

The Relationship between Well-Being, Empathy, Moral Identity, and Spirituality on Prosocial Behavior among Malaysian Youth

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of well-being, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality on prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth. A quantitative approach was employed with a sample of 411 participants, using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses to investigate the relationships between these variables. The results revealed that moral identity was the strongest predictor of prosocial behavior, followed closely by spirituality, empathy, and well-being. These findings highlight the central role of moral identity in shaping prosocial actions, with spirituality and empathy also playing significant roles. Well-being, while slightly less influential, still contributes meaningfully to prosocial behavior by promoting emotional stability and life satisfaction. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering moral development, spiritual growth, and emotional well-being to encourage prosocial behavior in youth. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders are encouraged to implement programs that focus on these key areas to promote a more compassionate and engaged youth population.

Keywords: Well-Being, Empathy, Moral Identity, Spirituality, Prosocial Behavior, Malaysian Youth

Introduction

Prosocial behavior, defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, has garnered significant attention in recent psychological and social research, especially among youth populations. The importance of prosocial behavior lies in its impact on community cohesion, social well-being, and the development of empathetic, moral citizens (Baumeister et al., 2022; Eisenberg et al., 2021). In Malaysia, a multicultural society facing various socio-economic challenges, fostering prosocial behavior among youth is increasingly seen as a vital strategy for promoting social harmony and resilience (Abdul Rahman & Azman, 2020; Chong et al.,

2019). As young adults transition into influential members of society, understanding the key factors that drive prosocial behavior is crucial for policymakers and educators.

One of the significant factors influencing prosocial behavior is individual well-being, which encompasses emotional, psychological, and social dimensions (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Diener et al., 2018). Studies have shown that higher levels of well-being positively correlate with increased prosocial tendencies, as individuals with greater life satisfaction and psychological balance are more likely to extend help to others (Caprara et al., 2017; Steger et al., 2019). Among Malaysian youth, well-being is often shaped by cultural, familial, and economic contexts, making it a multifaceted predictor of prosocial behavior (Abdul Hamid et al., 2021; Musa & Khalid, 2020). Thus, exploring the link between well-being and prosocial actions among this demographic is of critical importance.

Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, has long been identified as a key driver of prosocial behavior (Batson, 2011; Davis, 1983). Recent research has demonstrated that individuals with higher levels of empathy are more likely to engage in helping behaviors, driven by emotional connections to the needs of others (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2019). In Malaysia, cultural factors such as collectivism and strong family ties may amplify the role of empathy in fostering prosocial actions among youth (Ismail & Rahim, 2021; Hossain et al., 2022). This connection suggests that empathy plays a foundational role in promoting social cohesion and positive interactions within diverse communities.

Another critical factor is moral identity, which refers to the degree to which individuals incorporate moral traits such as honesty, compassion, and fairness into their self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy et al., 2019). Individuals with a strong moral identity are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior as a reflection of their self-image and ethical values (Shao et al., 2021; Jennings et al., 2020). Among Malaysian youth, where moral education is embedded in the school curriculum, the development of moral identity can significantly influence their willingness to participate in socially beneficial actions (Tan et al., 2020; Chong & Lim, 2021).

Finally, spirituality, which encompasses beliefs, values, and practices related to a sense of connection to something greater than oneself, has been found to inspire prosocial behavior through its promotion of altruism and compassion (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Emmons, 2018). Spirituality encourages individuals to act in ways that align with their moral and ethical beliefs, often resulting in behaviors that benefit others (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). In the Malaysian context, where spirituality is deeply rooted in cultural and religious practices, it plays a crucial role in shaping the prosocial attitudes and actions of youth (Ismail et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Well-being and Prosocial Behavior

Well-being, which includes dimensions such as emotional, psychological, and social well-being, is a fundamental factor influencing prosocial behavior. Numerous studies have demonstrated that individuals who report higher levels of well-being are more likely to engage in prosocial activities such as volunteering, helping others, and participating in

community services (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020). Research by Abdul Rahman and Ismail (2021) found that youth with higher life satisfaction are more inclined to exhibit prosocial behavior, as well-being positively affects their motivation to contribute to the well-being of others. This relationship is particularly relevant in the Malaysian context, where youth well-being has been identified as a crucial factor in fostering social cohesion (Musa & Khalid, 2021; Chong & Ng, 2020).

In addition to emotional well-being, psychological well-being has been linked to prosocial tendencies. Youth with a strong sense of purpose, autonomy, and self-acceptance are more likely to engage in behaviors that benefit others, as these aspects of psychological well-being foster positive social interactions (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Zimet et al., 2019). A study by Lim et al. (2020) further supports this, highlighting that young adults who score high on measures of psychological well-being are more active in community outreach programs and social initiatives. The cultural context in Malaysia, which places a high value on collective well-being, strengthens this association (Ismail et al., 2021; Musa & Rahim, 2022).

Social well-being, as part of overall life satisfaction, also significantly contributes to prosocial behavior. Socially connected individuals who maintain positive relationships with family, friends, and their community are more likely to engage in altruistic acts (Zhang et al., 2020; Steger et al., 2019). This is supported by a study in the Malaysian context, which found that youth who experience strong social bonds with their peers are more willing to help others (Rahman & Abdul Khalid, 2022). The interconnectedness that comes with high social well-being reinforces the need to act in ways that maintain the well-being of the collective.

Moreover, studies emphasize that well-being not only affects the motivation to act prosocially but also the sustainability of such behaviors. Youth with higher levels of subjective well-being tend to engage in consistent and long-term prosocial actions, driven by their intrinsic satisfaction and life contentment (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener & Tay, 2018). Hence, interventions aimed at improving youth well-being can have the dual effect of enhancing personal fulfillment and encouraging greater prosocial participation in society.

Empathy and Prosocial Behavior

Empathy, defined as the ability to understand and share another's emotional experience, is a significant predictor of prosocial behavior. Multiple studies have found that individuals who exhibit higher levels of empathy are more likely to engage in helping behaviors, particularly in situations where others are perceived to be in distress (Batson et al., 2020; Lopez-Perez et al., 2020). Empathy-driven prosocial actions are especially relevant among youth, who are in a developmental stage where emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships are being shaped (Karimi et al., 2021; Jennings et al., 2020). In Malaysia, empathy has been identified as a key factor influencing young adults' willingness to assist those in need (Hossain et al., 2021; Chong et al., 2020).

Research highlights two key components of empathy: emotional empathy and cognitive empathy, both of which contribute to prosocial behavior. Emotional empathy, or the ability to feel what others are feeling, is a powerful motivator for immediate helping behaviors (Davis, 1983; Lopez-Perez et al., 2020). Cognitive empathy, or the capacity to understand another's perspective, facilitates long-term prosocial actions by enabling individuals to assess

and address the needs of others more effectively (Karimi et al., 2020; Smetana et al., 2019). Both aspects are essential in fostering prosocial behavior among youth, particularly in a collectivist culture like Malaysia, where social harmony and understanding are highly valued (Ismail & Rahim, 2021; Chong et al., 2019).

In addition, research suggests that empathy can be enhanced through targeted interventions, thereby increasing prosocial behaviors. Studies conducted among Malaysian adolescents have shown that empathy-based programs, such as service-learning and emotional intelligence workshops, lead to a significant increase in helping behaviors (Hassan et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2021). This finding is consistent with global trends where empathy training is used to foster social responsibility and reduce antisocial behaviors (Batson, 2021; Caprara et al., 2020).

However, empathy alone does not guarantee prosocial action. Some researchers argue that empathy must be accompanied by other factors, such as moral reasoning and social norms, to translate into consistent prosocial behavior (Batson, 2020; Smetana et al., 2019). This underscores the complexity of the empathy-prosocial relationship and suggests that multiple factors contribute to helping behaviors, particularly in diverse and multicultural settings like Malaysia (Chong et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2020).

Moral Identity and Prosocial Behavior

Moral identity, or the extent to which being a moral person is central to an individual's self-concept, has been widely associated with prosocial behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy et al., 2019). Youth with a strong moral identity are more likely to engage in actions that reflect their ethical values, such as helping others and advocating for social justice (Shao et al., 2021; Jennings et al., 2020). In Malaysia, moral identity is particularly relevant, as moral education is a significant component of the national curriculum, shaping young adults' views on ethical responsibility and social behavior (Tan & Chong, 2020; Rahim et al., 2021).

Recent research has shown that moral identity influences prosocial behavior through its impact on internal moral motivations. Youth with a well-defined moral identity are more likely to act prosocially because they view such behaviors as integral to their sense of self (Hardy & Carlo, 2021; Jennings et al., 2020). This is particularly true in situations where individuals are faced with moral dilemmas, as those with strong moral identities are more likely to prioritize ethical considerations in their decision-making (Aquino et al., 2021; Smetana et al., 2019). Studies in Malaysia have confirmed this trend, showing that young adults with higher levels of moral identity are more likely to engage in volunteerism and charitable activities (Ismail & Rahman, 2020; Chong et al., 2021).

Moral identity is also influenced by external factors, such as family upbringing, cultural values, and societal expectations (Shao et al., 2021; Jennings & Hardy, 2020). Research indicates that youth who grow up in environments where moral values are emphasized are more likely to develop a strong moral identity, which in turn promotes prosocial behavior (Rahman et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). In Malaysia, the role of family and community in shaping moral values is particularly significant, as collectivist cultures tend to prioritize social responsibility and ethical conduct (Chong & Lim, 2021; Musa et al., 2020).

Moreover, moral identity can be nurtured through educational and community-based interventions. Programs that emphasize moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility have been found to enhance moral identity among youth, leading to increased prosocial behavior (Aquino & Shao, 2021; Hardy et al., 2019). In Malaysia, initiatives such as youth leadership camps and community service projects are used to instill moral values and promote prosocial behavior among young adults (Tan & Chong, 2020; Rahim et al., 2021).

Spirituality and Prosocial Behavior

Spirituality, which encompasses beliefs and practices related to a connection with the transcendent or the divine, has been shown to inspire prosocial behavior across various cultural contexts (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Emmons, 2018). Research suggests that individuals who identify as spiritual are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviors, motivated by a sense of moral duty and compassion (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). Among Malaysian youth, spirituality plays a significant role in shaping moral behavior, as religious beliefs are deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the country (Ismail et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

Spirituality is believed to promote prosocial behavior by encouraging individuals to act in ways that align with their spiritual or religious values. Studies have found that youth who engage in spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, or attending religious services are more likely to participate in prosocial activities, driven by their desire to contribute positively to society (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Zhang et al., 2020). In Malaysia, where spirituality is often intertwined with moral education, young adults frequently view prosocial behavior as a reflection of their spiritual beliefs (Hassan et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2021).

Spirituality not only fosters altruism but also enhances individuals' moral compass, guiding them to engage in behavior that aligns with ethical and moral principles (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Emmons, 2018). Youth who engage in spiritual practices often feel a sense of moral responsibility to help others, perceiving prosocial behavior as a reflection of their spiritual beliefs (Shariff et al., 2022; Rahman & Ismail, 2021). Studies have demonstrated that individuals who score higher on measures of spirituality are more likely to donate, volunteer, and assist others, particularly in religiously or spiritually framed situations (Zhang et al., 2020; Emmons, 2018). This is particularly relevant in Malaysia, where many youth are raised in spiritual communities that prioritize collective well-being and altruism (Ismail et al., 2021).

Moreover, spirituality is often intertwined with a sense of community, which further encourages prosocial behavior. Youth who are part of spiritual or religious groups are often encouraged to help others as part of their spiritual duty, which is reinforced through communal activities like charity drives, volunteering, and social support initiatives (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Musa & Khalid, 2021). This group-based approach to spirituality has been found to be particularly effective in encouraging prosocial behavior, as it fosters a sense of belonging and collective responsibility (Zhang et al., 2020; Rahman & Abdul Khalid, 2022). In Malaysia, religious institutions often play a central role in organizing community service activities, which provide youth with opportunities to engage in helping behaviors (Ismail et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

Spirituality also plays a significant role in shaping youth perceptions of social justice, which can drive prosocial behavior (Shariff et al., 2022; Emmons, 2018). Many spiritual traditions

emphasize concepts like fairness, equality, and compassion, which motivate individuals to act in ways that benefit society, particularly those who are marginalized or in need (Steger et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). In Malaysia, where spirituality is often linked to values of communal harmony and compassion, youth who are more spiritually inclined are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors that promote social justice and equality (Ismail et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

In summary, spirituality not only fosters a sense of moral duty and altruism but also encourages collective action through group-based spiritual practices. This connection between spirituality and prosocial behavior is particularly pronounced in Malaysia, where spiritual beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in the cultural context, motivating youth to engage in helping behaviors both within and outside their spiritual communities. Understanding the role of spirituality in fostering prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth provides valuable insights for developing interventions that encourage moral responsibility and social engagement (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Rahman & Ismail, 2021).

Method

Participants

This study involved a sample of 411 Malaysian youths aged between 18 and 30 years, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diversity in gender, education level, and geographic regions across Malaysia. The sample size of 411 was determined using power analysis to provide sufficient statistical power for detecting relationships between the independent variables (well-being, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality) and the dependent variable (prosocial behavior). All participants were fluent in Malay or English and provided informed consent prior to participating in the study.

Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited via social media platforms, local educational institutions, and community outreach programs. Before participation, all individuals were informed about the study's aims, confidentiality protocols, and their right to withdraw at any time. Data collection was conducted through self-report questionnaires administered either in paper form or online, depending on participants' preferences. The questionnaires took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Well-Being

Well-being was assessed using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), developed by Tennant et al. (2007). The scale includes 14 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = None of the time, 5 = All of the time), with higher scores indicating greater levels of well-being. Sample items include "I've been feeling optimistic about the future" and "I've been feeling relaxed." The WEMWBS demonstrated strong internal consistency in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91.

Empathy

Empathy was measured using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), developed by Davis (1983). This scale consists of 28 items, divided into four subscales (Perspective Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress), with each subscale rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Does not describe me well, 5 = Describes me very well). However, for the

purpose of this study, only the Empathic Concern subscale was used, as it directly measures empathy related to others' feelings. Sample items include "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me." The Cronbach's alpha for this subscale was 0.85, indicating good internal consistency.

Moral Identity

Moral identity was measured using the Moral Identity Scale developed by Aquino and Reed (2002). This 10-item scale is divided into two dimensions: Internalization and Symbolization, but only the Internalization dimension, which assesses how strongly moral traits are tied to one's self-concept, was used in this study. Participants rated items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). A sample item includes "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics." The Internalization subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 in this study.

Spirituality

Spirituality was assessed using the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES), developed by Underwood and Teresi (2002). The scale consists of 16 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Never or almost never, 6 = Many times a day), with higher scores reflecting more frequent spiritual experiences. Sample items include "I feel God's presence" and "I feel deep inner peace or harmony." The DSES demonstrated high internal reliability in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

Prosocial Behavior

Prosocial behavior was measured using the Prosocial Behavior Scale (PBS), a widely used instrument for assessing general prosocial tendencies. The scale includes 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating a greater frequency of general prosocial behaviors. Sample items include "I help others even when it is not convenient for me" and "I make an effort to listen to people's problems." The total possible score on the scale ranges from 10 to 50, with higher scores reflecting more frequent engagement in prosocial activities. The PBS demonstrated good internal consistency in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize levels of well-being, empathy, moral identity, spirituality, and prosocial behavior. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine relationships between the independent variables (well-being, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality) and the dependent variable (prosocial behavior). Multiple regression analyses were employed to determine the predictive power of each independent variable on prosocial behavior. All statistical tests were conducted with a significance level set at $p < .05$.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive statistics for well-being, empathy, moral identity, spirituality, and prosocial behavior are presented in Table 1. The results indicate that participants reported moderate to high levels of well-being ($M = 53.20$, $SD = 7.30$), with 62.53% of participants scoring in the high category. Empathy ($M = 36.80$, $SD = 5.50$) demonstrated moderate to high levels, with 60.10% of participants reporting high empathy scores. Moral identity ($M = 40.50$, $SD = 6.20$)

also indicated moderate to high levels, with 64.23% of participants in the high category. Spirituality ($M = 68.40$, $SD = 9.10$) showed relatively high levels, with 65.94% of participants scoring in the high range. Finally, prosocial behavior ($M = 41.30$, $SD = 6.70$) was reported as high, with 67.90% of participants in the high category.

These findings are consistent with previous research, which emphasizes the positive relationship between well-being and prosocial behavior (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020). The high levels of well-being among Malaysian youth reflect their general satisfaction with life and psychological health, which is a well-established predictor of prosocial behavior (Musa & Khalid, 2021; Lim et al., 2020). This supports the idea that interventions targeting improvements in youth well-being can foster more frequent prosocial actions in both community and individual contexts (Steger et al., 2019).

Empathy, an essential motivator for prosocial behavior, was found to be high among participants, aligning with previous studies that highlight empathy's role in fostering helping behaviors (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2020). The moderate to high levels of empathy suggest that Malaysian youth are generally attuned to the emotional needs of others, which is a critical factor in promoting prosocial actions. This supports prior research indicating that interventions aimed at enhancing empathy could further bolster prosocial behavior among this demographic (Batson, 2020; Hossain et al., 2021).

The results on moral identity align with prior findings that individuals with a stronger moral identity are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior (Aquino et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2021). The high levels of moral identity observed in this study suggest that Malaysian youth see moral traits as central to their self-concept, which drives their engagement in prosocial activities. This supports previous research on the role of moral identity in motivating behavior that aligns with ethical standards (Hardy & Carlo, 2021; Chong & Lim, 2021).

Spirituality also emerged as a strong predictor of prosocial behavior, with a majority of participants reporting high spirituality scores. This is consistent with studies that show spirituality's role in promoting altruism, compassion, and prosocial actions (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). The findings suggest that in a culturally diverse and religiously inclined society like Malaysia, spirituality significantly influences youths' motivation to help others, reinforcing the importance of spiritual-based interventions for promoting prosocial behavior (Ismail et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

Overall, the moderate to high levels of well-being, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality observed in this study suggest that these factors are essential in shaping prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth. These results emphasize the need for multifaceted interventions that address emotional, moral, and spiritual domains to enhance prosocial behavior in Malaysian society (Musa & Khalid, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020).

Table 1

Levels of Well-being, Empathy, Moral Identity, Spirituality, and Prosocial Behavior Among Malaysian Youth

Level	n	%	Mean	SD
<u>Well-being</u>				
Low	78	18.98	53.20	7.30
Moderate	76	18.49		
High	257	62.53		
<u>Empathy</u>				
Low	65	15.82	36.80	5.50
Moderate	99	24.08		
High	247	60.10		
<u>Moral Identity</u>				
Low	62	15.08	40.50	6.20
Moderate	85	20.68		
High	264	64.23		
<u>Spirituality</u>				
Low	57	13.87	68.40	9.10
Medium	83	20.19		
High	271	65.94		
<u>Prosocial Behavior</u>				
Low	59	14.35	41.30	6.70
Medium	73	17.75		
High	279	67.90		

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, spirituality, and prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth (see Table 2). The results revealed that all independent variables were significantly positively correlated with prosocial behavior, indicating that higher levels of wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality are associated with greater engagement in prosocial actions.

The strongest correlation was observed between moral identity and prosocial behavior ($r = .76, p < .001$). This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the role of moral identity in motivating individuals to engage in prosocial behavior as an expression of their internalized values (Aquino et al., 2021; Hardy & Carlo, 2021). Youths who perceive moral traits as central to their self-concept are more likely to act in ways that benefit others, reflecting a strong connection between moral identity and prosocial actions.

Spirituality demonstrated a strong positive relationship with prosocial behavior ($r = .73, p < .001$). This result aligns with prior research suggesting that spiritual beliefs and practices promote altruism and compassion, which drive individuals to help others (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). Malaysian youth who report high levels of spirituality are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, reflecting the significance of spiritual values in shaping socially responsible actions.

Empathy was significantly correlated with prosocial behavior ($r = .69, p < .001$). This supports literature indicating that empathy, particularly the ability to feel and understand others' emotions, is a critical motivator for helping behaviors (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2020). Youths who demonstrate high empathy are more inclined to engage in prosocial actions, suggesting that interventions to enhance empathy could further promote prosocial behavior among this demographic.

Wellbeing was positively correlated with prosocial behavior ($r = .65, p < .001$). This finding is consistent with previous research showing that individuals with higher levels of emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing are more likely to participate in prosocial activities (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020). Youths who experience high wellbeing are more motivated to contribute to the welfare of others, reflecting the importance of wellbeing as a predictor of prosocial behavior.

These correlations provide valuable insights into the factors influencing prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth. Moral identity emerged as the strongest predictor, followed closely by spirituality, empathy, and wellbeing. These findings suggest that interventions targeting moral education, spiritual development, and emotional wellbeing could significantly enhance prosocial behavior in Malaysian youth.

Table 2

Correlations Between Wellbeing, Empathy, Moral Identity, Spirituality, and Prosocial Behavior

Variable	Prosocial Behavior	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Well-being	.65**	.001
Empathy	.9**	.001
Moral Identity	.76**	.001
Spirituality	.73**	.001

N = 411, ** $p < .001$

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive effects of wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality on prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth (see

Table 3). The regression model was significant; $F(4, 406) = 211.45$, $p < .001$, with the independent variables explaining 71.2% of the variance in prosocial behavior ($R^2 = 0.712$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.709$). All four independent variables—wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality—significantly predicted prosocial behavior.

Moral identity emerged as the strongest predictor of prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < .001$), consistent with previous research highlighting the central role of moral identity in driving prosocial actions (Aquino et al., 2021; Hardy & Carlo, 2021). Youths who view moral traits as integral to their self-concept are more likely to engage in behaviors that benefit others, reflecting the critical influence of moral identity on prosocial behavior.

Spirituality was the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < .001$), aligning with studies that emphasize the role of spiritual beliefs in fostering altruism and compassion (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). Youths with higher levels of spirituality are more inclined to engage in prosocial activities, driven by values of empathy, kindness, and community service, which are often central to spiritual practices.

Empathy also significantly predicted prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < .001$), supporting literature that positions empathy as a key motivator for helping behaviors (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2020). Youths who demonstrate higher levels of empathy are more attuned to others' emotional needs, which drives them to act in ways that help and support others.

Finally, wellbeing was also a significant predictor of prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of emotional and psychological wellbeing are more likely to participate in prosocial actions (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020). This indicates that youths who experience greater life satisfaction and emotional stability are more motivated to engage in behaviors that benefit others.

These findings confirm the strong and multifaceted influence of moral identity, spirituality, empathy, and wellbeing on prosocial behavior. Moral identity and spirituality emerged as the strongest predictors, highlighting the importance of internalized values and spiritual beliefs in motivating prosocial actions. Meanwhile, empathy and wellbeing also play critical roles, suggesting that interventions targeting emotional development and life satisfaction may further enhance prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth.

Table 3

Regression Analysis for Wellbeing, Empathy, Moral Identity, and Spirituality on Prosocial Behavior

Variable	Prosocial Behavior			
	B	SE. B	Beta, β	<i>p</i>
Well-being	0.38	0.07	0.40	.001
Empathy	0.41	0.08	0.43	.001
Moral Identity	0.52	0.06	0.50	.001
Spirituality	0.47	0.08	0.46	.001
R²	.712			
Adjusted R²	.709			
F	211.45			

$R^2 = 0.712$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.709$, $F = 211.45$ ($p < .001$)

Implications for Prosocial Behavior: Policy and Practice

The findings from this study carry important implications for understanding the factors that influence prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth. Wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality were all significant predictors, suggesting that educators, community leaders, and policymakers should focus on these areas to foster prosocial actions among youth.

Moral identity emerged as the strongest predictor of prosocial behavior, highlighting the importance of promoting ethical development and moral education in youth programs. Interventions that emphasize the internalization of moral values, such as leadership programs, community service, and character-building initiatives, could encourage youths to adopt prosocial behavior as part of their self-identity (Aquino et al., 2021; Hardy & Carlo, 2021). By fostering environments where moral traits are reinforced, educators and community leaders can cultivate a generation of socially responsible individuals.

Spirituality also played a critical role in predicting prosocial behavior. This finding emphasizes the importance of integrating spiritual and religious values into youth development programs, especially in a multicultural society like Malaysia, where spiritual beliefs are deeply embedded in the cultural fabric (Shariff et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). Programs that encourage reflection, compassion, and altruism, rooted in spiritual teachings, could further inspire prosocial actions in youths, particularly through religious institutions and community engagement initiatives.

Empathy significantly predicted prosocial behavior, underlining the need for emotional intelligence training and empathy development programs in schools and youth organizations. Initiatives that foster empathy, such as peer support groups, mentorship programs, and community outreach activities, can help youth connect with the emotional experiences of others, driving them to engage in prosocial behavior (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2020). Policymakers should prioritize interventions that enhance emotional understanding as part of a comprehensive approach to youth development.

Finally, wellbeing was also a significant predictor, suggesting that promoting emotional and psychological wellbeing is critical to encouraging prosocial behavior. Mental health programs,

counseling services, and initiatives that enhance life satisfaction could indirectly increase prosocial engagement by improving the overall wellbeing of youth (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020). Youths who experience higher levels of life satisfaction are more likely to extend their positive emotional states to others through helping behaviors.

Practical Applications for Educators and Policy Makers

The relationships revealed in this study provide clear guidance for practical applications in educational and community settings. Educators should integrate moral education, emotional intelligence, and wellbeing-enhancing activities into their curricula to equip youths with the skills and values necessary for prosocial behavior. Leadership programs that focus on moral identity development and empathy training can have lasting effects on students' attitudes and behaviors.

Policymakers should support youth engagement programs that foster spirituality, empathy, and moral development. Encouraging youth participation in community service, religious activities, and cultural exchange programs can enhance prosocial behavior and contribute to community cohesion. Additionally, mental health initiatives aimed at improving youth wellbeing should be a priority, as enhancing life satisfaction could increase prosocial actions among Malaysian youth.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community leaders can also leverage social media and digital platforms to promote prosocial campaigns, highlighting examples of youth involvement in community service and helping behaviors. By fostering a culture of empathy, spirituality, and moral responsibility, Malaysian youth can be guided toward becoming more engaged and socially responsible citizens.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth, several limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between the independent variables and prosocial behavior. Future studies should adopt a longitudinal approach to track changes in prosocial behavior over time and examine how these relationships evolve as youths mature (Caprara et al., 2021; Diener et al., 2020).

Additionally, this study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce biases such as social desirability. Future research should consider using a mixed-methods approach, including interviews and behavioral observations, to gain a deeper understanding of how youths engage in prosocial actions and the underlying motivations for such behaviors (Lopez-Perez et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2020).

Moreover, this study focused specifically on Malaysian youth, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Future research could explore how similar factors influence prosocial behavior in different countries and cultural settings, particularly in societies with varying degrees of spiritual emphasis, moral education, and empathy development (Zhang et al., 2020; Shariff et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the significant roles of wellbeing, empathy, moral identity, and spirituality in shaping prosocial behavior among Malaysian youth. Moral identity emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that fostering moral development is crucial for encouraging prosocial actions. Spirituality and empathy also play important roles, reinforcing the need for emotional and spiritual growth in youth development programs. Wellbeing, while slightly less influential, still contributes meaningfully to prosocial behavior, particularly through the enhancement of life satisfaction and emotional stability.

These results have clear implications for educators, community leaders, and policymakers, who should focus on promoting moral identity, spirituality, empathy, and wellbeing to foster more prosocial behavior among youths. Future research should continue to explore these relationships across diverse cultural contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence prosocial behavior in youth.

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