

PSYCHOSOCIAL PREDICTORS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG A SAMPLE OF NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES

Olukayode Ayooluwa Afolabi, PhD
Department of Pure & Applied Psychology,
Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Only few psychological researches have actually investigated prosocial behavior among Youths in Nigeria. The other ones have been among children and the aged. Thus, this research looked at the roles of psychosocial factors (religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion, family type, type of residence, rural/urban and cultural/ethnic differences) on prosocial behavior among undergraduates. The study makes use of cross-sectional survey design that employed a well designed questionnaire with 5 sections. Data was gathered from 440 students from 2 Nigerian Universities. Of the sample, 230 (52.3%) are males and 210 (47.7%) are females with their ages ranging from 19-27years. Results of the 4 hypotheses tested revealed that there were significant relationships among the variables of study. Besides their significant individual contributions to prosocial behavior, religiosity also mediated the relationships between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior. It was also found that respondents residing in a village are more prosocial than those in a city. Lastly, cultural/ethnic differences significantly influence prosocial behavior. The findings were discussed and recommendations made.

Keywords: Prosocial behavior, religiosity, social exclusion, life satisfaction, cultural/ethnic differences, students, Nigeria

Introduction

Prosocial behavior, or "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another", consists of actions which "benefit other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering. It can also be referred to as a broad category of behaviours that includes any action that provides benefit to others like following rules in a game, being honest and cooperating with others in social situations. These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others,

as well as for egoistic or practical concerns (Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2006).

Prosocial behavior is a conducted or planned action to help other people, disregarding the helper's motives. It involves sincere assistance (altruism) which is entirely motivated by self-interest. Prosocial activities are any conducted or planned action to help other people without expecting anything in return (Afolabi, 2013). Prosocial activities involve attention and assistance towards other people, or devotion (love, loyalty, service) which are given to other people without any expectation to get something in return (Myers, 1996).

The purest forms of prosocial behavior might be motivated by altruism, an unselfish interest in helping another person. According to Sanstock (2007), the circumstances most likely to evoke altruism are empathy for an individual in need, or a close relationship between the benefactor and the recipient.

This paper applies principles from social exchange theory (Skinner, 1957) to prosocial behavior and argues that much of what we do stems from the desire to maximize our rewards and minimize our costs. The theory is based on self-interest and it assumes that self-interest has no genetic basis. Helping can be rewarding in three ways: it can increase the probability that someone will help us in return in the future; it can relieve the personal distress of the bystander; and it can gain us social approval and increased self-worth. Helping can also be costly; thus it decreases when costs are high. Social exchange theory presumes that people help only when the rewards outweigh the costs. Thus social exchange theory presumes that there is no pure altruism.

Religiosity and Prosocial behavior

Religion can be defined as a system of beliefs with certain rituals, practices, which are learned and demonstrated in places of worship. Religion differs from spirituality in that spirituality is considered as a way of living which predetermines how individuals respond to life experiences. One need not engage in any formal religious activities to be spiritual, and spirituality can be used as a flexible and more general term. In addition, while religion may be an expression of spirituality, it is not guaranteed that all religious people are spiritual (Zullig, Ward, and Horn, 2006).

Religious people are thought to be more prosocial than nonreligious people. Laboratory studies of this using ultimatum, dictator, public goods and trust games have produced mixed results, which could be due to lack of context. Grossman and Parrett (2011) examined the relationship between religion and prosocial behaviour 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. Their findings reveal no evidence of religious prosociality.

There has been considerable research into the question of whether or not high levels of religiosity are linked with “prosocial” behaviors such as volunteering, charitable giving and helping others through one’s employment. Olver (2012) quoted a study by a DePaul University Scholar in 2011 that examined how religious values and the ideas and language that accompany them can motivate prosocial behaviors. As the author notes, many prior psychological studies “find only moderate correlations between religiosity and helping.” The author concluded that “while quantitative studies have found that subjective religiosity was not as strong a predictor of [pro-social] helping, the paper suggests that this finding may be explained by inadequate measures of subjective religiosity.”

Hardy and Carlo (2005) examined the hypothesis that religiosity would be differentially related to six types of adolescent prosocial behavior, and that these relations would be mediated by the prosocial value of kindness. Religiosity was a significant positive predictor of kindness, as well as compliant, anonymous and altruistic prosocial behavior, but not public, dire and emotional prosocial behavior. Associations between religiosity and both compliant and altruistic prosocial behaviors were mediated by kindness.

Saroglou, Pichon, Trompette, Verschueren and Dernelle (2005) concluded that an “*important discrepancy seems to exist between self-reports and laboratory studies regarding prosociality among religious people*”. They suggested that this involves moral hypocrisy on the part of religious people. Bonner, Koven, and Patrick (2003) also found that both religiosity and general spirituality are positively correlated with prosocial behavior. They suggested that this was because people’s spiritual or religious beliefs help them feel more personally fulfilled and worthy, leading them to participate in activities that heighten their levels of self-actualization, including prosocial behavior.

Rural/Urban differences and Prosocial Behaviour

Rural/Urban differences or, location differences show that where a person lives, either rural or urban; will have a bearing on whether or not a person will be helped. Therefore, it is believed that people living in urban environments are less likely to help than those in rural communities. This can be simplified as; someone living in a larger city or town might feel a diffusion of responsibility, feeling as though they do not need to help nor do they have the responsibility to help.

It is believed that positive social behavior would indeed be superlinear, in part to offset the less desirable elements of a city, such as

crime. Brian (2011) reported that prosocial behaviors “do not obey a clear pattern.” People in cities aren’t more likely to vote or to donate a living organ, though they’re much more likely to give a deceased organ or a political contribution. Taken together, these positive behaviors do not scale the same way that innovation and economic growth typically scale within cities (Hajati, Pudjibudojo & Judiarso, 2009). Korte and Ayvalioglu (1981) investigated differences between people in two cities and four small towns in Turkey. They assessed helpfulness, such as willingness to change money or participate in a short interview. It was found that helpfulness was higher for people in small towns than for people in large cities. In 1975, Korte and Kerr in their study, observed that strangers were being helped more often in rural than in urban environments. This was also confirmed by House and Wolf (1978) when they analysed the refusal rates of survey participation in some samples of the United States. The refusal rates were higher in large cities than in small towns.

Geographic location or residence tends to influence people’s behavior of caring and sharing due to their social interactions. For instance, rural residents are more likely to help or share due to the fact that they have been used to live cohesively as opposed to urban residents who are more disintegrated (Cook, 2012).

People in rural areas are more helpful. This effect holds over a wide variety of ways of helping and in many countries. One explanation is that people from rural settings are brought up to be more neighborly and more likely to trust strangers. People living in cities are likely to keep to themselves in order to avoid being overloaded by all the stimulation they receive. This is because where an accident occurs, it can influence helping more than where potential helpers were born, and that population density is a more potent determinant of helping than is population size (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2010).

In summary, “the modern metropolis, after all, can be an unpleasant, expensive and dangerous place. It’s full of rush hour traffic and panhandlers, overpriced apartments and feisty cockroaches. The air is dirty, there is litter in the streets and the public schools are falling apart. In other words, urban life isn’t easy. Individuals cram themselves together, but all the cramming comes with a cost. This means that people don’t just become more productive and innovative in metropolitan areas – they’re also more likely to get shot and mugged. This is a tradeoff that every city dweller understands. They take the good with the bad. Other people make us smarter, but they also make us sick” (Lehrer, 2011).

Cultural/Ethnic differences and Prosocial behavior

Cultural differences may influence prosocial behavior in that a person is likely to help, donate or generally extend a positive gesture to a person based on cultural affiliation. The behavior is more or less collectivist than individualistic as based in the culture. In addition, some cultures (e.g. children in the Israeli kibbutz community are more cooperative and helpful than American and European children) have an inherent perspective on prosocial behavior while others lack the initiative to help, care, and share or comfort (Cook, 2012). Also, collectivist indigenous societies, such as Polynesian societies have also been found to be more pro-social than Western societies. Some individuals socialized to help around the house. For example, children from Kenya, Mexico and Phillipines socialized to help in family chores. These same children, according to Donaldson (2006) scored highest in helpful behaviours. For less serious situations, U.S. viewed helping more as a matter of choice whereas Indians saw helping as a moral responsibility.

Cultural differences, in relation to pro-social behaviour, are expressed differently between individualistic and collectivistic societies. For instance, someone living in the U.S. is least likely to help someone in need than someone living in Australia, India or Kenya. Cultural differences can be explained by different socialization practices that determine an individual's motive for pro-social behaviour. Miller, Bersoff and Harwood (1990) suggested that collectivist cultures, e.g. Hindu's, have a duty-based view of interpersonal responsibilities, and individualist cultures like the US have an option-orientated view. Hindus assume a general obligation to help others, while Americans perceive helping behaviours being dependent on the nature of the relationship or the level of need.

Some evidence suggests that children in Western societies are less prosocial than children in other cultures, but some studies find no differences along these lines (see review by Eisenberg, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006). A field study by Levine, Norenzayan, and Philbrick (2001) found large cultural differences in spontaneously helping strangers. For example, the proportion of individuals helping a stranger with a hurt leg pick up dropped magazines ranged from 22 percent to 95 percent across 23 cultures. Although national wealth was negatively associated with helping rates, the closely related cultural value of individualism-collectivism (individualism is on average higher in richer countries) was not related (Anonymous, 2012). People in collectivist cultures may draw a firmer line between in-groups and out-groups and be more likely to help in-group members and less likely to help out-group members, than people from individualistic cultures, who have an independent view of the self. The same way, *Simpatía* in Latino and Hispanic cultures have a range of friendly social and emotional traits. Levine

et al. (2001) found that people in cultures that value *simpatía* were more likely to help in a variety of nonemergency helping situations (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2010).

Life Satisfaction and Prosocial Behaviour

Research has shown that prosocial behavior is positively correlated with satisfaction with life. Hunter and Lin (1981) found that retirees over the age of 65 who are prosocial were more satisfied with life, and were less depressed and had low anxiety. The same way Martin and Huebner (2007) found that a higher rate of prosocial interactions was linked to greater life satisfaction and prosocial acts for middle school students

Caprara and Steca in 2005 tested the posited structural path of influence through which perceived self-efficacy of affect regulation operates in concert with perceived interpersonal self-efficacy to determine prosocial behavior, which in turn influences satisfaction with life in four age groups. A strong sense of efficacy in the regulation of positive and negative affect was associated with a high perceived efficacy in the management of social relationships and in empathic engagement in others' emotional experiences. Interpersonal self-efficacy directly affected prosocial behavior and entirely mediated the influence of affective self-efficacy on it. As predicted, prosocial behavior directly influenced life satisfaction, showing a higher path of influence for the oldest group as compared to the other ones.

Anderson (2009) in his study concluded that satisfaction with life did not account for any of the variance of prosocial behavior. This suggests that those who demonstrate prosocial behavior are not significantly motivated to do so because of life satisfaction, but as a result of other factors. Perhaps prosocial behavior is too complex and too broad to be significantly accounted for by satisfaction with life.

Prosocial behavior and satisfaction with life were also found to be unrelated. Perhaps this finding can be explained by the study by Gebauer, Riketta, Broemer and Maio (2008). These researchers found that in order for prosocial behavior to positively relate to life satisfaction, the behavior needed to have pleasure based motivation, not pressure based motivation. Pleasure based prosocial behavior is motivated by personal interest, whereas pressure based prosocial behavior is motivated by external factors, such as guilt or praise.

Perceived Social Exclusion and Prosocial Behaviour

Researchers have found that social exclusion decreases the likelihood of prosocial behavior occurring. In a series of seven experiments conducted by Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco & Bartels (2007), the researchers manipulated social inclusion or exclusion by telling research participants that

other participants had purposefully excluded them, or that they would probably end up alone later in life. They found that this preliminary social exclusion caused prosocial behavior to drop significantly. In another study by Balliet (2008) across three studies– a scenario (Study 1), experimental (Study 2), and field study on adults (Study 3) – they found support for the hypothesis that individuals who are less (versus more) oriented towards future outcomes engage in less prosocial behaviors with others who have ostracized them during prior interactions. Thus, when one considers prior research on ostracism, it highlights the fact that social exclusion is painful and decreases well-being (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; MacDonald & Leary, 2005). For example, several studies have shown that individuals who are ostracized from a game of ball toss report lower levels of belonging, control, self esteem, and meaningful existence, regardless of disposition (Zadro, Boland, & Richardson, 2006) and prosocial behavior (Afolabi, 2013).

Correlational research has linked social rejection with decreased prosocial behavior, although it is unclear which one is the cause of the other. Numerous correlational studies have found that children who are rejected by their peers act less prosocially than do others (e.g., Gest, Graham-Bermann, & Hartup, 2001; Wentzel & McNamara, 1999). Thus, prosocial actions are expected to correlate with social acceptance, so also, close relationships and prosocial behaviour goes together (Twenge, et. al, 2007). Other studies have also found that children who are rejected by their peers act less prosocially than do others (e.g., Gest, Graham-Bermann, & Hartup, 2001; Wentzel & McNamara, 1999). Therefore, social exclusion may impair some inner responses that are needed for prosocial behavior. This is because according to DeWall & Baumeister (2006) who work with human participants confirmed that exclusion causes a reduction in sensitivity to pain and a lack of emotional responses.

Researches on the relevance of prosocial behavior have been among children and the aged. Only few of these have actually investigated prosocial behavior among youths, especially in Nigeria. Despite considerable empirical support for the importance of prosocial behavior among youths, a dearth of empirical exploration of prosocial behavior subsists. The incidence of prosocial behavior among youths and challenges thereof remains unclear.

The review of literature and the theoretical proposition guiding the present work suggest that religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion, family type, type of residence, rural/urban and cultural/ethnic differences are likely to be predictive of prosocial behaviour among Nigerian youths. Under this circumstance, central research questions arise: are the youths involved in prosocial behavior? What are their perceptions of prosocial behavior as an important aspect of social life? Do youths

experience difficulties or barriers in their pursuit of prosocial behavior? These constitute the research questions of the present study.

The present study therefore explores prosocial behavior among youths from different places of residence with cultural/ethnic differences and different family types in two Nigerian Universities. The study is justified in the chosen setting because of a complete lack of empirical information on prosocial behavior among youths in any Nigerian University. It will also serve as a baseline for further action. The current study is an attempt to address these short-comings and facilitate the effective utilization of prosocial behavior by providing a context-specific database.

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There would be significant correlation between the exogenous and endogenous variables of study
2. Religiosity would mediate relationship between the psychological variables of life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behaviour.
3. Place of residence would have significant influence on prosocial behavior.
4. Cultural/ethnic differences would have a significant influence on prosocial behavior.

Method

Design

The design for this study is the cross-sectional survey with five exogenous (predictor) variables and one endogenous variable. The five exogenous variables include religiosity, rural/urban and cultural differences, life satisfaction and social exclusion. The endogenous variable is prosocial behavior.

Setting

The setting for the present study includes the University of Lagos, Lagos (UNILAG) and the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, (AAUA) Ondo State, both in Nigeria. UNILAG was founded in 1962 and it comprised of nine Faculties and a College of Medicine. The Faculties offer a total of 117 programmes in Arts, Social Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Pharmacy, Law, Engineering, Sciences, Business Administration and Education. UNILAG also offers Master's and Doctorate degrees in most of the aforementioned programmes. The UNILAG is situated in Lagos, the most populous city in Nigeria. It is also Nigeria's commercial capital. Officially, Lagos is the second fastest growing city in Africa and the seventh fastest in the world. With a growth rate of 3.2%, the state today has a population of over 21 Million (Ibirogba, Lagos State Commissioner for

Information in 2011). This qualifies the University as being located in a City.

The AAUA on the other hand, is located at Akungba-Akoko, Ondo state, Nigeria. Akungba has an estimated population of about 27, 627. This location is **about 282km from Lagos**. (AAUA website, 2013). At present, AAUA has a little over 10,000 students in five Faculties – Arts, Education, Law, Science, and Social and Management Sciences(AAUAwebsite,2013).

Participants/Sample

Of the 440 participants who took part in this study (those who returned their questionnaires for analyses), 240 were from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria. These represent 10 undergraduate students randomly selected from each of the 4 levels of study (i.e. year 1 to 4) in the Departments of Economics, Geography and Planning, Mass Communication, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. This implies that 40 students from each of the 6 Departments were selected. These respondents represent those leaving in the City. The same method was employed among the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Social Sciences of AAU, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, where 200 students were selected. They comprised of 40 students each from the Departments of Economics, Geography and Regional Planning, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. These represent those leaving in the village. The students in the Faculty of Social Sciences were selected because of their training in the prediction and modification of human behavior. The demographic variables of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information

Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender (n = 440)	
Males	230 (52.3%)
Females	210 (47.7%)
Level of Education (n = 440)	
First year	110 (25%)
Second Year	110 (25%)
Third Year	110 (25%)
Fourth Year	110 (25%)
Religious Affiliation (n = 440)	
Christianity	210 (47.5%)
Islam	135 (30.7%)
Traditional Worshippers	95 (21.8%)
Family Background (n = 440)	
Monogamous Family	247 (56.2%)
Polygamous Family	193 (43.8%)
Type of Residence (n = 440)	
Duplex	89 (20.2%)
Flat	95 (21.6%)
Self-contained	111 (25.2%)
Family Home	145 (33%)
Place of Residence (n = 440)	
City	240 (54.5%)
Village	200 (46.5%)
Cultural/Ethnic differences (n= 440)	
Hausa	70 (15.9%)
Igbo	135 (30.7%)
Yoruba	215 (48.8%)
Others (Minority group)	20 (4.5%)

Measures

The instruments used to gather information is a questionnaire comprising of sections A to E. Section A tapped information on demographic variables concerning age, sex, religion, educational level, type (duplex, self-contained, flats etc) and place of residence (rural or urban), cultural/ethnic affiliation, and marital status.

Section B contained a *12-item prosocial behavior scale* developed by Afolabi (2013) for the purpose of this study. The development of the scale

evolved from texts and the review of literature. Following a thorough review of related literature, the items for the scale were derived from theories and features of helping people. Sample items include: I enjoy helping others, I feel fulfilled whenever I have helped somebody in need of assistance, etc. The scale has coefficient alpha of 0.81, test re-test reliability of 0.77 and a split half reliability of 0.72 among Nigerian undergraduates.

Section C contained *religiosity scale*. The scale has three factors/composites which includes religious salience or commitment; religious activity or involvement; and religious identity. In line with this, a composite was created using 7 items that seem to jointly tap these three areas of religiosity ($\alpha = .84$). One item (How important is religion in your life?) was based on Likert format from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), and two items (How often do you go to church? How often do you attend church related activities (such as youth activities) other than worship services?) utilized a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (more than once a week). The remaining four items (I am a spiritual person; I practice my religion; My faith never deserts me during hard times; My faith makes me who I am) used a scale from 1 (very much unlike me) to 5 (very much like me). These last four items were taken from the *spirituality* subscale of Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The composite was created by averaging across all items. The scale was found to have a Cronbach alpha reliability of .81 and test re-test reliability of .79.

Section D contained *satisfaction with life scale (SWLS)* by Diener, Emmons, Larson and Griffin (1985). This is a 5-item measure that was used to evaluate each participant's cognitive judgments of satisfaction with his or her life (e.g. "In most ways my life is close to ideal" and "The conditions of my life are excellent"). Participants responded to each question of the SWLS using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= "Strongly Disagree"; 7= "Strongly Agree"). Afolabi (2010) reported a reliability of .79 among Policemen. For the present study, a test re-test reliability of .88 was established.

Section E contained *perceived social exclusion scale*: This is a 4-item scale developed and used by Layte, Maitre and Whelan (2010). Items on the scale include "I feel left out of society", "Life has become so complicated", "I don't feel that the value of what I do is recognized by others", "Some people look down on me because of my family background". Item 4 was reworded to capture the student sample used. Each item was responded to on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree - 5 to strongly disagree -1. A test-re-test reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained in this study.

Scoring: All the scale items were scored in a manner that a high score reflects a high presence of the construct in question. Likert scoring format was used for all the scales.

Ethical Issues

Confidentiality was provided by writing on the research instrument instructing respondents not to identify themselves in anyway so as to guarantee their anonymity. The participants were also informed that the exercise was for research/academic purposes only, and that the results of the research would not be released in any individually identifiable way. No participant was forced to take part and those that were not willing were not forced. They were also informed that they will not be at any disadvantage if they do not take part in the research. Apart from these, they were told that there are no anticipated physical, psychological or social discomforts associated with the research.

Procedure

The data for the research was collected at the AAU, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, and the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Nigeria. Trained Research Assistants (researcher's final year students who just completed their final year research projects) were employed and encouraged to interact with the student leaders in each of the classes. The copies of the well designed questionnaire were then administered to the randomly selected samples with the assistance of their class leaders.

Following informed consent, and willingness to take part in the research, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the carefully and randomly selected students in each of the Departments. In this case, it was designed in such a way that at least 10 copies of the questionnaire were administered to undergraduates in each of the levels 100 to 400 (that is, year 1 to 4). Those who could not complete and submit the study instrument immediately were encouraged to return same to the researcher as soon as they were through the following day. Those who were too eager and those that were reluctant to take part were excluded. Eventually, it took the researcher about 7days to retrieve the copies of the questionnaire back from the participants. Out of the 450 copies of the questionnaire administered, 440 copies were completed, returned and found useful for analyses. This is a response rate of approximately 97.8%.

The participants did not receive any remuneration for participating in the study. These schools were chosen because they fit into the Village and City settings respectively as required by the research design.

Data Analysis

The study employed Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson, r), regression/path analysis, independent t-test and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). For the direction and magnitude of the relationships between the variables of study, multiple regression/path analysis was used to

determine if the exogenous variables predict prosocial behavior intention among the sample and to show if religiosity mediates the relationship between the variables. Independent t-test and the one way ANOVA were used to determine if any difference(s) exist between place of residence and cultural/ethnic affiliation on prosocial behavior.

Results

Here, scores for all the variables of study were statistically tested. From the results presented in Table 2, it shows that the data met the normality assumption thus, confirming the first hypothesis.

Table 2: Correlations among Variables of the Study (n = 440)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Prosocial Behaviour	1					
2. Religiosity	.31**	1				
3. Life Satisfaction	.39**	-0.43**	1			
4. Perceived Social Exclusion	-.48**	-.13*	.003	1		
5. Age	.06	.18*	-.21*	.006	1	
6. Gender	.41**	.35**	-0.01	.15*	-0.03	1
Mean	33.41	21.12	19.02	12.10		
SD	7.51	9.78	6.62	2.65		
Range	48.00	28.00	30.00	16.00		

**p< .001

*p< .05

The results showed that each of the three psychological variables is significantly related to students' prosocial behavior. It reveals significant relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior ($r = .31$; $p < .001$), life satisfaction ($r = .39$; $p < .001$) and perceived social exclusion ($r = -.48$; $p < .001$). It implied that a high level of correlation exist between these variables. Therefore, highly religious individuals and those who scored high on life satisfaction would be more prosocial than those who scored low on religiosity and life satisfaction. On the other hand, the negative relationship between perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior indicated that individuals with high social exclusion perception will not be willing to render help. By this, it means the higher the social exclusion perception, the lower the prosocial tendency.

Hypothesis two states that religiosity will mediate relationships between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior. The basic causal chain involved in the mediating role of religiosity is presented in figure 1.

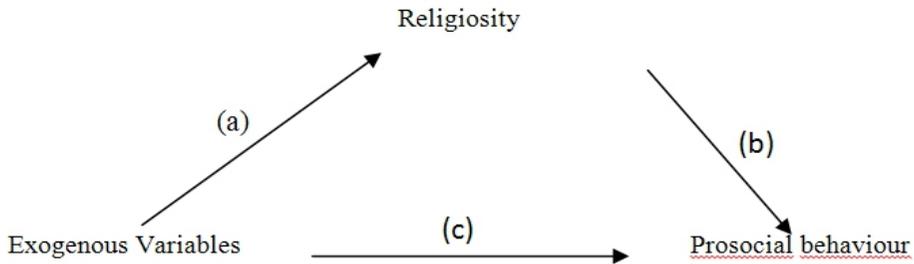


Figure 1: Mediation role of religiosity

Figure 1 assumes a three-variable system such that there is a direct path of the exogenous variables (of life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion) on religiosity (path a), a direct path of the exogenous variables to prosocial behaviour (path c) and an indirect path of the exogenous variables to prosocial behaviour through the impact of the mediator variable – religiosity (path b).

To test for the mediating role of religiosity, three regression equations were estimated (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, religiosity was regressed on the exogenous variables (presented in Table 3). Second, the endogenous variable was regressed on the exogenous variables (presented in Table 4). Third, the endogenous variable was regressed on both exogenous variables and religiosity (presented in Table 5). These three regression equations provide the test of the linkage of the mediation model.

To establish mediation, two major conditions were satisfied. First, the independent variables affect both the mediator in the first equation and the dependent variable in the second equation. Secondly, the mediator affects the dependent variable in the third equation. These conditions were established and confirmed by Afolabi (2004), Okurame (2002) and Baron & Kenny (1986) and all hold in the predicted direction.

TABLE 3: Equation 1: Regressing religiosity (mediator variable) on the exogenous variables

Exogenous Variables	Religiosity	
	B	R ²
Life satisfaction	.29**	a .34**
Perceived social exclusion	-.38**	

a for the variables within the regression model **p < .01

TABLE 4: Equation 2: Regressing the endogenous variable on the exogenous variables

Exogenous Variables	Prosocial behavior	
	B	R ²
Life satisfaction	.31**	a .39**
Perceived social exclusion	-.27**	

a for the variables within the regression model **p < .01

TABLE 5: Equation 3: Regressing the endogenous variable on both the mediator and exogenous variables

Exogenous Variables and the Mediator	Prosocial behavior	
	β	R^2
Life satisfaction	.24**	a .45**
Perceived social exclusion	-.23**	
Religiosity	.38**	

a for all variables within the regression model * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Results of equation 1 in Table 3 showed that the exogenous variables have significant causal influence on the mediator variable (religiosity) ($R^2 = .34$; $F(2, 438) = 5.09$, $P < .01$). Results of equation 2 presented in Table 4, also show that the exogenous variables have significant causal influence on the endogenous variable (prosocial behaviour), with $R^2 = .39$; $F(2, 438) = 4.98$, $P < .01$. Results of equation 3 presented in Table 5 in addition revealed that both the exogenous and mediator variables have significant causal influence on the endogenous variable (prosocial behaviour) with ($R^2 = .45$; $F(2, 438) = 10.7$; $P < .01$). Results of equations 1, 2 and 3 presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 respectively satisfy the three conditions required for a mediation role to be established for religiosity. This causal chain involved in the mediating role of religiosity is diagrammed in figure 2.

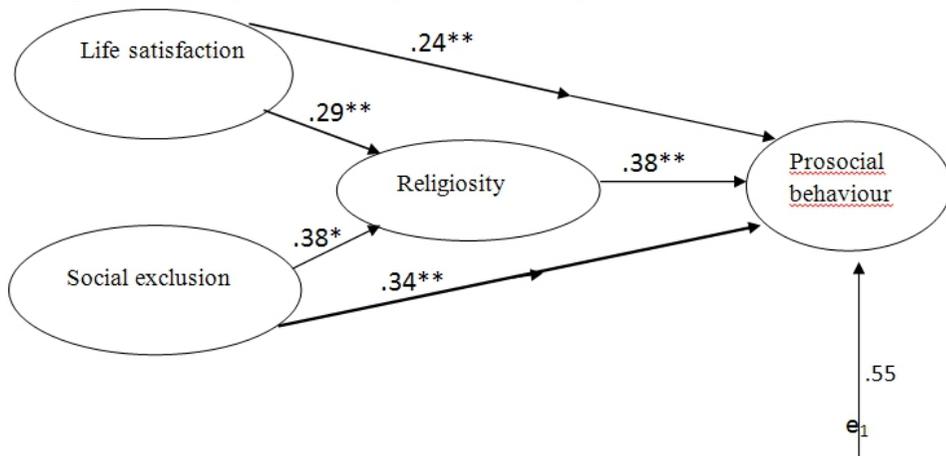


Figure 2: Mediation role of religiosity between life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion on prosocial behaviour

Specifically, the proportion of variance in the endogenous variable of prosocial behaviour in equation 3 showed an increase over that in equation 2. When the endogenous variables were regressed on the exogenous variables with the exclusion of the mediator variable in equation 2, the proportion of variance accounted for in prosocial behaviour was 39%. However, when the endogenous variable was regressed on both the exogenous and mediator

variables, the proportion of variance accounted for in the endogenous variable of prosocial behaviour was 45%. This confirms the mediation role played by religiosity between life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion on one hand and prosocial behaviour on the other. Similarly, a careful examination of the path (beta) coefficients in equation 3 revealed that a direct significant path exist from each of the exogenous variables of life satisfaction, ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) and perceived social exclusion ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .01$) to the endogenous variable of prosocial behavior.

Religiosity therefore, seems to be a mediator between the exogenous variables of life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion and the endogenous variable of prosocial behaviour. The conclusion from the path analysis therefore, is that a direct path from the endogenous variables of life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion to the endogenous variable of prosocial behaviour is plausible. Results of equation 3, importantly too, revealed that the paths between religiosity and prosocial behaviour ($\beta = .38$; $P < .01$) are significant. Thus, religiosity accounted for a significant proportion of variance (38%) in prosocial behaviour.

The regression and path analyses carried out in testing hypothesis 2 is aimed at estimating the significance of the conceptual framework and to find out the extent to which the hypothesis is supported by the findings of this study. The path analysis of the model illustrating the mediating role of religiosity between life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion on one hand and prosocial behaviour on the other is presented in figure 2.

It is important here to state that the variations in the endogenous variable not explained or accounted for by causal variables in the model were estimated. This is in line with the position of Howitt and Cramer (1997). As such a vertical arrow pointing towards prosocial behaviour (as shown in figure 2) indicate unexplained variance in prosocial behaviour. The e stands for error (sometimes called residual), a term used in path analysis to describe the variance that remains to be explained (Howitt & Cramer, 1997). The error path coefficient is the square root of the proportion of unexplained variance in prosocial behaviour. Figure 2 shows that the proportion of unexplained variance in prosocial behaviour was 55%. Therefore, the error path coefficient for prosocial behaviour is the square root of .55 ($\sqrt{0.55}$) which gives 0.74.

Table 6: Summary of t-test showing the influence of place of residence on prosocial behavior

Place of Residence	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
Village	200	43.61	4.66	438	2.615	< .005
City	240	38.24	5.21			

Table 6 shows the results of hypothesis 3 which stated that place of residence would have significant influence on prosocial behavior of undergraduate students. The result shows that there was a significant influence of place of residence on prosocial behavior ($t = 2.615$; $df = 438$; $p < .005$). As shown on Table 7, the results showed that undergraduates living in the village, like Akungba, (with a mean score of 43.61) are more prosocial than those living in the city, like Lagos, (with a mean score of 38.24).

Table 7: Showing the means and standard deviation of scores in prosocial behavior

Variables	Mean	SD	N
Type of residence			
Duplex	31.22	4.23	89
Flat	35.01	3.67	95
Self-contained	36.17	2.44	111
Family home	47.56	5.21	145
Place of residence			
City	38.24	5.21	240
Village	43.61	4.66	200
Religion			
Christians	38.71	6.44	210
Muslims	30.21	4.39	135
Traditional religions	33.11	5.98	95
Family type			
Polygamy	27.01	6.76	193
Monogamy	33.17	4.97	247
Cultural/ethnic differences			
Hausa	33.33	7.23	70
Igbo	41.92	6.12	135
Yoruba	48.76	5.33	215
Others (Minority group)	38.89	6.91	20

Table 7 showed the mean scores of respondents on prosocial behavior based on their groups. Here we can see at a glance that respondents residing in a family house have a higher mean score (47.56) than others while those staying in duplexes have the least mean score (31.22) on prosocial behavior. Also, those residing in the village have a higher mean score (43.61) than those residing in the city with a mean score of 38.24. Based on religiosity, Christians have the highest mean score (38.71) on prosocial behavior, this is closely followed by the traditional religions with a mean score of 33.11 while Muslims have a mean score of 30.21. Also, respondents from monogamous family have a higher mean score (33.17) than those from polygamous family with a mean score of 27.01. Finally, of the ethnic groups who took part in the study, the Yorubas have the highest mean score (48.76) on prosocial behavior, Igbos scored 41.92, Minority groups scored 38.89 while the Hausas had a mean score of 33.33.

Table 8: Showing the effect of cultural/ethnic differences on Prosocial behavior

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Total	3070.70	439	-----		
Between	441.62	3	147.20	24.41	< .001
Within	2629.08	436	6.03		

Results of hypothesis 4 shows that cultural/ethnic differences have a significant influence on prosocial behavior { $F(3, 436) = 24.41; p < .001$ }. Further analysis showed that of the four ethnic groups studied, Yorubas scored highest on prosocial behavior with mean score of 48.76. This is followed by Igbos with a mean score of 41.92, minority groups with a mean score of 38.89 and lastly Hausas with a mean score of 33.33 (see table 8).

Discussion

The first hypothesis which predicted that there would be significant correlation between the psychological variables of study was confirmed. This is because there was a significant correlation between religiosity and prosocial behavior. This implies that religious individuals are more prosocial than those that were less religious. One can then say that the more religious the person is, the more prosocial the person would be. There was also a significant correlation between life satisfaction and prosocial behavior among the sample. This has earlier been substantiated by Hunter and Lin (1981) who found that individuals who volunteered to assist others were more satisfied with life and were less depressed with low anxiety. This is also in line with the conclusions made by Martin & Huebner (2007) that a higher rate of prosocial interaction was linked to greater life satisfaction and prosocial acts for middle school students.

Also, the relationship between perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior was significant. Though the relationship was negative, it showed that for those who scored high on social exclusion are highly antisocial. This can be explained by the fact that they already perceived themselves as socially excluded individual. Thus, they do not see any reason to be of assistance to anyone.

The second hypothesis which predicted that religiosity would mediate the relationships between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior was confirmed. First it was confirmed that the exogenous variables have significant relationships with prosocial behavior. Secondly, the mediator analysis suggests that they also have indirect relationships with prosocial behavior through their relationship with religiosity. This shows that individuals with high levels of life satisfaction and perceived social exclusion are more likely to help others in need, which in turn enhances prosocial behavior.

It is important to note that the path analysis results also revealed that religiosity fulfilled conditions specified by Baron and Kenny (1986) for mediation in a structural model. The three regression equations specifically revealed that the proportion of variance in prosocial behavior was boosted by 6%. This is an indication that religiosity is a mediator in the relationship between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior. This is in line with the argument of Harrell (2012) that religion increases prosocial behavior but that results are equivocal. This result also found support in the work of Hardy & Carlo (2005) which found a significant positive predictor of kindness as well as compliant anonymous and altruistic prosocial behavior with religiosity. From this, it can be suggested that this was as a result of people's spiritual or religious beliefs which help them feel more personally fulfilled and worthy. This then lead them to participate in activities that heighten their levels of self-actualization including prosocial behavior.

This pattern of result confirmed the argument of Saslow, et.al (2012) including that of Cook (2012) that religiosity is a vital interceding factor for prosocial behavior. The confirmation of the mediator role of religiosity in this study implies that individuals high on these three psychological variables will have a better level of prosocial behavior. This conclusion suggests that if University authorities, psychologists, sociologists, guidance/counselors, behavior experts, etc are keen in making the future leaders (the youths) more helpful and kind to others, greater focus will have to be placed on the psychological traits of life satisfaction and social exclusion. This is because these have been shown to be causally related to the prosocial behavior of some Nigerian undergraduates. On the other hand, individuals can also achieve prosocial behavior without religiosity. This view is supported by the findings of previous studies (i.e. Afolabi, 2013; Eisenberger et. al, 2003). This is because existing literature suggests that religiosity may affect individual's level of prosocial behavior. Bonner et.al, (2003) and Hunter and Lin (1981) concluded that life satisfaction is one of the best predictors of kindness, particularly of measures associated with prosocial behavior.

Apart from this, the contributions of social exclusion and life satisfaction were also significant. The total contribution made by perceived social exclusion is 23% though, negative. One cannot be surprised about this result. This is because an individual who perceived that he is socially excluded from the scheme of things around him/her is expected to be anti-social not prosocial. One reason is because of unequal access to the labour market and poor living conditions will negatively affect social participation and social contact. This will in turn impact on the quality of life which leads to social exclusion. According to Twenge, et.al, (2007), social exclusion decreases the likelihood of prosocial behavior occurring. This finding is in

line with that of Gest et al. (2001) who found that individuals who are rejected by their peers act less prosocially than do others. So also Wentzel and McNamara (1999) concluded that prosocial actions are expected to correlate with social acceptance and prosocial behavior. On the other hand, the total contribution of life satisfaction to prosocial behavior is 24%. This is in line with the findings of Zadro et. al (2006) that individuals who are ostracized from a youth activity report lower levels of belonging, control, self esteem, and meaningful existence, including prosocial behavior (Afolabi, 2013). The same result was established by DeWall and Baumeister (2006).

The third hypothesis which predicted that place of residence would have significant influence on prosocial behavior was supported. It implied that undergraduates living in the village (like Akungba) were more prosocial than those living in the city (like Lagos). This can happen because people living in urban environments are less likely to help than those in rural communities. In cities, normally, there is diffusion of responsibility and thus they do not see any reason to help. Also, subjects with fewer numbers of family members, tend to be more prosocial than those with higher number of family members staying together. This finding is in line with the work of Cook (2012) who opined that geographic location or residence tends to influence people's behavior of caring and sharing due to their social interactions. He concluded that rural residents are more likely to help or share due to the fact that they have been used to live cohesively as opposed to urban residents who are more disintegrated. Cities certainly are a challenge to evolutionary explanations of altruism (fellow feeling) which are largely based on consanguinity. In cities, people are forced to work closely with and have fellow feeling for people who in all likelihood are not closely related.

The same way, Hajati, Pudjibudojo & Judiarso (2009) showed that there is a positive correlation between the rate of density and crowding producing low prosocial behavior among flat residents. Moreso, the modern metropolis can be unpleasant, expensive and dangerous. It is full of rush hour traffic and panhandlers, overpriced apartments and feisty cockroaches.

The fourth hypothesis which stated that cultural/ethnic differences would have a significant influence on prosocial behavior was also confirmed. This showed that there are differences in the prosocial behavior of undergraduates based on their ethnic differences. Thus, cultural differences actually influence prosocial behavior in that a person is likely to help, donate or extend positive gesture to a person based on cultural affiliation. According to Cook (2012), some cultures have an inherent perspective on prosocial behavior while others lack the initiative to help, care, share or comfort. Similarly, cultural differences, in relation to prosocial behavior are expressed

differently between individualistic and collectivist societies. For example, someone living in the US is least likely to help someone in need than someone living in Australia, India or Kenya. According to a review by Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad in 2006, some evidence suggests that children in Western societies are less prosocial than children in other cultures. This conclusion also found support in the work of Levine, Norenzayan and Philbrick (2001) which found large cultural differences in spontaneously helping strangers.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study implicate prosocial behavior as beneficial in many ways. First prosocial behavior impacts various social behaviors, promotes well being, and allows people to express themselves through helping others. Besides, it shows that religious undergraduates are more prosocial than the less religious students. It further concluded that the Christians are more prosocial than either Muslims or Traditional religious worshippers based on their mean scores on prosocial behavior. Also, those that are highly satisfied with their life are more involved in prosocial activities. Type of residence too, was found to be an important factor in prosocial behavior. This is because those staying in family homes were found to be more assisting than those either in flats, duplex and self-contained apartments. It was also found that students from monogamous family tend to be more prosocial than those from the polygamous families. However, those students who perceived that they are socially excluded from the scheme of things around them were found to be less prosocial. Another implication here is the finding that students who reside in the village are more prosocial than those residing in the cities. Prosocial behaviour requires the opportunity and desire to cooperate and consider the needs of others. In cities there is also more dependence on people and institutions that are strangers and not always benevolent. Lastly, the findings here, hold both theoretical and practical implications for social/personality experts, guidance/counselor, teachers, therapists, consultants, etc in Nigerian Universities.

Limitation of Study, Conclusion and Recommendations

It is imperative to state here that even though the present study provides important clues for future researches, it is not free from limitations. Firstly, this study suffers from the common limitations of survey research that uses retrospective, self-reported measures. The most important problem with regard to surveys is that they are subject to social desirability bias. Respondents may not be able to recall very accurately the amount of helping behaviours they participated in over the years and so they tend to give a more

positive answer. Secondly, the research is limited in its generalizability because the participants were selected from just two Institutions located in the same geo-political (South-West) zone in Nigeria. Compared to the number of students in Nigeria's over 54 Universities, this sample size of 440 is grossly inadequate. Thirdly, some of the instruments used to tap information on the variables were designed in the Western world and has not been used before now in Nigeria. This might have affected the results of the research.

Therefore, future researches should try and consider experimental study of prosocial behavior while increasing the number of participants by using more Universities from other geo-political zones in Nigeria. Besides these, future researches should therefore, examine the patterns of PSBs in normative samples. It should also investigate the roles of self esteem, self concept, including the effects of mood, environment, residential mobility, spirituality, narcissism, and bystander effect on PSB. In conclusion, it has been established that religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion, place and type of residence, cultural/ethnic differences and family type, all influence prosocial behaviour among some Nigerian undergraduates. Most importantly, this research has established that religiosity has the capability to mediate the relationships between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behavior. A new discovery indeed.

Generally, it is recommended that Universities should give their students an opportunity to work collaboratively in small groups and participate in activities designed to promote social understanding. There should also be opportunities for training designed to teach social problem-solving skills and to reduce peer rejection. Effective cognitive-behavioral therapy should also be put in place to increase prosociality in students with severe antisocial behavior.

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