

# Prosociality Among College Students in Sabah, Malaysia: An Empirical Study

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the prosociality among 91 college students in Sabah, Malaysia, who completed the 16-item Prosociality Scale online. Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed no significant differences in students' prosociality by way of age and ethnicity, while Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant differences in terms of gender. Additionally, Wilcoxon signed rank test, which was conducted to determine the level of significance of each prosociality item by using a hypothesized value of 3.5, showed that all items were significant at  $p < .001$ . Moreover, the overall mean of students' prosociality was 67.4, indicating that their prosociality was of average level. In light of the findings, some recommendations were made on how to improve college students' prosociality.

**Keywords:** college students, Malaysia, prosocial behavior, prosociality, Sabah.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Definition of prosociality

Prosociality, marked by a concern for the feelings, rights, and welfare of others, include assisting, consoling, sharing, and collaborating. Individuals characterized by prosociality are altruistic and helpful; hence, they often experience more positive feelings toward themselves and the environment, while gaining greater social support that enables them to better face obstacles and challenges. Additionally, prosociality often positively impacts general wellness, which reduces loneliness, substance abuse, depression, and other forms of negativity. Lastly, it has stress-reducing effects; by engaging in prosocial behaviors, such as, lending a kind ear to others, individuals can also better curb the adverse emotional impact of undesirable events themselves (Cherry, 2022).

Additionally, prosociality encompasses culturally and socially appropriate behaviors associated with effective interpersonal communication, such as helping, donating, sharing, and comforting (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkens, & Spinrad, 2015; Hou, *et al.*, 2024). It not only benefits the general community, but also positively impacts the physical and mental wellbeing of both the givers and recipients (El-Khodary & Samara, 2019; Lott *et al.*, 2020). For college and university students, demonstrating prosociality often enables them to attain greater academic achievement, life satisfaction, social adaptability, and a competitive advantage (Bian & Wu, 2023).

### B. Context of the study

Similar to the aforementioned researchers, Bergin and Prewett (2020) posited that prosociality education encompasses consoling, complimenting, and assisting others; therefore, it promotes favorable interpersonal relationships by fostering inclusivity, consensus, sharing, and caring. Further, educational institutions that instil prosociality can augment culturally and socially acceptable behavior among students, while helping them raise their intellectual performance. In other words,

students surrounded by prosocial peers tend to earn higher test scores compared to those learning in a less altruistic environment. By interacting more often with prosocial others, they will also become more empathetic and considerate in the long run. Additionally, prosociality education can help reduce the discipline and achievement gaps that are often associated with students with low socioeconomic status and disadvantaged backgrounds. While it is not a panacea for resolving social injustices, prosociality can provide students at-risk with a more favorable academic setting. Additionally, Bergin and Prewett (2020) reiterated that prosociality is advantageous because it promotes positivity and academic engagement. Helping others with schoolwork often enables students to develop effective interpersonal communication skills and knowledge acquisition. Additionally, non-academic prosociality (kindness, altruism, and empathy), for example, tidying a bookshelf, cleaning the blackboard, watering the indoor plants, or showing new students around the campus, can promote positive learning outcomes because it results in more positive feelings, social acceptance, and academic engagement.

As aforementioned, prosociality often fosters positive emotions, social acceptance, and academic engagement. First, prosocial students not only display, but also promote positive emotions because they often act as cheerful individuals who are willing to render assistance to others, motivate others to learn, and open themselves to novel experiences, while actively participating in academic and extracurricular activities. Besides, students who experience positive emotions often tend to become more creative, diligent, and perseverant in the face of obstacles. Second, prosociality promotes social acceptance; students who feel supported, liked, included, and welcomed, are more motivated to participate in the classroom and beyond. Since they have more favorable interactions with others, they are also able to establish healthier friendships, which are often associated with academic achievement, test scores, motivation, and wellbeing. Third, prosociality often increases academic engagement among students; students who feel cared for have a greater tendency to complete academic tasks, pursue independent work, stay on task, follow rules and regulations, and take calculated risks, all of which enhance positive attitudes toward learning (Bergin & Prewett, 2020).

### C. Significance of the study

Malaysia ranks 20<sup>th</sup> out of 142 countries on the World Giving Index 2024, which reflects global prosociality based on generosity, charity, and volunteering (BMS Radio, 2024). However, there is currently a lack of empirical research on prosociality, particularly among college students in Sabah, Malaysia. Since the nation aspires to promote a caring and sharing society, it is essential for college students, as future leaders and professionals, to develop effective psychosocial relationships and social adjustment on campus and beyond. Prosociality enables them to develop the humility, courtesy, mutual assistance, friendship, self-sacrifice, and other social-ethical behaviors that they require to gain a competitive advantage in pursuing their professional and personal development on campus and in the real world. Moreover, empirical research on prosociality would render greater insight into the factors that elucidate altruistic behavior, which in turn could lead to the realization of a harmonious, efficient, and healthy Malaysian society. Current findings would also generate greater awareness on the attitudes and propensities related to college students' prosociality, which in turn could provide a framework for educators and policymakers for implementing measures that could shape and benefit campus life and beyond. To guide this study, three research questions were formulated:

1. Were there any significant gender, age, and ethnic differences in college students' prosociality?
2. Were there any significant differences in the prosociality items based on a hypothesized value of 3.5?
3. What were the percentages of agreement on the prosociality items and their implications?

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To establish a conceptual framework and research gap, a literature review was conducted. Recent articles linking prosociality with social support, empathy, and other psychosocial variables were downloaded from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia, and other websites. The literature review indicated the need to conduct more empirical research on prosociality, as a public good, among college students in Malaysia, which aspires to build an inclusive and equitable cradle-to-grave care economy.

### A. Prosociality: Social support

Research shows that prosociality is often related to social support and empathy. First and foremost, Guo (2017) who examined the impact of social support on college students' prosociality discovered that subjective support and support

utilization tended to be directly related to prosociality, while emotional trust and quality trust tended to be indirectly linked to prosociality. Additionally, interpersonal trust tended to have an intermediary impact between social support and prosociality. Findings implied that students with greater social support tended to demonstrate higher interpersonal trust, more favorable interpersonal communication, and greater tendency to demonstrate prosociality.

Quain, Yidana, and Ambotumah (2016) explored the antecedents of prosociality among university students. Findings showed that university attendees tended to display high prosociality, while perceiving that it would enable them to experience greater social approval and self-worth. Findings implied that students' prosociality could increase reciprocal behavior, which in turn could ease personal grief, while increasing social endorsement and self-esteem among students. On the other hand, Baradaran and Noushari (2021) who investigated the impact of temperament and character dimensions and perceived social support among college students found that prosociality tended to be significantly and positively related to perceived reward dependence, self-directiveness, social scaffolding, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence, which in turn were found to be significant predictors of prosociality.

A study by Hou, Zheng, and Zheng (2021) investigated the factors influencing prosociality among undergraduates. Findings showed that undergraduates tended to receive high social support, while their prosociality, empathy, and moral disengagement were found to be average. Additionally, empathy and social support tended to have a significant relationship with prosociality, while augmenting students' self-concept and reputation for being altruistic. Lastly, findings implied that prosociality could be linked to upbringing, culture, education, and personality.

Research by Xue *et al.* (2022) which studied the mediating and moderating roles of social support in relation to prosociality among university students revealed that social support tended to indirectly mediate between resilience and prosociality, with support utilization moderating the link. Findings implied that support utilization could help mitigate the negative impact of adverse events (e.g., the pandemic) on university students' prosociality; therefore, it could serve as a protective factor and psychosocial pathway linking resilience and prosociality.

Lastly, Reizer *et al.* (2023) investigated team cohesion as a mediator between prosociality (agreeableness and wellbeing), besides measuring the impact of leader support on perceived team cohesion. Findings showed that that agreeableness and team cohesion significantly predicted wellbeing. Agreeableness and wellbeing were indirectly related, while greater leader support tended to influence greater team cohesion compared to lower leader support.

## **B. Prosociality: Empathy**

Carlo *et al.* (2012) examined the relationships among prosociality, empathy, parent and peer attachments, and physical aggression among university students. Findings showed that parent and peer attachments were related to prosociality, with empathy mediating the relationship between peer attachment and social behaviors. Findings reflected the role of attachment and empathy in explaining prosociality. Additionally, Jiang *et al.* (2021) who studied the relationship between prosociality and empathy, and the mediating role of social responsibility among college students found that social responsibility partially mediated the relationship between prosociality and empathy. Lastly, prosociality and empathy were found to be higher before the pandemic, implying that maladjustment, loneliness, and social distancing during the global crisis might lead to lower prosociality and empathy.

In their study, Tendhar and de Mesquita (2020) examined the impact of compassion education on the prosociality and wellbeing among college students. Findings showed that many college students tended to experience high levels of stress, depression, and anxiety, with significant increases in violence and cyberbullying on campuses. Nevertheless, these negative emotions and actions could be reduced by increasing understanding and practicing compassion; empathy could enable college students to make better emotional connections with others, thus fostering positive interpersonal behavior, while morality could help them distinguish between desirable or undesirable customary behaviors in society. Lastly, compassion not only could enhance interpersonal connections, but could also increase hope, mindfulness, wellbeing, and life satisfaction among the givers themselves. Findings reflected the importance of compassion education as a holistic and wholesome approach to establishing a healthier, safer, and more inclusive environment for college students to face today's hectic and challenging lifestyle.

Santos (2023) who examined the impact of college students' empathy on their prosociality found that it was significantly related to prosociality; a significant number of students also exhibited empathetic behavior under specific occasions and

circumstances, with age and socioeconomic status being positively related to empathy. Findings implied that college students might possess heightened attentiveness toward the emotions and desires of others, thus leading them to engage in prosociality, while trying to eliminate guilty feelings associated with unkind thoughts and actions.

In their examination on the relationship between gender, age, and prosociality among college students, Dewi, Santosa, and Rusmawati (2023) found that a majority of college students tended to display high prosociality, without any significant gender or age differences. Findings implied that empathy help improve prosociality, as it would enable individuals to step into the shoes of others to acknowledge their feelings. College students, as agents of change, could play a vital role in promoting altruistic values and upholding prosociality, which in turn could result in greater empathy toward global humanitarian issues.

Peng *et al.* (2024) investigated the impact of empathy on prosociality and the underlying psychological mechanisms among college students. Findings revealed that (1) empathy significantly and positively predicted prosociality, (2) moral identity partially mediated the link between empathy and prosociality, and (3) a sense of security moderated the link between moral identity and prosociality. Findings implied that empathy could positively impact prosociality, thus yielding a different perspective on the propagation of mutual assistance and peace among college students. While being empathetic toward others' feelings and situations, they could increase their own motivation to display prosociality.

Huderi (2024) examined the relationship between the empathy and prosociality among college students. Findings showed that viewing specific emotional materials tended to stimulate different levels of empathy; students with high empathy were found to demonstrate higher levels of prosociality. Additionally, different empathy states were found to have a significant influence on prosociality, including compliance, openness, and emotion. On the other hand, Ravikumar and James (2024) who examined the prosociality and empathy between Type A and Type B personalities among college students found that prosociality tended to be significantly linked to compliance, openness, and emotion, with Type B students exhibiting higher empathy than Type A. Lastly, empathy was also found to be inversely related to both types of personalities, but was positively related to prosociality.

Shafique, Firdos, and Imtiaz (2024) examined the relationship between empathy and prosociality among university students. Findings indicated a significantly positive relationship between prosociality and empathy, reflecting that higher empathy would increase prosociality. Further, students from the urban areas showed significantly higher prosociality than their rural counterparts, thus reflecting the role of empathy and prosociality in creating a sustainable and more equitable society. Additionally, Davis *et al.* (2024) who examined the moderating role of public and altruistic prosociality on the relationships between motivation/beliefs and alcohol use among college students found that altruistic prosociality were related to fewer negative drinking consequences. Findings implied that prosociality might act as a protective strategy for college students, which in turn could reduce the impact of drinking environments and motivations; therefore, promoting prosociality could help mitigate negative health behaviors, while enhancing healthful living among college students.

### C. Prosocial behavior: Other related variables

Saleem *et al.* (2012) examined the effects of prosociality, neutral video games, and violent video games on college students' state hostility and positive affect. Findings showed that prosociality games tended to reduce state hostility, while increasing positive affect. In contrast, violent video games tended to yield the opposite effects that were moderated by physical aggression. Lastly, altruistic students were found to exhibit relatively more positive affect and less state hostility, while egoistic students tended to report relatively more aggravated and mean feelings. On the other hand, Waring, Sullivan, and Stapp (2016) who examined the impact of prosociality on university students' pro-environmental behavior and wellbeing revealed that social support within the campus tended to boost prosociality, which in turn could increase pro-environmental behaviors and intentions. Findings implied that pro-environmental and prosociality could be enhanced by boosting social support in the community, while efforts to improve wellbeing and the environment should focus on promoting prosociality and social support.

In their study, Zhang *et al.* (2020) investigated the relationships among peer attachment, parent attachment, and prosociality among college students in relation to respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA). Findings showed that both parental and peer attachment were positively related to college students' global prosociality, with peer attachment being positively related to global prosociality among those with low baseline RSA. Findings implied that parental and peer attachment and their

interaction with baseline RSA could have different effects on different types of prosociality, thus reflecting the role of psychosocial and physiological factors in predicting college students' prosociality.

Additionally, Chinopfukutwa and Hektner (2020) who examined the relationships among prosociality, crowd affiliations, and risky behaviors among university students found that social crowd affiliations positively predicted risk-related behaviors (academic, sexual, drug, and alcohol related). In contrast, social and scholastic affiliations were found to positively predict prosociality, implying the significance of peer crowd affiliation in promoting positive behaviors on campus.

Liao *et al.* (2021) studied the relationship between public service motivation and prosociality among college students. Findings showed that public service motivation and social innovation tended to be positively related to prosociality, while social innovation was found to mediate the relationship between public service motivation and prosociality. On the other hand, Maiya *et al.* (2021) who examined the relationships among acculturative stress, internalizing symptoms, and prosociality among college students found that acculturative stress was significantly related to public and altruistic prosociality in relation to internalizing symptoms; findings highlighted the role of mental health strain on prosociality in the context of acculturative stress, reflecting the importance of reducing acculturative stress and maladjustment in promoting favorable psychosocial development among college students.

Zhang *et al.* (2022) investigated the effect of meaning in life on prosociality as mediated by psychological capital (PsyCap). Findings showed that meaning in life tended to be significantly related to students' prosociality. In other words, students with higher meaning in life would engage in greater prosociality. Further, PsyCap was found to mediate the relationship between meaning in life and prosociality. Findings implied the significance of tapping into students' psychological strengths to bring forth greater prosociality. Further, Lu *et al.* (2022) who examined the relationship between physical activity and prosociality among college students discovered that students' physical activity tended to be significantly related to prosociality and self-perception, while self-perception was significantly related to prosociality. Findings implied that higher levels of physical activity could result in more favorable self-perception, with a corresponding increase in prosociality, while affirming the idea that regular physical activity could help enhance students' self-assertiveness and self-efficacy.

Hudson and Brandenberger (2023) studied the influence of college experiences on six moral and prosocial behaviors among students. Findings showed that public service was the only engagement experience that tended to predict any of the six behaviors. Additionally, social justice behavioral intentions tended to be the only moral and prosocial outcome that was positively related to all five of the other outcomes, suggesting that increasing students' commitment on this aspect could enhance their general moral and prosocial development. Additionally, participating in at least one weekly hour of public service tended to positively and significantly predict students' moral identity and life goals-civic purpose. Findings implied that engaging in public service could benefit college students in terms of moral identity, which in turn could enhance prosociality. Students' existing attitudes and orientations to moral and prosocial concerns might influence their community engagement experiences, while such experiences might influence their psychosocial development. Therefore, colleges and universities should provide multiple modes of community engagement to foster students' moral and prosocial development.

Shahzalal, Adnan, and Abdullah (2023) investigated university students' perceptions of self-control and prosocial norms in relation to intended behavior and desired social media usage. Findings revealed that university students tended to value self-control and prosocial norms as crucial determinants of positive social media behavior; these factors were also found to be strongly related to intended self-control, prosociality, and desired use of social media. On the other hand, Fang and Huang (2023) who examined the relationship between college students' moral elevation and prosocial behavior found that (1) moral elevation tended to positively predict prosociality, (2) moral identity tended to moderate the link between perceived social support and prosociality, and (3) perceived social support tended to mediate the relationship between moral elevation and prosociality. Findings implied that the mediating effect of perceived social support could be stronger for college students with higher moral identity compared to those with lower moral identity.

Lastly, Papachristopoulos *et al.* (2023) examined the impact of basic psychological needs satisfaction and benevolence on innovative and creative work behavior. Findings showed that both perceived prosocial impact and prosocial motivation tended to be positively related to innovative work behavior and creativity. Needs satisfaction in terms of autonomy and competence was found to mediate between perceived social impact and work outcomes, while prosocial motivation was found to moderate the link between benevolence and innovation.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Sample

The sample consisted of 91 undergraduates ( $n = 91$ ) from Sabah, Malaysia, all of whom were enrolled in a private university college in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah ( $N = 480$ ). It was obtained through systematic random sampling whereby every third student was asked to complete the questionnaire via WhatsApp. About 39.6 percent were males, while 60.4 percent were females. They came from culturally diverse backgrounds, and were fluent in English and Malay. Their demographic characteristics are shown in Table I.

**TABLE I: Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	36	39.6
	Female	55	60.4
Age	18-20	60	65.9
	21-23	26	28.6
	24-26	5	5.5
Ethnicity	Kadazandusun	59	64.8
	Malay	6	6.6
	Rungus/Murut	4	4.4
	Others	22	24.2

#### B. Instrument

Data were collected by using the 16-item Prosociality Scale developed by Caprara and Pastorelli (1993), which is often used to assess people's general and global tendency to react in prosocial ways. Respondents rate (1 = never/almost never true; 2 = occasionally true; 3 = sometimes true; 4 = often true; 5 = almost always/always true) their tendencies to enact prosocial behaviors. The total score is 80 (high = 72-80; average = 64-71; low = less than 64).

Several studies have shown its applicability and utility in assessing individual tendencies in prosociality across situations. The psychometric properties of the Prosociality Scale have been validated; prior studies have supported its construct validity, showing theoretically expected correlations of prosocial scores with agreeableness, emotional, and empathic self-efficacy, self-esteem, and civic engagement, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 (Kanacri *et al.*, 2021).

#### C. Data collection and analysis

Data were collected at the beginning of class. Students were asked to use their WhatsApp to access the Prosociality Scale on Google Forms to fill out their responses, which were subsequently transferred onto a spreadsheet. Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. First, Mann-Whitney U test was conducted on prosociality to determine if there were any significant gender differences, while Kurskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences in relation to age and ethnicity. Second, Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine the level of significance of each prosociality item based on a hypothesized value of 3.5. Lastly, percentages of agreement (often true and almost always/always true) on each item were collapsed to gain an overall impression of students' level of prosociality.

### IV. FINDINGS

#### A. Non-parametric test results

Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed no significant differences in students' prosociality by way of age and ethnicity, while Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant differences in terms of gender (see Table II).

**TABLE II: Results of non-parametric tests**

Variable	Non-parametric test	<i>p</i>
Age	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.501
Gender	Mann-Whitney U test	0.398
Ethnicity	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.980

Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine the level of significance of each prosociality item by using a hypothesized value of 3.5. Findings showed that all items were significant at  $p < .001$  (see Table III).

**TABLE III: Wilcoxon signed rank test based on the hypothesized value of 3.5**

Item	<i>p</i>
1. I am pleased to help my friends/colleagues in their activities	<.001
2. share the things that I have with my friends	<.001
3. I try to help others	<.001
4. I am available to volunteer to help those who are in need	<.001
5. I am emphatic with those who are in need	<.001
6. I help immediately those who are in need	<.001
7. I do what I can to help others avoid getting into trouble	<.001
8. I intensely feel what others feel	<.001
9. I am willing to make my knowledge/abilities available to others	<.001
10. I try to console those who are sad	<.001
11. I easily lend money or other things	<.001
12. I easily put myself in the shoes of those who are in discomfort	<.001
13. I try to be close to and take care of those who are in need	<.001
14. I easily share with friends any good opportunity that comes to me	<.001
15. I spend time with those friends who feel lonely	<.001
16. I immediately sense my friends' discomfort even when it is not directly communicated to me	<.001

**B. Mean and percentages of agreement**

Findings showed that the overall mean of students' prosociality was 67.4, indicating that their prosociality was of average level. Percentages of agreement (often true and almost always/always true) on each item were collapsed to gain an overall impression of students' level of prosociality; for example, the overall percentage was 65 percent (35+30) for Item 1 (see Table IV). About 71 percent of students indicated that it was often true/always true that they shared their things with friends, while another 73 percent indicated that it was often true/always true that they tried to help others. Additionally, 60 to 65 percent of students indicated that it was often true/always true that (1) they were available to volunteer to help those who were in need, (2) they did what they could to help others avoid getting into trouble, (c) they were willing to make their knowledge/abilities available to others, and (d) they could easily share with friends any good opportunity that came to them (see Table IV).

**TABLE IV: Percentages of agreement on prosociality items**

Items	Percentages				
1. I am pleased to help my friends/colleagues in their activities	2	1	23	35	30
2. share the things that I have with my friends	0	4	16	38	33
3. I try to help others	2	1	15	33	40
4. I am available to volunteer to help those who are in need	0	2	25	34	30
5. I am emphatic with those who are in need	1	2	29	27	32
6. I help immediately those who are in need	0	1	32	37	21
7. I do what I can to help others avoid getting into trouble	0	2	29	33	27
8. I intensely feel what others feel	3	1	30	34	23
9. I am willing to make my knowledge/abilities available to others	0	1	28	40	22
10. I try to console those who are sad	0	3	32	32	24
11. I easily lend money or other things	7	9	40	25	10
12. I easily put myself in the shoes of those who are in discomfort	2	6	45	23	15
13. I try to be close to and take care of those who are in need	0	1	40	33	17
14. I easily share with friends any good opportunity that comes to me	0	2	29	42	18
15. I spend time with those friends who feel lonely	1	3	35	31	21
16. I immediately sense my friends' discomfort even when it is not directly communicated to me	2	4	33	30	22

1 = never/almost never true; 2 = occasionally true; 3 = sometimes true; 4 = often true; 5 = almost always/always true

## V. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings showed that the overall mean of students' prosociality was 67.4, indicating that their prosociality was of average level, which was supported by previous research. As aforementioned, Malaysia ranks 20th out of 142 countries on the World Giving Index 2024, which reflects average level of prosociality among Malaysians (BMS Radio, 2024). Hou, Zheng, and Zheng (2021) found that, while undergraduates tended to receive high social support, their level of prosociality tended to be average.

Bergin and Prewett (2020) recommended several easy-to-implement prosocial strategies that incur little expense or time to a full curriculum. Instructors who start using these strategies will realize how quickly students respond, for example, by making small, positive changes in their attitudes and behavior, they can make a significant difference with their students. Three well established strategies that can increase students' prosociality include praise, inductive discipline, and positive teacher-student relationships. First, appropriate praise statements at the beginning of the academic year often result in increased prosociality in the long run. Second, inductive discipline that focuses on giving students reasons to modify their behavior is effective in cultivating prosociality; it teaches them to attend to others' wellbeing, thus creating acceptance and empathy, while also helping them internalize their values, exercise self-control, guide future behavior, and communicate respect. Third, instructors who emphasize prosocial relationships despite challenging behaviors tend to be more sensitive, while paying attention to students' interests and needs, establishing warm interactions, and showing respect to their agendas.

While many people know how to be prosocial, they do not always feel inclined to exhibit prosocial behaviors, especially if the environment does not support it. Students will become more prosocial in an environment that provides scaffolding and encourages prosocial behavior. Trudgen (2023) posited that there are several ways to promote prosocial behavior. First, instructors should explain rules and expectations and why they matter, not just what students are supposed to adhere to, and eventually the entire class should be setting rules and expectations together that align with shared values. Second, instructors should model and encourage helpful behavior, besides recognizing and praising them when they occur. They should set specific prosocial goals that align with individual and shared values and provide feedback about progress toward them. Third, they should prepare students for novel situations via such tools as role-playing and social stories, while welcoming and encouraging others' perspectives and ideas. Fourth, besides demonstrating empathy and practicing polite behavior even in tense or high-stress situations, instructors should provide encouragement to the class when they seem frustrated and feel like giving up. Fifth, they should create healthy ways for students to share their exasperations and even their anger, while encouraging positivity, effective interpersonal communication, and teamwork. Lastly, it will be beneficial for both instructors and students to receive professional prosocial training (Trudgen, 2023).

As the workforce continues to become increasingly diverse, there is a significant need for college and university graduates equipped with more effective social skills and greater ability to work well with others. By emphasizing prosociality in relation to empathy, kindness, and cooperation on campus, graduates will experience better job stability, happier family life, and greater acceptance from colleagues and peers (University of Missouri, 2024). Further, there are several techniques to improve students' prosociality. Instead of using rewards, evidence-based strategies that focus on inductive discipline should be used to encourage students to justify why they should modify their behavior. For example, instead of using threats to reduce classroom noise, an instructor should ask students to stop talking because they are disturbing their classmates who are quietly working. This technique allows students to develop empathy by considering how they would feel if others were disruptive rather than feeling punished by the instructor (University of Missouri, 2024).

Lastly, instructors can implement classroom management strategies that promote prosocial behavior by assigning group work that encourages students to develop team spirit and altruism. They also need to adopt behavioral modification strategies that will work best in their classroom, for example, by emphasizing person-specific praise (i.e., "I appreciate you" rather than "I appreciate that"). Other reinforcement measures that can enhance prosociality include (1) acknowledging positive behavior instead of only focusing on negative behavior, (2) using an appropriate tone of voice when reminding students of specific instructions, and (3) avoiding threats of punishments or bribery (University of Missouri, 2024).

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study was the first to examine college students' prosociality in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. First, although the sample size was quite large, one must be reminded that all the respondents for this study originated from only one small area. Therefore, limitations inherent in the sampling area might affect the generalizability of the findings to a certain extent. Future studies should consider the selection of more diversified regional and age group samples for validation. Second, each prosocial



attribute was dependent upon college students' self-reporting; therefore, deviations or inaccuracies could occur due to social desirability. Lastly, future research should combine the questionnaire with behavior observation, parental reporting, and classroom evaluations that can help obtain more objective and accurate information on the topic.

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