

Investigation of Gender Differences towards Pro-social Behavior of University Students

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Abstract:

Background: Pro-social behavior plays very important role in the society. This study investigated the gender differences toward pro-social behavior of university students. Different gender has different ways to help others. Students are more attentive to take part in pro-social activities.

Materials and Methods: The approach of this research was quantitative in nature and a cross-sectional research design was used in this study. Sample of 300 university students (including 150 males and 150 females) was selected from different universities of Lahore through random sampling technique. A standardized instrument pro-social personality battery was used to gather data. It consisted on 7 dimensions of pro-social behavior including empathic concern, social responsibility, personal distress, perspective taking, mutual concern moral reasoning, other oriented moral reasoning and altruism. The demographic information of the students was also collected.

Results: Results indicated that majority of male respondents does not completely participate in pro-social activities and helping behaviors, but few of them are humble and like to take part in helping activities. Males are slightly less pro-social than females. Majority of the females perform well and fully participate in pro-social activities and like to take part in helping activities because they are more empathetic and mostly help others emotionally and morally while males habitually prefer to do daring actions such as to save one's life. There was insignificant gender difference on seven dimensions of pro social behavior.

Conclusion: It was concluded that there is insignificant gender difference towards pro-social behavior of university students.

Key Words: Pro-social behavior; helping behavior; altruism; university students.

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I. Introduction

Pro-social behavior is an individual's planned act to provide support and assistance to anyone without any benefit or greediness. It is seen in different scenarios that individuals mostly help those who are somehow connected to them¹. Considerable studies show that pro-social behaviors are controlled and conscious conducts proposed for helping someone². Individual dissimilarities are one of the vital and critical determinants of pro-social behavior among people; as they have different traits of personality. Similarly, gender is another factor responsible for pro social behavior³. A study was conducted on effects of emotional intelligence, personality traits and gender differences on pro social behavior of Nigerian people. This directed an important association of these variables with pro social behavior⁴. Insignificant gender difference was found with social adjustments and relationships of people⁵. There has been debate on gender differences in pro social behavior of people as in a study females were found to be more pro social and motivated as compared to males⁶ whereas another important study indicated totally contradictory findings as no connections between gender and pro social behavior⁷. Different researches on pro social behaviors of university students are conducted in different cultures and regions but in Pakistan this phenomenon is still unexplored so this research was conducted to address this gap in literature by investigating gender differences towards pro-social behavior in Pakistani population.

II. Material And Methods

Study Design: The approach of this research was quantitative in nature and a cross-sectional study design was used.

Study Location: The data was collected from four different universities of Lahore, Pakistan namely; Lahore College for Women University, University of Central Punjab, Government College University and University of Punjab.

Study Duration: December 2020 to June 2021.

Sample size: 300 university students (including 150 males and 150 females) were selected by using random sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria:

1. The inclusion criterion of this research was primarily students from the undergraduate program as they are socially active and can help others or take part in social activities.
2. Those students who were from 20 years to 25 years of age were included in this research.
3. Unmarried students were included in this study.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Post graduate students were excluded.
2. Married students were excluded.
3. Students with disabilities were excluded.

Instruments for data collection

A standardized instrument pro-social personality battery was used to gather data. It was developed by Penner (1995). It is consisted on 30 items which are related to 7 dimensions of pro-social behavior including empathic concern, social responsibility, personal distress, perspective taking, mutual concern moral reasoning, other oriented moral reasoning and altruism. The demographic information of the students was also collected.

Procedure methodology

Researchers personally went to the selected institutions one by one. Permission was obtained from higher authorities then after approval of ethical committees research protocol was started. Researchers personally distributed the questionnaires among respondents. Data was collected from both males and females. Respondents filled the informed consent form and questionnaire. Their participation was voluntary and data was used only for research purpose. Their individual identities were not exposed while considering the ethics of research.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed through SPSS. Descriptive and inferential both statistics were applied.

III. Result

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of pro-social behavior among university students. It indicates that majority of male respondents does not completely participate in pro-social activities and helping behaviors, but few of them are humble and like to take part in helping activities. Males are slightly less pro-social than females. Majority of the females perform well and fully participate in pro-social activities and like to take part in helping activities because they are somehow more empathetic and mostly help others emotionally and morally while males habitually prefer to do daring actions such as to safe one's life.

Table no 1: Percentage distribution of pro-social behavior of university students.

Sr.	Statements	Gender	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1	When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well.	Male	5.5%	26%	0.2%	57.5%	6.8%
		Female	7.1%	14.3%	16.7%	54.8%	7.1%
2	I would feel less bothered about leaving litter in a dirty park than in a clean one.	Male	0.0%	34.2%	0.5%	56.5%	0.3%
		Female	23.8%	35.7%	9.5%	16.7%	14.3%
3	No matter what a person has done to us, there is no excuse for taking advantage of them.	Male	0.5%	35.7%	6.8%	53.4%	0.2%
		Female	0.3%	26.2%	33.3%	5.5%	21.4%
4	With the pressure for grades and the widespread cheating in school nowadays, the individual who cheats occasionally is not really as much at fault.	Male	0.7%	35.7%	26.2%	31%	0.3%
		Female	19.2%	37%	0.2%	38.4%	5.5%
5	It does not make much sense to be very concerned about how we act when we are sick and feeling miserable.	Male	0.2%	31.5%	0.6%	53.4%	8.2%

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		Female	0.3%	33.3%	21.5%	35.7%	7.1%
6	If I broke a machine through mishandling, I would feel less guilty if it was already damaged before I used it.	Male	0.5%	26.2%	11.9%	54.8%	0.2%
		Female	0.5%	34.2%	8.2%	50.7%	16.7%
7	When you have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everybody's best interest.	Male	0.6%	23.8%	26.2%	33.3%	11.9%
		Female	1.5%	34%	9.6%	52%	0.2%
8	I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other persons" point of view.	Male	5.5%	32.9%	2.3%	56.2%	0.0%
		Female	0.6%	31%	7.1%	53.4%	7.1%
9	When I see someone being take advantage of, I feel kind of being protective towards them.	Male	6.8%	31.5%	3.4%	54.8%	1.7%
		Female	0.0%	7.1%	14.3%	71.4%	6.8%
10	I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	Male	0.3%	28.8%	9.6%	58.9%	0.0%
		Female	3.8%	19%	9.5%	45.2%	23.8%
11	Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.	Male	8.2%	49.3%	0.2%	42.3%	0.8%
		Female	5.5%	35.7%	11.9%	40.5%	7.1%
12	If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.	Male	0.2%	23.3%	0.5%	64.4%	8.2%
		Female	7.1%	26.2%	9.5%	33.3%	23.8%
13	When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.	Male	0.5%	28.8%	6.8%	57.5%	3.5%
		Female	14.3%	38.1%	14.3%	26.2%	7.1%
14	I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.	Male	0.2%	20.5%	0.2%	68.5%	6.8%
		Female	5.5%	23.8%	35.7%	26.5%	9.5%
15	I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.	Male	5.5%	24.7%	6.5%	56.5%	8.2%
		Female	0.3%	11.9%	14.3%	54.8%	16.7%
16	I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look them both.	Male	0.0%	23.9%	0.5%	62%	11.3%
		Female	0.5%	6.8%	16.7%	45.2%	31%
17	I tend to lose control during emergencies.	Male	8.2%	35.2%	5.5%	42.5%	5.8%
		Female	9.5%	26%	21.4%	38.1%	7.1%
18	When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in their shoes" for a while.	Male	0.5%	41.1%	9.6%	45.2%	0.2%
		Female	0.7%	35.7%	23.8%	31%	7.1%
19	When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I got to pieces.	Male	0.2%	17.8%	8.2%	72.6%	0.0%
		Female	2.5%	14.3%	50.4%	11.9%	21%

20	My decisions are usually based on my concern for other people.	Male	0.3%	28.5%	5.5%	55.6%	6.8%
		Female	7.1%	32.4%	16.7%	52.4%	8.8%
21	My decisions are usually based on what is the most fair and just way to act.	Male	0.7%	30.6%	0.5%	58.8%	7.1%
		Female	7.1%	30%	14.3%	64.3%	7.1%
22	I choose alternatives that are intended to meet everybody needs.	Male	5.5%	31.5%	7.8%	49.3%	11%
		Female	0.5%	7.5%	26.2%	61.9%	9.5%
23	I choose a course of action that maximize the help other people receives.	Male	0.2%	19.2%	6.8%	64.4%	9.6%
		Female	0.6%	9.5%	16.7%	31%	11.9%
24	I choose a course of action that considers the right of all people involved.	Male	2.5%	0.5%	6.9%	59%	6.7%
		Female	0.5%	9.5%	16%	65.5%	12.4%
25	My decisions are usually based on concern with welfare of others.	Male	3.5%	34.2%	6.5%	50.7%	8.2%
		Female	8.9%	7.1%	21.3%	69.9%	9.5%
26	I have helped carry a stranger's belonging.	Male	0.5%	45.2%	15.1%	9.6%	2.5%
		Female	5.2%	9.1%	26.5%	42.9%	21.4%
27	I have allowed someone to go ahead of me in a line.	Male	28.5%	35.6%	16.4%	17.8%	0.5%
		Female	28.6%	38.1%	9.5%	19%	6.8%
28	I have let a neighbor whom I didn't know too well borrow an item of some value.	Male	23.5%	27.5%	12%	17.8%	0.5%
		Female	19%	16.7%	21.4%	35.7%	8.7%
29	I have before being asked, voluntary look after a neighbor's pet or children without being paid for it.	Male	43.8%	23%	13.7%	13.7%	7.1%
		Female	47.6%	11.9%	11.9%	16.7%	14.5%
30	I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street.	Male	27.6%	37%	15.1%	20.5%	5.5%
		Female	16.2%	31%	10.5%	23.8%	17.5%

Table 2 shows that females are somehow more pro-social than males in different dimensions of pro social behavior. It indicates that women are slightly more supportive rather than men. Females are somehow more likely to help others as compared to males. There was insignificant gender difference on seven dimensions of pro social behaviors.

Table no 2: Mean SD and t value of pro-social behavior dimensions among respondents

Pro-social behavior dimensions	Male		Female		p value	t value
	Mean	SD	Means	SD		
Social responsibility	20.93	6.19	24.73	7.27	0.27	1.25
Empathy concern	11.91	3.89	12.62	4.01	0.38	1.02
Perspective taking	14.93	4.89	16.07	5.06	0.53	-0.58
Personal distress	8.68	2.55	8.83	2.64	0.64	-2.06
Mutual oriented moral reasoning	9.04	2.59	9.51	2.60	0.31	2.97
Other oriented moral reasoning	8.89	2.74	9.86	2.58	0.17	-1.29
Self-reported altruism	12.33	5.28	13.33	5.72	0.76	-0.38
Significant at 0.05 level						

IV. Discussion

This study focused on the way one's ability of helping other can affect relations to their society. The result of this study suggests that males and females are both almost equal in most of the pro-social behavior dimensions. There was insignificant gender difference on pro social behaviors. These findings are consistent with results of previous studies done in different cultures^{5,7} which indicated that gender is not likely to be the predictor of pro-social behavior. The findings of this study contradict with a study conducted in Nigeria which indicated effects of gender on pro social behavior of people⁴. The present study opposes the results of a previous study on gender and pro sociality⁸. Another study found that gender differences exist in pro social behavior of people⁹ which is not in line of this study. This study contributes to the literature as its results support the previous study which indicated no significant gender differences in pro social behavior of common public¹⁰. This study can be re conducted with larger sample size while comparing people from different cultural background to find out more accurate and varied results.

V. Conclusion

It was concluded that there is insignificant gender difference towards pro-social behavior of university students. This study was effective in pointing the importance of pro-social behavior, empathy, social responsibility, perspective thinking and moral reasoning when it comes to determining different behavior which varies from person to person.

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