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Item Type	Journal article
Authors	Bhogal, Manpal Singh;Farrelly, Daniel
Citation	Bhogal, M. S. and Farrelly, D. (2019) The psychology of prosocial behavior: An introduction to a special issue, Current Psychology. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00377-9
DOI	10.1007/s12144-019-00377-9
Publisher	Springer Science and Business Media LLC
Journal	Current Psychology
Download date	2026-05-13 05:49:12
License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/2436/622638

The Psychology of Prosocial Behavior: An Introduction to a Special Issue

Manpal Singh Bhogal (m.s.b2@wlv.ac.uk)¹ & Daniel Farrelly (d.farrelly@worc.ac.uk)²

¹ Department of Psychology, University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, WV1 1LY, UK

² School of Psychology, University of Worcester, St John's Campus, Henwick Grove, Worcester,
WR2 6AJ, UK

We are pleased to introduce our special issue for *Current Psychology* titled *The Psychology of Prosocial Behavior*. Researchers have long sought to empirically and philosophically explore why people are prosocial to others. Explanations have derived from a variety of disciplinary frameworks including economics, psychology, anthropology, biology, and philosophy. The collection of papers in this special issue showcase the diversity of approaches in psychology whereby people aim to understand prosocial behavior, ranging from evolutionary psychology to developmental psychology. We would like to thank Prof. Richard Ferraro, editor-in-chief of *Current Psychology* for supporting us in bringing you this special issue. We would also like to thank the reviewers who took time out of their busy schedules to review the papers which were both accepted and rejected.

Researchers have long aimed to explore why people help others at a cost to oneself, which is helpful to the benefit of society. We observe prosociality in a variety of contexts, involving family, friends, co-workers and strangers. Prosociality is also an umbrella term for a variety of forms of behavior including altruism (Farrelly, 2019), heroism (Margana, Bhogal, Bartlett & Farrelly, 2019), fairness (Bhogal, Galbraith & Manktelow, 2016b; 2017), and trustworthiness (Ehlebracht et al. 2018). This signifies how powerful and varied prosociality is, and why it important to explore with an empirical lens. This can also be seen in this issue, where the different authors have their own individual perception about what the term *prosociality* means in their research. Essentially, the aim of bringing you this special issue is to bring together the variety of papers exploring the multidimensional phenomenon which is prosocial behavior.

This collection of papers includes empirical findings which strongly add to the literature on understanding prosocial behavior, including a narrative, critical literature review. The first paper by Marti-Vilar, Serrano-Pastor and González-Sala asks the question: what factors predict prosocial behavior? They propose an emotional intelligence model to explain prosociality, finding strong support. This paper shows that prosociality is multidimensional in nature. In the second paper, Stiff, Rosenthal-Stott, Wake and Woodward explore prosocial behavior in students during their time at university towards fellow students. In the third paper, Villar, Oceja, Salgado, Stocks and Carrera provide strong support for the relationship between Quixoteism and helping behavior, the first to explore this link.

In the third paper, Blakey, Mason, Cristea, McGuigan and Messer explored generosity in children, finding children's generosity depends on who they are engaging with, and that children strive for equality when distributing resources. In the fourth paper, Anli reports

the validity and adaptation of the prosocial behavioral intentions scale, finding strong psychometric properties in a Turkish sample.

The following four papers adopt an evolutionary approach to understanding prosocial behavior, largely arguing, and finding evidence that prosocial behavior, predominantly altruistic behavior is a mating signal. These papers finding support that factors such as physical attractiveness influence prosocial behavior. In addition, people are attracted to altruistic mates as altruism is important in mate choice. These papers come from Schwartz and Baßfeld, and Norman and Fleming. Two of these papers include us, and our collaborators James Bartlett and Laura King.

Research by Balconi, Fronda, and Vanutelli offer an interesting view of how inter-brain connectivity is affected by gift-giving. This not only provides a neurological approach to prosociality, but also looks at both the giver and receiver in such exchanges, as each is affected by the process. This is followed by research from Vermue, Meleady, and Seger on how prosocial behaviours in the form of trust (or a lack of it) can moderate how we perceive group members, which has important implications for real world interactions within and between different social groups in society. Gratitude as a prosocial behaviour is examined by Gulliford, Morgan, Hemming, and Abbott, and they show that gratitude has the potential to mask manipulative and self-serving goals. This is a novel perspective on prosocial behaviour, showing that prosociality can have a dark side. Guan, Chen, Chen, Liu, and Zha explore the phenomenon of awe and how it can promote prosociality within a Chinese population. They find a nuanced path between the two, which offers an interesting insight. An extreme form of applied prosociality, that of bone marrow donation, is the topic of

research by Tuszyńska-Bogucka. This study looks at psychological predictors of donating behaviour and find that there are complex and interesting determinants of people's decisions to be prosocial in this context.

The issue ends with a critical review paper critically outlining the literature exploring prosocial behavior and mate choice. Finally, we thank the authors who submitted their papers for inclusion in our special issue. These well-designed and well-written papers have been written by authors at varying stages in their career, and we wish them success in their future endeavors. We hope the readers of *Current Psychology* enjoy reading these papers as much as we have enjoyed editing them.

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