The findings showed substantial disparities between male and female students, with females having higher average scores.

Barrio et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between personality qualities and empathy. The findings indicate that while conscientiousness, energy, and openness do not highly correlate with empathy, friendliness does. Empathy and emotional stability are not correlated, and both boys and girls exhibit the same pattern. Kamas and Preston (2020) investigated the link between prosocial behavior, empathy, and personality variables among Saudi students. The findings indicate a relationship between empathy and personality traits, and that prosocial actions and greater empathy levels are correlated.

The few research papers discuss prosocial behavior and empathy. Leng et al. (2020) examined the association between prosocial behavior and empathy during the pandemic which was partially mediated by college student's sense of social duty. This shows that social responsibility may enhance college student's mental health and provide fresh perspectives on their mental well-being throughout the epidemic. Spataro et al. (2020) investigated Emotional states like anger, grief, or neutrality have a major impact on prosocial behavior. The results indicate that prosocial assistance is highly motivated by feelings as well as empathy. Xiao et al. (2021) examined prosocial behavior, empathy, and aggressiveness. The goal of the current cross-sectional study was to investigate the relationships, both direct and indirect. The findings demonstrate that, via fostering positive behavior, perspective-taking and empathetic care indirectly influence aggressiveness, with gender variations noted.

A few research publications look at gender variations in prosocial behavior, empathy, and type A and B personality. Abdullah et al. (2020) explored how empathy influences gender variations in prosocial conduct in economic games, and discovered that common personality traits such as empathy lead to gender differences in prosocial behavior. Van der Graaff et al. (2017) explored gender differences in prosocial behavior development, finding that males maintained consistent levels until age 14 while females increased levels until age 16. Empathic concern is regularly linked to prosocial behavior, whereas perspective-taking has an indirect influence. Dedha and Sharma (2023) explored the gender disparities in prosocial behavior among college students. The findings showed substantial disparities between male and female students, with females having higher average scores. Tariq and Naqvi (2020) investigated the link between personality traits and prosocial behavior in teens. The findings demonstrated that personality traits such as openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were positively associated with proactive behavior, but neuroticism was negatively associated. Agreeableness was the most effective predictor of prosocial behavior, whereas neuroticism was the poorest. According to the study, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness, all have substantial positive relationships with helpful conduct, but neuroticism has a negative correlation.

Abera (2021) investigated the link between emotional intelligence and prosocial conduct among university students. The study found a favorable relationship between emotional intelligence and prosocial conduct, but no association between emotional intelligence and academic performance. However, prosocial behavior has a negative and substantial effect on academic performance. Although there was not a significant gender disparity in emotional intelligence or prosocial conduct, male and female students fared considerably differently academically. The majority of students had high emotional intelligence, prosocial behavior, and academic achievement. Park and Shin (2017) explored how anonymous peer influence affects college students' prosocial behavior, especially when contributing money or engaging in social initiatives. This conclusion backs with prior studies on the beneficial effects of anonymous peers on prosocial conduct, which is a fundamental feature of personality but also extremely flexible and unstable in reaction to immediate events.

Siu et al. (2012) used a questionnaire to evaluate prosocial conduct among Chinese teens in Hong Kong. Some indicators suggested gender differences, but association studies demonstrated that the education of parents, prosocial rules, pragmatic principles, ethical reasoning, and empathy were all linked to prosocial behavior. According to regression research, prosocial norms, pragmatic values, and empathy dimensions are all relevant predictors of prosocial behavior. The study emphasizes the importance of values and norms in driving prosocial behavior, which has often been overlooked in previous research.

The current study's research gap is that few studies have combined Prosocial behavior, Empathy, and Types A and B personality. The study seeks to evaluate the association between Prosocial behavior, Empathy, and Type A and Type B personality. To study if there are substantial variations in Prosocial behavior between men and women. To study the substantial differences in personality types between men and women. The purpose of this study is to look at the substantial differences in Empathy between men and women, as well as the link between Prosocial behavior and Empathy in Types A and B personalities.

1.1. Hypothesis

- H₁: There will be a significant relationship between Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality.
- H₂: There will be significant differences in Prosocial behavior between males and females
- H₃: There will be significant differences in Type A and Type B personality between males and females.
- H₄: There will be significant differences in Empathy between males and females.
- H₅: There will be a significant relationship in Prosocial behavior and Empathy between Type A and Type B personality

2. Material and methods

2.1. Sample

The sample selected for the study is young adults, age range from 18-25. A convenient sampling method is used. Samples were collected from Bangalore and other cities in Tamilnadu. Data was collected from 242 college students both males and females. (100 males and 142 females) The mode of data collection was online mode.

2.2. Research Design

In this study, the correlational research design is used to find the relationship between Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality among males and females.

2.2.1. Tools

The Prosocialness scale for Adults (PSA) was developed by Caprara et al. (2005). Age range 18 to 92 years. The questionnaire contains 16 statements, and the scale is a 5-point Likert scale from Never to Always. The results of the reliability analysis show that the prosocial scale has good reliability. The internal consistency coefficient of the total scale was 0.890

The A/B Behavioral Pattern Scale (ABBPS) was developed by Upinder Dhar and Manisha Jain (1983). The questionnaire contains 17 statements in type A personality and 16 statements in type B personality. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale from Always agree to Always disagree. The results of the reliability analysis show that the scale has good reliability and validity.

The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire was developed by Spreng et al (2009). Age range 16+. The questionnaire contains 16 statements and the scale is a 5-point Likert scale from Never to Always. The results of the reliability analysis show that the scale has good reliability and validity.

2.2.2. Procedure

To collect data, the questionnaires were sent to the college students through online mode. Informed consent was collected from the participants, only after they accepted to participate they were able to fill out the questionnaires.

2.3. Ethical consideration

Students were provided with informed consent. The data was kept confidential, and students were allowed to withdraw if necessary. None of the individuals suffered physical or emotional harm.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Correlational research design, and independent sample t-test analyses were done through IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23.

3. Results and Discussion

The total participants were 242 young adults of which there were 100 males (41.32%) and 142 females (58.68%). The participants were college students and their mean age was 19.42 ± 1.55 (18-25) years. The participants were from Bangalore and various cities in Tamilnadu. The participants were from both nuclear and joint families of which 73.1% were from nuclear families and 26.5% were from joint families. Out of the 242 participants, firstborns were 43.8%, 39.2% were second born, 13.6% were single born, remaining 3% were third born and twins. The majority of individuals were firstborn. The participants were both undergraduate and postgraduate of which 85.9% were undergraduate students and 14% were postgraduate students. 36.78% were from the science stream, 7.85% were from the humanities stream, 50.82% were from the engineering stream, remaining 5% were from the arts and management stream.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

Variables	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Prosocial behavior	63.47	10.96	31	80
Empathy	38.13	7.36	25	63
Type A personality	59.75	10.88	17	85
Type B personality	57.83	8.75	31	80

The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to determine the normality of the data, and the findings indicated that it was not normally distributed. As a result, a nonparametric test was performed.

Table 2 Correlation between the variables

Variables	Prosocial behavior	Empathy	Type A personality	Type B personality
Prosocial behavior	-			
Empathy	0.178**	-		
Type A personality	0.219**	-0.241**	-	
Type B personality	0.307**	-0.152*	0.537**	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2 reveals the relationship between Prosocial Behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personalities. Prosocial behavior has a positive correlation with all three variables, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. Leng et al. (2020) conducted a prior study that supported the current findings by investigating the relationship between prosocial activity and empathy during the pandemic, which was largely mediated by college student's sense of social obligation. According to Jiang et al. (2021), the data show that neuroticism has a negative impact on OPB, but extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness have a positive effect.

Empathy is inversely connected with Type A and Type B personality but positively correlated with prosocial behavior, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. Previous research that contradicts the present conclusions includes the study by Barrio et al. (2004), which found that while conscientiousness, energy, and openness do not strongly connect with empathy, friendliness did. According to Kamas and Preston (2020), the findings show a link between empathy and personality characteristics, as well as a correlation between prosocial behavior and higher empathy levels. Van der Graaff et al. (2017) discovered that empathic concern is consistently connected with prosocial conduct, whereas perspective-taking has an indirect influence

Table 3 Gender differences in the variables

Variable	Logistic Parameter	n	Mean Rank	U	p
Prosocial behavior	Male	100	108.09	2.502	0.012*
	Female	142	130.94		
Empathy	Male	100	95.28	4.901	0.000***
	Female	142	139.97		
Type A personality	Male	100	125.31	-0.711	0.477
	Female	142	118.82		
Type B personality	Male	100	122.96	-0.272	0.786
	Female	142	121.48		

*p < .05, ***p < .001

Table 3 reveals the gender differences in Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality. Prosocial behavior and Empathy are positively associated in both males and females, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. Abdullah et al. (2020) discovered that shared personality traits and empathy lead to gender variations in prosocial behavior, which validates the current findings. According to Dedha and Sharma (2023), the findings indicated substantial disparities in prosocial behavior between male and female students, with females scoring higher on average. Males and females have identical Type A and Type B personalities, indicating that the null hypothesis may be accepted. The study applicable to Type A and Type B personalities could not be identified.

Table 4 Difference in Prosocial behavior and Empathy between Type A and Type B personality

Variable	Logistic Parameter	n	Mean Rank	U	p
Prosocial behavior	Type A	153	117.62	1.131	0.258
	Type B	89	128.17		
Empathy	Type A	153	108.63	3.76	0.000***
	Type B	89	143.62		

***p<.001

Table 4 reveals the differences in Prosocial behavior and Empathy between Type A and Type B personalities in men and women. Prosocial behavior does not differ significantly across Type A and Type B personalities, indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted. Empathy varies greatly between individuals with Type A and Type B personalities. Individuals with Type B personality have a higher level of empathy than Type A personality individuals. The relevant research studies for the present results could not be identified.

4. Conclusion

The present study helps to understand the Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A, and Type B personality among college students. From the analyses it is clear that Prosocial behavior, Empathy, Type A and Type B personality have a significant relationship with each other. Prosocial behavior and Empathy have significant differences in males and females. Some previous research studies support the results. Results showed that individuals with Type B personality had higher Empathy than individuals with Type A personality. The limitations of the present study are that the data was collected through online mode where there might be random responses.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The author is sincerely grateful to all the students who participated in the study. The author is extremely grateful to her guide, Ms. Cynthia Sara James, for her patient guidance throughout the study. The author extends her heartfelt thanks

to the chairman of the college, who helped in data collection. The author is extremely thankful to her family and friends for their support.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors, Subbiksha Ravikumar and Cynthia Sara James, declare no conflict of interests.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

References

- [1] Abdullah, A. A., Hamsan, H. H., & Ma'rof, A. A. (2020). How do personality factors associate with prosocial behavior? the mediating role of empathy. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(16). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i16/8303>
- [2] Afolabi, O. A. (2013). Roles of personality types, emotional intelligence and gender differences on prosocial behavior. *Psychological Thought*, 6(1), 124–139. <https://doi.org/10.5964/psyc.v6i1.53>
- [3] Barrio, V. del, Aluja, A., & García, L. F. (2004). Relationship between empathy and the big five personality traits in a sample of Spanish adolescents. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 32(7), 677–681. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2004.32.7.677>
- [4] Colman, A. M. (2015). *A dictionary of psychology*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- [5] Dedha, N., & Sharma, Dr. R. (2023). *Prosocial behavior among college students: Gender ...* [ijcrt.org. https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2305740.pdf](https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2305740.pdf)
- [6] Eisenberg, N., & Shell, R. (1986). Prosocial moral judgment and behavior in children. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 12(4), 426–433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167286124005>
- [7] Fletcher-Watson, S., & Bird, G. (2020). Autism and empathy: What are the real links?. *Autism*, 24(1), 3-6.
- [8] Getahun Abera, W. (2021). Emotional intelligence and pro-social behavior as predictors of academic achievement among university students. *Community Health Equity Research & Policy*, 43(4), 431–441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272684x211033447>
- [9] Jiang, Y., Yao, Y., Zhu, X., & Wang, S. (2021). The influence of college students' empathy on prosocial behavior in the COVID-19 pandemic: The mediating role of social responsibility. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.782246>
- [10] Kamas, L., & Preston, A. (2020). *Empathy, Gender, and Prosocial Behavior*. *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*, 101654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2020.101654>
- [11] Leng, J., Guo, Q., Ma, B., Zhang, S., & Sun, P. (2020). Bridging personality and online prosocial behavior: The roles of empathy, moral identity, and social self-efficacy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.575053>
- [12] Park, S., & Shin, J. (2017). The influence of anonymous peers on Prosocial Behavior. *PLOS ONE*, 12(10). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185521>
- [13] Siu, A. M., Shek, D. T., & Lai, F. H. (2012). Predictors of prosocial behavior among Chinese high school students in Hong Kong. *The Scientific World Journal*, 2012, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1100/2012/489156>
- [14] Spataro, P., Calabrò, M., & Longobardi, E. (2020). Prosocial behavior mediates the relation between empathy and aggression in primary school children. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 17(5), 727–745. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2020.1731467>
- [15] Tariq, F. T., & Naqvi, I. (2020). Relationship between personality traits and prosocial behavior among adolescents. *Found. Univ. J. Psychol*, 4, 54-63.
- [16] Van der Graaff, J., Carlo, G., Crocetti, E., Koot, H. M., & Branje, S. (2017). Prosocial behavior in adolescence: Gender differences in development and links with empathy. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47(5), 1086–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0786-1>
- [17] Xiao, W., Lin, X., Li, X., Xu, X., Guo, H., Sun, B., & Jiang, H. (2021). The influence of emotion and empathy on decisions to help others. *SAGE Open*, 11(2), 215824402110145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211014513>