

Exploring the Relationship between Prosocial Personality Traits and Diverse Social Preferences

Philip Hampton^{1*}, Markus Ritter¹, Cristiana Huhulea²

¹Department of Sociology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, United States of America; ²Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America

ABSTRACT

Aim: The primary aim of this article is to investigate and illuminate the multifaceted relationship between prosocial personality traits and an array of diverse social preferences. Through a novel experimental paradigm and comprehensive analysis, we endeavor to deepen our understanding of how specific prosocial traits relate to various social preferences, extending beyond traditional paradigms.

Objective: This research aims to uncover the intricate connections between prosocial personality traits and a wide range of social preferences. Through a novel experimental paradigm, we seek to discern how specific traits contribute to diverse social preferences, enhancing our understanding of the complex interplay between personality and prosocial behaviors.

Methodology: We developed a novel experimental paradigm employing six variations of the dictator game, manipulating decision costliness and reciprocity conditions. Two community samples participated in within-subjects designs. Prosocial traits were assessed using validated measures. Statistical analyses examined trait-preference associations, addressing limitations of prior research.

Results: Our findings revealed nuanced associations between prosocial personality traits and diverse social preferences. Politeness uniquely linked to costly prosocial allocations, while compassion was pronounced in costless generosity games. HEXACO honesty-humility played a pivotal role across both contexts. Negative reciprocity linked to lower HEXACO agreeableness. Certain traits showed effects beyond unconditional kindness contributions.

Discussion: This study deepens understanding of the intricate interplay between prosocial personality traits and diverse social preferences. The novel paradigm and robust sample sizes enhance credibility. Politeness and compassion displayed unique associations, while HEXACO traits showcased broad influence. Implications extend beyond economic games, offering insights into real-world prosocial behaviors.

Conclusion: By uncovering the intricate connections between prosocial personality traits and diverse social preferences, this research expands our comprehension of human prosocial behavior. The novel experimental paradigm and insightful findings provide a foundation for future investigations, enriching our understanding of the dynamic interplay between personality and social preferences.

Keywords: Prosocial behaviors; Personality traits; Self-interest; Likert scale

Correspondence to: Philip Hampton, Department of Sociology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, United States of America, E-mail: hampton.phili@edu

Received: 03-Jul-2023, Manuscript No. IJSCP-23-26160; **Editor assigned:** 05-Jul-2023, Pre QC No. IJSCP-23-26160 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 19-Jul-2023, QC No. IJSCP-23-26160; **Revised:** 26-Jul-2023, Manuscript No. IJSCP-23-26160 (R); **Published:** 02-Aug-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2469-9837.23.10.311.

Citation: Hampton P, Ritter M, Huhulea C (2023) Exploring the Relationship between Prosocial Personality Traits and Diverse Social Preferences. Int J Sch Cogn Psycho.10:311.

Copyright: © 2023 Hampton P, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

Human interactions are characterized by a remarkable variety of behaviors that extend beyond narrow self-interest, reflecting an intricate interplay of prosocial tendencies and social preferences. These preferences, encompassing distributive fairness, reciprocity, and other-regarding considerations, highlight the complex nature of social interactions and underscore the diversity of motivations that drive human behavior. Understanding the mechanisms that underlie these preferences and their relationship with individual differences in personality traits is crucial for unraveling the dynamics of prosocial behavior.

Prosocial behaviors are those actions taken to benefit others, often at a cost to oneself. While traditional economic theories have emphasized self-interest as the primary driver of human behavior, extensive empirical research has consistently demonstrated that individuals frequently engage in prosocial acts, deviating from purely self-centered motivations. These prosocial behaviors manifest across a range of contexts, from charitable donations and volunteering to everyday acts of kindness and cooperation [1,2].

A critical challenge in understanding prosocial behaviors lies in deciphering the diverse array of social preferences that guide human interactions. Distributive preferences capture concerns for equality and fairness, reflecting individuals' inclinations to divide resources fairly or to favor the less advantaged. Reciprocity preferences, on the other hand, involve responding to others' actions with either generosity or retaliation, based on previous interactions or intentions. These preferences intertwine in complex ways, shaping how individuals navigate social dilemmas and make decisions that affect others.

At the heart of these behaviors lie individual differences in personality traits that predispose individuals to engage in certain patterns of prosocial behavior. Personality traits, often conceptualized within frameworks like the Big Five and HEXACO models, offer a lens through which to examine stable and enduring characteristics that influence how individuals perceive and respond to their social environment [3]. Understanding how specific prosocial personality traits contribute to distinct social preferences provides a nuanced perspective on the motivations driving prosocial behavior.

Despite the substantial progress made in understanding the relationship between prosocial behaviors and personality traits, there are notable gaps in the literature. Much of the existing research has focused on a limited set of social preferences, often employing simplified game scenarios that fail to capture the complexity of real-world interactions. Moreover, the majority of studies have primarily examined the trade-offs between self-interest and prosocial tendencies in contexts such as the dictator game [4]. While these investigations offer valuable insights, they may not fully capture the richness and diversity of social preferences that human's exhibit.

To address these limitations and advance our understanding of the intricate connections between prosocial personality traits

and a wide array of social preferences, this study introduces a novel experimental paradigm. By building upon previous work that incorporates reciprocity and efficiency concerns into binary-choice tasks, we aim to comprehensively examine the relationship between specific prosocial traits and diverse social preferences [5,6]. We hypothesize that different prosocial personality traits will be uniquely associated with distinct social preferences, shedding light on the underlying motivations that drive prosocial behavior across various contexts.

In the following sections, we will detail the methodology employed to investigate these relationships, present the results of our study, and discuss the implications of our findings for understanding the complex interplay between prosocial personality traits and the diverse range of social preferences that shape human interactions [7]. This research contributes to a more comprehensive framework for understanding prosocial behavior and offers insights into how individual differences in personality traits influence the ways in which individuals navigate social interactions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ethics statement

The study was approved by the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences at The University of Melbourne. Participants provided informed consent *via* an electronic survey following established guidelines.

Participants: The study involved North American recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Selection criteria excluded workers familiar with economic game paradigms.

Personality measures

Two personality measures were used:

Big Five Aspect Scales (BFAS): Participants completed the 100-item BFAS assessing five broad personality domains and their aspects. Focus was on the agreeableness domain, including politeness and compassion, measured with 10 items each on a five-point Likert scale.

HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R): Participants completed the 100-item HEXACO-PI-R, focusing on honesty-humility and agreeableness domains. Each trait measured with 16 items on a five-point Likert scale.

Participants completed demographic questions, personality measures, and hypothetical economic games *via* an electronic survey on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Personality questionnaires served as fillers. Economic games were hypothetical and imagined playing with an anonymous partner. Attention checks were used, excluding 11% of participants.

Economic games: Six games based on dictator and generosity concepts were played, using a 2 × 3 repeated measures design:

- Two game types-dictator and generosity (Table 1).
- Three reciprocity conditions-baselines, help, and hurt (Figure 1).

Dictator games: Participants chose preferred allocations out of 11 combinations of payoffs adding up to \$10 for self and partner.

Generosity games: Participants chose allocations out of 11 combinations with fixed \$5 for self and varying amounts for partner.

Game type	
Dictator games	Generosity games
(0,10)	(5,10)
(1,9)	(5,9)
(2,8)	(5,8)
(3,7)	(5,7)
(4,6)	(5,6)
(5,5)	(5,5)
(6,4)	(5,4)
(7,3)	(5,3)
(8,2)	(5,2)
(9,1)	(5,1)
(10,0)	(5,0)

Table 1: Payoff combinations to choose from above table.

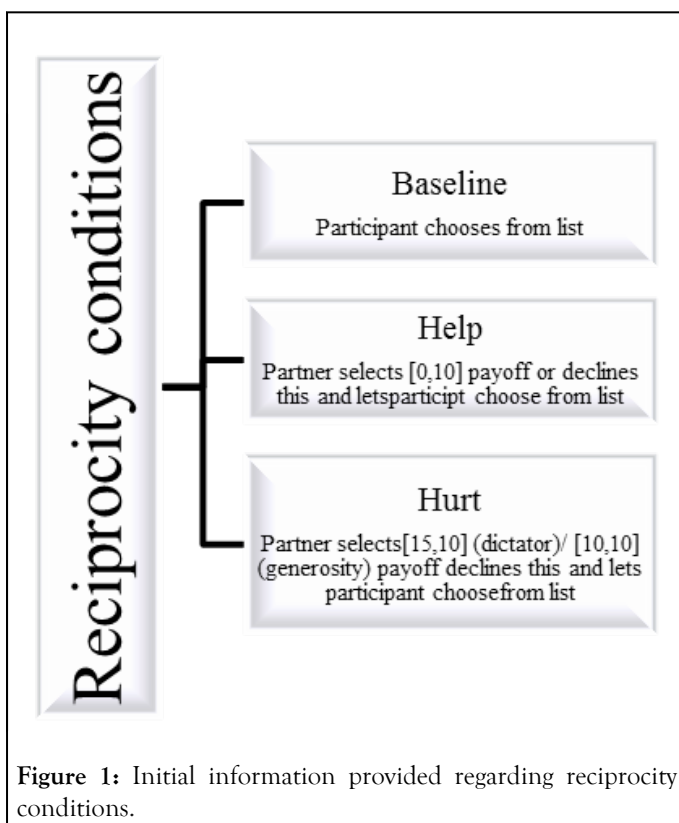


Figure 1: Initial information provided regarding reciprocity conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of study exhibited social preferences surpassing mere inequality aversion and egalitarianism. Participants showed generosity by allocating more wealth to partners when decisions were costless compared to costly situations [8-10]. Positive reciprocity was evident as participants allocated more after receiving assistance, yet negative reciprocity was absent, with no difference when hurt by a partner's action. Gender played a role, with men allocating more than women in generosity games and after being unharmed by their partner.

Personality traits demonstrated a mix of expected and unexpected patterns. In the Big Five model, politeness (not compassion) showed significance. Within HEXACO, honesty-humility predicted higher allocations in dictator games, while agreeableness predicted greater generosity in costless decisions [11,12]. Study used hypothetical scenarios, raising concerns about their comparability to incentivized games and potential methodological biases [13-15].

CONCLUSION

This research enhances our understanding of the complex relationship between prosocial traits and a diverse range of social preferences. The novel experimental paradigm and robust sample sizes bolster the credibility of the findings. Implications extend beyond economic games, offering insights into real-world prosocial behaviors. The study significantly contributes to our comprehension of human prosocial behavior by uncovering the intricate connections between specific prosocial personality traits and diverse social preferences. The innovative experimental paradigm and insightful outcomes provide a foundation for further exploration, enriching our understanding of the dynamic interplay between personality and social preferences in human interactions.

REFERENCES

1. Abbink K, Sadrieh A. The pleasure of being nasty. *Econ Lett.* 2009;105(3):306-308.
2. Dunlop PD, Morrison DL, Koenig J, Silcox B. Comparing the Eysenck and HEXACO models of personality in the prediction of adult delinquency. *Eur J Pers.* 2012;26(3):194-202.
3. Bardsley N. Control without deception: Individual behaviour in free-riding experiments revisited. *Exp Econ.* 2000;3:215-240.
4. Andreoni J, Vesterlund L. Which is the fair sex? Gender differences in altruism. *Q J Econ.* 200;116(1):293-312.
5. Hilbig BE, Thielmann I, Wühl J, Zettler I. From honesty-humility to fair behavior-benevolence or a (blind) fairness norm? *Pers Individ Differ.* 2015;80:91-95.
6. Murphy RO, Ackermann KA. Social value orientation: Theoretical and measurement issues in the study of social preferences. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev.* 2014;18(1):13-41.
7. Thielmann I, Hilbig BE. The traits one can trust: Dissecting reciprocity and kindness as determinants of trustworthy behavior. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull.* 2015;41(11):1523-1536.
8. Aleixo PA, Norris CE. Personality and moral reasoning in young offenders. *Pers Individ Differ.* 2000;28(3):609-623.
9. Costa PT, McCrae RR. "Four ways five factors are not basic": Reply. *Pers Individ Differ.* 1992;13:861-865.

10. Deutsch M. The effect of motivational orientation upon trust and suspicion. *Hum Relat.* 1960;13(2):123-139.
11. Fehr E, Schmidt KM. A theory of fairness, competition, and cooperation. *Q J Econ.* 1999;114(3):817-868.
12. Ekpanyaskul C, Padungtod C. Occupational health problems and lifestyle changes among novice working-from-home workers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *Saf Health Work.* 2021;12(3):384-389.
13. Iqbal M, Ahmad N, Waqas M, Abrar M. COVID-19 pandemic and construction industry: Impacts, emerging construction safety practices, and proposed crisis management. *Braz J Oper Prod Manag.* 2021;18(2):1-7.
14. Wall S, Dempsey M. The effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on women's perinatal mental health: A systematic review. *Women Birth.* 2023;36(1):47-55.
15. Irwin JR, McClelland GH. Negative consequences of dichotomizing continuous predictor variables. *J Mark Res.* 2003;40(3):366-371.