

## **PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO NARCISSIM AND SPIRITUALITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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The current study explored pro-social behavior in relation to narcissism and spirituality among university students. The study also explored differences on the basis of different demographic variables i.e., age and gender. The sample comprised of 300 university students ( $n = 150$ ,  $n = 150$ ) from a university in Pakistan, using convenience sampling technique. The assessment tools for data collection were Pro-social tendencies measure (PTM), Spirituality index of wellbeing (SIW), and Narcissism personality inventory (NPI). To find out the relationship of pro-social behavior with narcissism and spirituality, Pearson product moment correlation was computed. The result indicated significant positive relationship between PTM and SIW, whereas negative relationship between narcissism and spirituality was found. *t*-test was applied on data in order to view the difference between pro-social behavior, narcissism and spirituality on the basis of gender among university students which was indicated significant. The association between age and the three study variable (PTM, SIW and NPI) was found to be significantly positive. This study will be implacable for the psychologist working on personality development and in the field of positive and social psychology.

*Keywords:* Pro-Social Behavior, Narcissism, Spirituality, Altruism, University Students

Pro-social behavior is considered a preplanned action that aims at helping others, sincere assistance, without selfishness (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Altemeyer (1996) argues that pro-social behavior is the individual

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intentional or proposed actions to help or support others people without any greediness or selfishness. In pro-social behaviors individual helps without any cost and benefit (Blasi, 1980). It is observed in many situations that people mostly help those people who are somewhat related to them. According to Blau (1986) helping people without any benefit is the purest form of pro-social behavior.

### **Types of Pro-social Behaviors**

***Altruism.*** According to Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) altruistic pro-social behavior is voluntary helping behavior which is for the assistance and care for another person, that is often acceptable to their norms to helping others without any selfish demands.

***Compliant.*** To provide help or support others by verbal or nonverbal request are called compliant pro-social behavior (Argue, David, & Lynn, 1999).

***Emotional.*** Emotional pro-social behavior means helping others and helping on the bases of any emotional circumstances which evoke helping (Smith & Denton, 2005). Buss (2015) argued that this type of pro-social behavior is shown mostly by children rather than adolescents. An injured person who is crying will more emotionally evocative as compared to an injured person who is quite or not crying (Hoffman, 2000).

***Public.*** An individual will be more encouraged and respectable when they show altruistic behaviors to others in front of other people (Baumeister, 2001). Homans (1984) in a meta-analysis found that helping behavior is directly proportion to age. Recipient reward or punishment increase or decrease the probability of helping behavior respectively so the intrinsic motivation is superseded by extrinsic incentives, thus less motivation cause less pro-social behavior in response (Bonner, Koven, & Patrick, 2003). According to social psychological perspective, assistance requires a sense of personal responsibility and ability to help others (Penner et al., 2005).

According to Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) girls of late adolescent age report high level altruistic or pro-social behavior than the boys of late adolescent age. In addition, adolescent girls show lower level of pro-social behavior in front of public than adolescent people Meta-analysis study shows that children of the age 7 to 12 have low level of pro-social

behavior and high level of sharing and donation than the adolescents (Margaret & Howard, 2006).

## **Narcissism**

Narcissism is defined as self-love egoism, ego-centricity, it means that an individual loves him/her-self (Kumru, 2002). Knickerbocker (2003) recognized two segments of narcissism that influenced the narcissist personality, grandiose and vulnerable personality. In grandiose narcissism the individual seeks gratitude from other people, and in vulnerable narcissism the individual him/her-self have thoughts of superiority and over self-confidence.

A syndrome in which a cross breed of narcissism personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder and some traits of paranoid personality disorder exhibited is known as malignant narcissism (Gramzow & Tangney, 1992). Carlo and Randall (2002) argue that some narcissists may have destructive tendencies. They found the following aspects of narcissism.

*Positive.* High self-image.

*Inflated.* Inflated reality contact. Their own interpretation is considered extravagant as compared to his independent interpretation.

*Agentic.* It views most exaggerated in the agentic domain, it is strongly connected to the closed area.

*Special.* The individual perceived him/her- self unique and extraordinary.

*Selfish.* The person has selfish thoughts or behaviors.

*Oriented toward success.* It shows a person's orientation towards success.

Research shows that narcissistic behavior is different among genders. Females are showing minimum narcissism than males (Campbell, 1999). Women are thought more helpful and cooperative, and are easily vulnerable to environmental factors (Davis & Franzoi, 1991). The major causes of narcissism are often individual isolation and anti-social behavior in the society (Daaleman & Frey, 2004).

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality can be defined as an understanding of interconnectedness of an individual with all creatures and the knowledge and the awareness of the life meaning and purpose (Carlo, Knight, Eisenberg, & Rotenberg, 1991).

Spirituality includes religious aspects like religious practices and beliefs as well as non-religious activities, beliefs and expressions (Eliade, 1985). People influence other people, and influence the groups they live. According to Sociology, spirituality is the concept in which people perform their rituals and religious practices of their respective groups (Ronald & Tirole, 2006). Spirituality helps many people in making their lives meaningful (Gefen & Straub, 1997). Spiritual individuals tend to be more optimistic than their non-spiritual peers (Barrett & Yarrow, 1977).

Research shows positive relationship between spirituality and pro-social behavior. Ones belief in supernatural powers like gods, ancestors, spirit tend to make them more altruistic, social and internally responsible and make them to work in a group than the person who has not this belief (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006). Batson (1983) argues that every person is prone towards pro-social behaviors for their kin and this pro-social behavior in individual becomes generalized to all other individuals due to spiritual and religious beliefs which could act as a social power. Eagly and Krowley (1986) also recognized that religiosity and spirituality are absolutely associated with altruism.

Afolabi (2014) studied roles of psychosocial factors (religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion, family type, and type of residence, rural/urban and cultural/ethnic differences) on pro-social behavior among Nigerian undergraduates were examined through cross-sectional survey design. The 440 students were included in this sample. The finding of the study explained that there were significant relationships among the variables.

Thomas (2008) studied the relationships between cognitive deficits and spiritual development. The participants were randomly selected through systematic sampling of students and former students of Kellyville Public School. According to the results, there is strong relationship between spirituality development and awareness of God.

## **Rationale**

The ubiquity of pro-social behavior amongst humans has long been a significant puzzle in the social sciences (Simpson & Robb, 2008). Pro-social behavior can be defined as voluntary actions intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals (Knickerbocker, 2003).

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 which 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, & Horn, 2006).

Many researchers have theorized that today's generations are much more narcissistic than previous generations. Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman (2008) found that scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), a measure that examines a subject's level of narcissism, have increased by 30% since 1982.

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate pro-social behavior with narcissism and spirituality among university students. It was also intended to find out age and gender differences on pro-social behavior, narcissism and spirituality among university students. The outcomes of the present study will contribute in understanding how university students show their helping behavior and what they think about narcissism and spirituality. The findings will also provide empirical support for relationship of pro-social behavior with narcissism and spirituality.

## **Objectives**

The current study included the following two objectives:

- To investigate the relationship between pro-social behavior, narcissism and spirituality among university students.
- To find out the gender differences on pro-social behavior, spirituality, and narcissism personality traits among university students.
- To find out the association between age and the three study variables.

## Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the current study are:

- Pro-social behavior will have positive correlation with spirituality among university students.
- Narcissism personality trait will have negative relationship with pro-social behavior and spirituality among university students.
- Boys will show more pro-social and spiritual behavior than girls while girls show more narcissistic behavior than boys.
- Pro-social behavior and spirituality increase while narcissistic behavior decrease with age the of university students.

## Method

### Research Design

The research design of the current study was correlational research design.

### Sample

In present study, convenient sampling Technique was used to select the sample from the student population of Hazara University. The sample size was 300 participants.

### Assessment Measures

In this study, three questionnaires were used; Narcissism personality Inventory, Pro-social tendencies measured Spirituality index of Wellbeing. Descriptions of these scales are given below:

*Pro-social tendencies measure (Carlo & Randall, 2000).* Pro-social tendencies measure contains 23 items with scoring on five-point scale (Does not describe me at all =1, Describes me a little =2, Somewhat Describes me =3, Describes me well =4, and Describes me well =5). The reliability of PTM is 0.60 (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

*Spirituality index of wellbeing (Daaleman & Frey, 2004).* Spirituality Index of Wellbeing was used to measure spirituality. It contains 12 items with scoring 5 point scale (strongly agree =1, agree =2, uncertain =3, disagree =4, strongly disagree =5). Items 1-6 make up the

Self-Efficacy Subscale. Items 7-12 make up the Life Scheme Subscale. High scores indicate high level of spirituality.

*Narcissism Personality Inventory* (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006). Narcissism Personality Inventory contains 16 items with scoring on 2 point scale (agree =1, disagree =2). The reliability of NPI is .75 (Hendin & Cheek, 1997).

### **Procedure**

The sample of university students ( $N = 300$ ) were taken from Hazara University Mansehra Pakistan. The Participants were approached individually by researcher and questionnaires were distributed individually. Participants were briefed regarding the nature of the research being carried out in order to obtain their cooperation; they were requested to fill the questionnaires as per instructions. The completed forms were checked when they were handed back if any question was missed to respond. The scores were calculated and statistical analyses for testing the hypotheses were carried out. Overall the research was completed in one year. The data was collected in three months.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This study was conducted after the approval of Board of Study (BOS) of the relevant department. The research questionnaires were handed after ensuring security and safety of the respondents. The study was conducted after proper informed consent of the respondents. The respondent's responses were reported honestly and accurately. Confidentiality and drop-out right of the participant was ensured by researcher.

### **Results**

The data of 300 university students have been analyzed. In the present study three statistical analyses were done by using SPSS Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Person product moment correlation analysis was done to find out the relationship among variables. The descripts to these analyses are given below:

Table 1  
*Correlation among Spirituality Index of Wellbeing, Narcissism Personality Inventory, and Pro-social Tendencies Measure (N=300)*

Scales	SIW	PTM
NPI	-.21**	.22
SIW	----	.17**

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ . PTM=Pro-social Tendencies Measure; SIW =Spirituality Index of Wellbeing; NPI= Narcissism Personality Inventory.

The result of table 1 indicated significant positive correlation between spirituality and pro-social behavior, while significant negative relationship emerged between narcissism and spirituality among university students. Non-significant relationship exists between pro-social behavior and narcissism.

Table 2  
*Comparison of Gender on Pro-social Behavior, Spirituality and Narcissism (N=300)*

Scales	Boys (n=150)		Girls (n=150)		t (298)	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		
PTM	73.94	13.06	76.13	13.03	1.46	.16
NPI	24.27	2.12	24.00	3.44	.83	.09
SIW	37.25	9.07	40.93	9.37	3.41***	.39

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ . PTM=Pro-social Tendencies Measure; SIW= Spirituality Index of Wellbeing; NPI= Narcissism Personality Inventory.

Table 2 shows significant gender differences on Spirituality, which shows that girls shows more spiritual behavior than boys; while non-significant gender difference emerge on pro-social behavior and Narcissism Personality trait.

Table 3  
*Correlation of students' age with their Pro-social Behavior, Spirituality Index, and Narcissism Personality Inventory (N=300)*

	Pro-social	Spirituality	Narcissism
Age	.61*	.16*	.42*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 3 shows that age of the students has significant positive correlation with Pro-social, Narcissism, and Spirituality. This indicates



that pro-social behavior, Narcissism Tendencies and spirituality increase with the increase in age.

### **Discussion**

This study examined pro-social behavior in relation to narcissism and spirituality among university students. The study also examined age and gender differences in pro-social behavior, spirituality, and narcissism between university students. The study concluded that there is a relationship between spirituality and pro-social behavior but there is no association between spirituality and pro-social behavior with narcissism. The study also found that spirituality and pro-social behavior have relationship with age, but there is no association between narcissism and age.

These findings are consistent with previous studies supporting the positive relationship between pro-social behavior and spirituality. Bonner, Koven, and Patrick (2003) showed that spirituality is positively association with pro-social behavior. Results were also similar to findings of Einolf (2013) who found that spiritual experiences may affect involvement in pro-social behavior.

Findings of this study also supported previous studies showing the negative correlation of narcissism with spirituality and pro-social behavior among university students. Wink (1999) found negative relationship between spirituality and narcissism.

Findings in this study were in line with previous studies supporting the positive correlation of age with of pro-social behavior and spirituality. According to Kumro (2002) the adult people show more pro-social behavior as compared to Youngers whereas narcissistic behavior decline in university students. The findings of this study were in accord with Brown, Chen, Gehlert, and Piedmont (2013) who found that spirituality are strongly correlated with age.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of present study was to identify pro-social behavior in relation to narcissism and spirituality among university students. Findings of the study suggest significant positive correlation among pro-social behavior and spirituality. Results of this study also show that among university students there is a positive correlation between pro-social behavior and spirituality and a negative correlation between narcissism and spirituality. The study also found that there is a significant

negative correlation between narcissism and age. It suggests that narcissism behavior decrease with the age of the students.

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