

Determinants of Prosocial Behaviour among Undergraduate Students at a Public University in the Klang Valley

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ABSTRACT

Prosocial behaviour, encompassing voluntary actions like giving and helping, strengthens interpersonal relationships and contributes to a harmonious social environment. In higher education, it supports collaborative learning, psychological well-being, and a stronger sense of community. Despite its importance, limited research has jointly examined the psychological and spiritual determinants of prosociality within Malaysia's multicultural and religiously active university environment. This study aimed to examine the predictive roles of altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction on prosocial behaviour. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 202 undergraduate students (36 males and 166 females) from the Faculty of Education at a public university in the Klang Valley. Participants were selected using proportional stratified random sampling across four academic programmes, and data were gathered using validated self-administered questionnaires. Data were analysed using Pearson correlations and multiple regression. The findings revealed that students exhibited higher-than-expected baseline levels of prosocial behaviour. The multiple regression model was statistically significant, explaining 19.1% of the variance in prosociality. Notably, altruistic tendency emerged as a robust, significant positive predictor of prosocial engagement. In contrast, neither religious practice nor life satisfaction was a significant independent predictor. While life satisfaction demonstrated a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with prosocial behaviour, religious practice showed no significant correlation. These results suggest that students may view religious rituals primarily as a personal obligation rather than an internalised moral compass driving outward helping behaviour. These findings highlight the central role of internalised altruistic dispositions, aligning with the Islamic virtue of *ithār* (selflessness), in fostering prosociality. The study concludes that student development initiatives, policymakers, and educators should prioritise experiential moral value formation and well-being support over surface-level religious practices to effectively enhance prosocial engagement in higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Prosocial behaviour refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit others, such as giving, helping, and sharing, regardless of whether these actions involve personal cost (Crone & Achterberg, 2022). Such behaviour strengthens interpersonal relationships, enhances social reputations, and contributes to a more

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harmonious social environment (Guo et al., 2025). Individuals engage in prosocial acts through intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social norms, displaying selfless, other-oriented behaviours that serve distinct social and psychological functions (Man & Jing, 2025).

In university settings, prosocial behaviour supports collaborative learning, psychological well-being, and a stronger sense of community. Empirical evidence shows that factors such as empathy, positive orientation, and perceived social support significantly increase the likelihood of prosocial engagement (Mohd Nordin & Che Rozubi, 2024; Kristanto et al., 2022; Haller et al., 2022; Laguna et al., 2021). Within Malaysia's multicultural context, relational interdependence is reinforced by family ties, religious values, and communal obligations that encourage support for others. Participation in religious activities and the cultivation of altruistic values further strengthen prosocial norms.

Although personality traits and empathy have received considerable attention, limited research has examined how psychological elements such as altruism, religious practice, and life satisfaction jointly influence prosocial behaviour among Malaysian undergraduates. Understanding these determinants is vital for designing student-support initiatives that nurture prosociality in higher education. The present study was conducted in a Malaysian public university in the Klang Valley, a densely populated and culturally diverse region where students frequently engage in community-oriented activities, peer support programmes, and campus-based charitable events. Previous studies have documented empathy as a predictor of prosociality and found positive associations between religious orientation and prosocial behaviour (Mohd Nordin & Che Rozubi, 2024; Kausar et al., 2023). However, few investigations have simultaneously assessed altruistic orientation, religiosity, and life satisfaction as joint predictive factors. Examining these constructs within a multicultural and religiously active environment offers insight into how psychological and spiritual resources shape prosocial behaviour in higher education.

Altruism, defined as the dispositional tendency to recognise others' needs and prioritise their welfare without expecting material or social gain (Fike & Nickodem, 2025; Lin et al., 2022), is a key personality trait that drives a wide range of prosocial behaviours. Individuals with strong altruistic tendencies are motivated by the ultimate goal of promoting others' well-being (Amitha & Azhagannan, 2024; Lin et al., 2022). Research consistently shows a robust and reciprocal relationship between altruism and prosocial behaviour, and altruistic acts are generally linked to stronger interpersonal relationships and improved mental health outcomes (Stocks & Lishner, 2023; Batson & Powell, 2003). Within the university context, altruism fosters social solidarity and cooperation, strengthening a sense of community and shared responsibility (Rahimyar & Sarvari, 2023). Educational interventions that cultivate altruistic values are therefore likely to enhance prosocial engagement in higher education settings.

Religiosity is another important factor. Across cultural contexts, religious beliefs, practices, and identities are associated with helping, sharing, donating, and empathic actions. Studies show that religiosity predicts prosocial behaviour directly and indirectly, accounting for substantial variance in helping activities among students (Mujidin et al., 2024; Al Ghanam, 2024; Safitri et al., 2024; Kausar et al., 2023). In Islamic contexts, religious education encourages participation in social activities, peer support, and community service, fostering a prosocial mindset (Kholidah, 2022). Religious teachings promote moral responsibility and ethical conduct, which naturally translate into behaviours that benefit others (Wasim & Siddiqui, 2020). Even in Western settings, moral lessons embedded in religious traditions can inspire prosocial actions (Schumann, 2020). These findings underscore the role of religiosity in motivating individuals to prioritise the welfare of others.

Life satisfaction, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of life quality, has also been examined in relation to prosocial behaviour, though findings are mixed. Several studies report a positive association, showing that individuals with higher life satisfaction are more likely to display prosociality, often driven by emotional well-being and autonomous motivation (Amit & AVS, 2023; Durrani et al., 2023; Collie, 2022). Other evidence, however, suggests no significant relationship (Geraghty, 2020). Despite these inconsistencies, the balance of evidence indicates that individuals who feel content with their lives may

possess greater emotional capacity and motivation to care for others and contribute to community-enhancing activities.

From an Islamic perspective, altruism (*īthār*), prosocial behaviour, and life satisfaction are integral to spiritual teachings and the fabric of community life. Altruism is encouraged as both an act of worship and a means to achieve social justice and harmony, representing one of the highest moral virtues in Islam (Setiawan & Abrilian, 2024). The Qur'an reinforces this ideal, as in Surah Al-Hasr, which highlights the importance of selflessness in social interactions (Fatimah, 2021). Islamic teachings frame communal participation and charitable acts as forms of worship that foster peace, nurture positive relationships, and strengthen social cohesion (Bagasra, 2021; Thalgi, 2024). These values also contribute to life satisfaction by enhancing social bonds and collective well-being, while cautioning that balance between caring for others and attending to personal needs is essential for enduring fulfilment.

Despite the growing body of literature, the relationships among altruistic tendency, religiosity, life satisfaction, and prosocial behaviour remain insufficiently explored in Malaysian universities. Current literature largely addresses isolated predictors of prosocial behaviour, with few studies examining multiple psychological determinants together. Moreover, the overall baseline level of prosociality among Malaysian undergraduates has not been well documented. To address these gaps, the present study investigates the predictive roles of altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction, while establishing a baseline of prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students in a Malaysian public university.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: Is there a positive relationship between altruistic tendency and prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students?
- RQ2: Is there a positive relationship between religious practice and prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students?
- RQ3: Is there a positive relationship between life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students?
- RQ4: To what extent do altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction jointly predict prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students?

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Altruistic tendency will be positively associated with undergraduate students' prosocial behaviour.
- H2: Religious practice will be positively associated with undergraduate students' prosocial behaviour.
- H3: Life satisfaction will be positively associated with undergraduate students' prosocial behaviour.
- H4: Altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction will jointly and significantly predict prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Altruism and Prosocial Behaviour

Altruism and prosocial behaviour have attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly for understanding the social functioning of young adults such as university students. Altruism is commonly defined as a dispositional tendency to recognise others' needs and prioritise their welfare by voluntarily helping or benefiting them without expecting material or social gain (Fike & Nickodem, 2025; Lin et al., 2022). It involves actively considering others' concerns and being willing to place their needs above one's own in daily life. Recent studies highlight altruism as a key personality trait that drives a wide range of prosocial behaviours. Individuals with strong altruistic tendencies are more likely to engage in helping actions because they are motivated by the ultimate goal of promoting others' well-being (Amitha &

Azhagannan, 2024; Lin et al., 2022). Research consistently shows a robust and reciprocal relationship between altruism and prosocial behaviour, underscoring their dynamic interplay.

Altruism motivates behaviours such as helping, cooperating, and sharing, even though these actions may also be influenced by egoistic motives or social norms. While altruistic acts can occasionally lead to moral dilemmas or selective helping, they are generally linked to stronger interpersonal relationships and improved mental health outcomes (Stocks & Lishner, 2023; Batson & Powell, 2003). Within the university context, where students frequently socialise and collaborate, altruism fosters social solidarity and cooperation, strengthening a sense of community and shared responsibility. This capacity to nurture affection and mutual care promotes prosocial action and contributes to a more cohesive campus society (Rahimyar & Sarvari, 2023). In summary, altruism functions both as a predictor and a sustainer of prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students, and their relationship is mutually reinforcing. Educational interventions that cultivate altruistic values are therefore likely to enhance prosocial engagement within the university environment.

2.2 Religiosity and Prosocial Behaviour

Across diverse cultural and academic contexts, religiosity is generally associated with higher levels of prosocial behaviour. Religiosity, which encompasses religious beliefs, practices, and identity, has been linked to actions such as helping, sharing, donating, and showing empathy. For example, Mujidin et al. (2024) reported that religiosity accounted for 58.44% of the variance in prosocial behaviour, while Al Ghanam (2024) found that religiosity predicted prosocial actions both directly and indirectly among students. Safitri et al. (2024) also observed a 39.6% positive correlation, indicating that individuals with higher religiosity are more inclined to engage in helping, cooperating, and charitable activities. Similarly, Kausar et al. (2023) showed that students who were more engaged in religious practices were more likely to act prosocially.

Several explanations have been proposed for this positive association. In Islamic contexts, religious education encourages participation in social activities, peer support, and community service, thereby cultivating a prosocial mindset (Kholidah, 2022). Religious beliefs also promote moral responsibility and ethical conduct, which naturally translate into prosocial actions (Wasim & Siddiqui, 2020). Even in Western settings where explicit religious instruction is less prominent, the moral lessons embedded in religious traditions can inspire behaviours that benefit others (Schumann, 2020). In summary, higher levels of religiosity are generally linked to greater prosocial behaviour, reflecting the moral teachings and communal practices that encourage individuals to prioritise the welfare of others.

2.3 Life Satisfaction and Prosocial Behaviour

Life satisfaction, a cognitive component of subjective well-being, refers to an individual's overall evaluation of life quality, encompassing key domains such as relationships, career, and self-esteem (López-Gómez et al., 2020; Merenkova & Solodkova, 2020). Research examining its association with prosocial behaviour has produced mixed findings. Several studies demonstrate a positive link: Amit and AVS (2023) reported that individuals with higher life satisfaction tend to display greater prosociality, while Durrani et al. (2023) found a similar positive correlation, slightly stronger among females. Collie (2022) further showed that students with greater life satisfaction—often tied to emotional well-being—exhibit higher autonomous prosocial motivation, which in turn promotes helping behaviours.

Other evidence, however, suggests a more complex relationship. Geraghty (2020) found no significant difference in life satisfaction between students with high and low prosocial inclination, indicating that life satisfaction does not always translate directly into prosocial action. Overall, prior studies imply that individuals who feel content with their lives may possess greater emotional capacity and motivation to care for others and participate in community-enhancing activities, particularly within university settings. When life is perceived as meaningful and fulfilling, people are more inclined to give back and contribute to the well-being of others. In summary, while the findings are not entirely consistent, the balance of evidence

suggests that higher life satisfaction can foster prosocial behaviour by enhancing emotional resources and the desire to support others.

2.4 Islamic Perspectives

Islam places strong emphasis on altruism, prosocial behaviour, and life satisfaction, considering these values integral to its spiritual teachings and the fabric of community life. Altruism (*īthār*) refers to the noble act of preferring others' needs over one's own, which fosters social cohesion and promotes collective well-being. Rooted in Islamic principles, altruism is encouraged as both an act of worship and a means to achieve social justice and harmony. According to Setiawan and Abrilian (2024), *īthār* signifies prioritising others even at personal cost, representing one of the highest moral virtues in Islam. The Qur'an reinforces this ideal, as reflected in Surah Al-Hasr, which illustrates the importance of selflessness in social interactions (Fatimah, 2021).

Similarly, Islam strongly advocates prosocial behaviour, linking religious devotion to active engagement in society. Communal participation is framed as a form of worship, connecting faith to social activism and justice initiatives (Bagasra, 2021). Charitable acts are seen as essential for fostering peace, nurturing positive relationships, and supporting sustainable development (Thalgi, 2024). These values also contribute to life satisfaction, as altruistic and prosocial behaviours strengthen social bonds and enhance both individual and collective well-being (Thalgi, 2024). Islamic teachings encourage families and communities to cultivate charitable attitudes through education, which in turn nurtures a deeper sense of fulfilment and contentment. Nevertheless, while Islam celebrates selflessness, some scholars caution that excessive focus on others can risk neglecting personal needs, potentially affecting individual well-being. This perspective invites a balanced understanding, in which a Muslim who harmonises altruism with self-care achieves enduring life satisfaction.

In summary, while Western psychological frameworks conceptualise altruism, religiosity, and life satisfaction as distinct empirical variables driving prosocial behaviour through cognitive and social mechanisms, the Islamic paradigm offers a holistic synthesis of these constructs. From an Islamic perspective, dispositional altruism is elevated to the spiritual virtue of *īthār* (selflessness); outward religious practice is given depth through sincere inner intention (*niyyah*) and active service (*khidmah*); and subjective life satisfaction is realised as a state of spiritual well-being (*sa'ādah*) and inner tranquility (*sakīnah*) achieved by fulfilling both social and spiritual responsibilities. Thus, the psychological and spiritual dimensions of human behaviour are not isolated predictors but interconnected facets of a single moral matrix.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of the literature and the Islamic perspectives integrating psychological and spiritual determinants, a conceptual framework was developed for this study. The framework posits that prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students (the dependent variable) is influenced by three primary independent variables: altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction. Altruistic tendency is driven by the internalised disposition to help others, aligning with the Islamic virtue of *īthār*. Religious practice represents the outward engagement in spiritual rituals, while life satisfaction reflects the cognitive evaluation of overall well-being. The framework illustrates the hypothesised direct positive relationships (H1, H2, and H3) as well as the joint predictive role (H4) of these three factors on prosocial engagement.

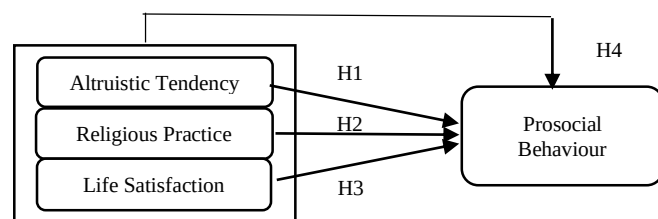


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

3. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the determinants of prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students at a public university in the Klang Valley. The design was chosen as it enables the collection of data from a large sample at a single point in time, allowing for the assessment of associations between psychological predictors and prosocial behaviour (Shafique et al., 2024).

3.1 Participants

Table 1 shows that the target population consisted of undergraduate students from the Faculty of Education. The faculty comprises four academic programmes: Guidance and Counselling (GUIDE), Islamic Education (ISED), Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TAASL), and Teaching English as a Second Language (TEASL), with a total enrolment of 943 students (216 male students, 727 female students).

A proportional stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure adequate representation across programmes, years of study, and gender. Within each stratum, students were selected using simple random sampling. A final sample of 202 students participated in the study (36 males [17.8%] and 166 females [82.2%]).

Table 1. Total number of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education

Programme	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
GUIDE	4	37	11	35	8	53	10	27	185
ISED	15	60	15	35	34	36	8	28	231
TAASL	27	76	17	32	8	58	17	19	254
TEASL	13	85	15	70	13	59	1	17	273
Total	59	258	58	172	63	206	36	91	943

Note: GUIDE = Guidance and Counselling; ISED = Islamic Education; TAASL = Teaching Arabic as a Second Language; TEASL = Teaching English as a Second Language.

3.2 Procedures

Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires distributed to undergraduate students after obtaining formal approval from the faculty. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and all information was used solely for academic research purposes. These procedures were implemented to ensure adherence to established ethical standards for research involving human participants.

All the data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were first computed to summarise participants' demographic characteristics and their overall levels of prosocial behaviour. These analyses provided a general overview of the sample and established the baseline levels of the key study variables.

To address the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses, several inferential analyses were conducted. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the predictive roles of altruistic tendency, religiosity, and life satisfaction in prosocial behaviour. This procedure allowed for the assessment of the unique and combined contributions of the predictors while controlling for potential overlap among variables.

Pearson product-moment correlations were then calculated to explore the bivariate relationships among altruistic tendency, religious practice, life satisfaction, and prosocial behaviour. In addition, a one-sample *t*-test was performed to determine the overall extent of students' engagement in prosocial behaviour by comparing the participants' mean scores to a predefined test value of 48, which represents the expected average level of prosociality. For all statistical tests, the threshold for significance was set at $p < .05$.

3.3 Instrument

Data for this study were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire comprising five sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including age, gender, religion, and level of study. The second section measured prosocial behaviour using a 16-item scale adapted from Hine (2013). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never/Almost never*) to 5 (*Always/Almost always*).

Altruistic tendency was assessed using the Altruism Scale originally developed by Rushton et al. (1981) and later adapted by Witt and Boleman (2009). The scale was rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Never* to 5 = *Very often*), and it demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .91$).

Religiosity was measured using a shortened version of the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI; Worthington et al., 2003). The revised instrument contained 16 items, each rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all true of me* to 5 = *Totally true of me*). It demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .84$).

Finally, life satisfaction was measured using the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). This instrument evaluates participants' cognitive judgments of their overall life satisfaction on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). In the present study, the SWLS demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .84$).

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

Among the 202 undergraduate participants, 36 identified as male (17.8%) and 166 as female (82.2%). While this represents a notable gender imbalance, this ratio is highly reflective of the actual student enrolment within the Faculty of Education at the target public university, where approximately 77.1% of the total undergraduate population (727 out of 943 students) is female. Participants were enrolled in four academic programmes within the faculty: 62 students (30.7%) were from the Islamic Education (ISED), 44 (21.8%) from Guidance and Counselling (GUIDE), 42 (20.8%) from Teaching English as a Second Language (TEASL), and 54 (26.7%) from Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TAASL). A detailed summary of the participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 2. Although a proportional stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure fair representation across different academic programs, the inherent gender profile of the faculty is inevitably mirrored in the final sample.

Table 2. Demographic information of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender (n = 202)		
Male	36	17.8
Female	166	82.2
Programme (n = 202)		
ISED	62	30.7
GUIDE	44	21.8
TEASL	42	20.8
TAASL	54	26.7
Current CGPA (n = 202)		
3.00 to 4.00	199	98.5
2.00 to 2.99	3	1.5
Below 2.00	0	0
Current Year (n = 202)		
First Year	174	86.1
Second Year	18	8.9
Third Year	7	3.5
Fourth Year	3	1.5
Age (n = 202)		
19-21 years old	156	77.2
22-24 years old	42	20.8
Above 24 years old	4	2.0
Race (n = 202)		
Malay	194	96.0
Others	8	4.0

4.2 Regression Analysis of Prosocial Behaviour with Altruistic tendency, Religiosity and Life satisfaction

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction predict prosocial behaviour among students. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $R=0.437$, $R^2=0.191$, Adjusted $R^2=0.18$, indicating that approximately 19.1% of the variance in prosocial behaviour can be explained by the three predictor variables. Table 3 shows the summary of the hypothesis testing.

H_1 predicts that altruistic tendency would be positively associated with prosocial behaviour. Consistent with this hypothesis, altruistic tendency emerged as a significant positive predictor, $B = 0.261$, $\beta = 0.431$, $t = 6.186$, $p < .001$, confirming that students with higher altruism reported greater prosocial engagement. Meanwhile, H_2 predicts a positive association between religious practice and prosocial behaviour. This hypothesis was not supported; religious practice was not a significant predictor, $B = -0.058$, $\beta = -0.054$, $t = -0.771$, $p = 0.442$. H_3 , on the other hand, predicts a positive association between life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour.

This hypothesis was also not supported; life satisfaction was not a significant predictor, $B = 0.093$, $\beta = 0.071$, $t = 1.059$, $p = 0.291$. Finally, H_4 predicted that the three predictors would jointly influence prosocial behaviour. This hypothesis was supported, as the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,198) = 15.601$, $p < .001$.

Table 3. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Predicted Relationship	Test Result	Outcome
H1	Altruistic tendency → Prosocial behaviour (positive)	$B = 0.261$, $\beta = 0.431$, $t = 6.186$, $p < .001$	Supported
H2	Religious practice → Prosocial behaviour (positive)	$B = -0.058$, $\beta = -0.054$, $t = -0.771$, $p = 0.442$	Not Supported
H3	Life satisfaction → Prosocial behaviour (positive)	$B = 0.093$, $\beta = 0.071$, $t = 1.059$, $p = 0.291$	Not Supported
H4	Altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction jointly predict prosocial behaviour	$R = 0.437$, $R^2 = 0.191$, $F(3, 198) = 15.601$, $p < .001$	Supported

The strongest predictor in the regression model was altruistic tendency, indicating that undergraduate students with higher levels of altruism were more likely to engage in helpful and cooperative behaviours. In contrast, religious practice and life satisfaction were not significant individual predictors, suggesting that these factors do not directly promote prosocial behaviour in this population, even though they may exert indirect or combined effects. These results challenge the common assumption that religiosity or life satisfaction necessarily translates into greater social interaction or helping behaviour among undergraduates.

As shown in Table 4, a multiple regression analysis revealed that altruistic tendency was a significant positive predictor of prosocial behaviour ($B = 0.261$, $\beta = 0.431$, $t = 6.186$, $p < .001$). This coefficient indicates that, at the 5% level of significance, students with stronger altruistic dispositions are more likely to perform actions intended to benefit others. Altruism reflects a selfless concern for the welfare of others (Rodrigues & Hewig, 2021), and it has been shown to directly influence voluntary behaviours such as helping, sharing, and comforting within undergraduate populations. Such tendencies are often shaped through socialisation processes involving family, peers, and educational communities, and interactions in university settings can further reinforce altruistic motivations and prosocial engagement. The present finding is consistent with previous research demonstrating that altruistic individuals are especially prone to behaviours that protect and support others (Neumann-Böhme et al., 2022).

Table 4. Regression analysis of predictors (altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction) on prosocial behaviour of students

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	R	R ²	Adj. R ²
(Constant)	56.276	3.194		17.619	<0.001	0.437	0.191	0.18
Altruistic Tendency	0.261	0.042	0.431	6.186	<0.001			
Religious Practice	-.058	0.075	-.054	-.771	0.442			
Life Satisfaction	0.093	0.088	0.071	1.059	0.291			

Dependent Variable: Prosocial Behaviour. Sig. P<0.05

As shown in Table 4, religious practice was not a significant predictor of prosocial behaviour ($B = -0.058$, $\beta = -0.054$, $t = -0.771$, $p = 0.442$). This lack of statistical significance ($p > .05$) suggests that, contrary to common assumptions and prior literature, engagement in religious activities does not meaningfully influence students' inclination to behave prosocially. Wasim and Siddiqui (2020) reported that religiosity can promote prosocial behaviour through humanistic and ethical frameworks, but they also noted that such effects are mediated by personal spirituality and moral reasoning, which may not fully align with outward religious practice.

In the present context, where religion is woven into everyday life, students may view religious practice primarily as a personal or spiritual obligation rather than a motivator for helping others. Another possibility is that some students perform religious duties due to cultural or familial expectations rather than an internalised moral compass that drives prosocial action. Supporting this interpretation, Jacquet et al. (2021) found that religiosity can sometimes correlate negatively with behaviours that benefit unrelated community members, as religious individuals may prioritise moral regulation over active helping.

Similarly, life satisfaction did not significantly predict prosocial behaviour ($B = 0.093$, $\beta = 0.071$, $t = 1.059$, $p = 0.291$). This indicates that students' general contentment with life does not necessarily translate into greater engagement in helping, sharing, or cooperative behaviours. The finding contrasts with much of the existing literature, which often reports a positive association between life satisfaction and prosociality (Durrani et al., 2023). Geraghty (2020), however, observed no significant differences in life satisfaction between students with high and low prosocial tendencies, echoing the current results. One explanation is that students may experience life satisfaction primarily in personal or academic domains that do not directly foster outward-oriented, socially beneficial behaviour. It is also possible that students who feel satisfied with their lives perceive less urgency to engage in prosocial actions or social change because they already view their environment as positive and fulfilling.

According to Table 5, students' altruistic tendency showed a statistically significant relationship with prosocial behaviour, with a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.430$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that students who display stronger altruistic dispositions are more likely to engage in behaviours intended to benefit others. The finding aligns with Amitha and Azhagannan (2024), who also reported a significant positive association between altruism and prosocial behaviour, demonstrating that individuals with higher altruistic traits are more inclined to help others. Students with high altruistic tendencies are primarily motivated by the goal of improving others' welfare rather than seeking personal gain. Unlike individuals with lower altruistic orientations, who may weigh costs and benefits or help only when it is convenient, highly altruistic students act without expectation of reciprocal benefit (Poepsel & Schroeder, 2025).

Table 5. Correlation between prosocial behaviour and altruistic tendency of students

		Prosocial Behaviour	Altruistic Tendency
Prosocial Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	0.430**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	202	202
Altruistic Tendency	Pearson Correlation	0.430**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	202	202

** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$

From an Islamic perspective, such behaviour reflects the principle of *īthār*, the noble act of preferring others' needs over one's own, which the Qur'an praises as a mark of true faith (Surah al-Hashr:9), students with higher altruistic tendencies are thus primarily motivated by the ultimate goal of improving others' welfare rather than seeking personal gain, embodying the prophetic teaching that "none of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim). In contrast, those with lower altruism may act only when personal costs are minimal, reflecting an egoistic motivation inconsistent with the Islamic ideal of selfless service (*khidmah*) for the sake of Allah.

With regard to religious practice, the results shown in Table 6 shows revealed no statistically significant relationship with prosocial behaviour ($r=.119$, $p=.091$, $p<0.05$), indicating a weak and nonsignificant correlation. This suggests that participation in religious activities did not meaningfully influence students' prosocial tendencies in this sample.

These finding contrasts with much of the existing literature, which generally reports a positive association between religiosity and prosocial behaviour. For example, Mujidin et al. (2024) found that religious involvement significantly contributed to prosocial actions, while Abu Alghanam and Shehadeh (2025) reported that higher levels of religiosity were associated with greater engagement in helping behaviours. Similarly, Kausar et al. (2023) observed that individuals with stronger religious orientations were more likely to participate in prosocial activities such as volunteering and charitable giving. These studies attribute the positive link to the central emphasis of Islam on assisting those in need and to the presence of rich moral teachings, role models, and spiritual rewards that encourage helping behaviours. The current result therefore highlights the possibility that, within this university context, religious practice may be experienced more as a personal or cultural obligation than as a direct motivator of outward prosocial action.

Table 6. Correlation between prosocial behaviour and religious practice of students

		Prosocial Behaviour	Religious Practice
Prosocial Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	0.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.091
	N	202	202
Religious Practice	Pearson Correlation	0.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.091	
	N	202	202

**** $p<.001$ * $p<.05$**

From an Islamic perspective, this discrepancy may be explained by the distinction between outward ritual (*ibādah mahdah*, such as prayer or fasting) and inner moral transformation. While Islam strongly emphasises helping those in need and offers abundant role models, teachings, and spiritual rewards for charitable acts, the Qur'an and Hadith repeatedly stress that the intention (*niyyah*) behind deeds determines their spiritual value. Students may therefore perform religious rituals out of cultural habit or social expectation without necessarily translating these practices into everyday prosocial actions. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught that "Allah does not look at your appearance or your wealth, but at your hearts and your deeds" (Sahih Muslim), underscoring that ritual participation alone is insufficient unless accompanied by sincere compassion (*rahmah*) and active service (*khidmah*) to others. This perspective helps explain why religious practice, as measured in this study, is not a significant predictor of prosocial behaviour despite Islam's clear moral teachings that encourage generosity and social responsibility.

According to Table 7, life satisfaction was significantly related to prosocial behaviour, although the association was weak ($r = 0.168$, $p = .017$). This indicates that students with higher life satisfaction were slightly more likely to engage in helping, sharing, and other prosocial actions. The finding aligns with Durrani et al. (2023), who reported a positive relationship between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction regardless of gender. Similarly, Amit and AVS (2023) found that individuals with greater life satisfaction tended to exhibit stronger prosocial tendencies, suggesting that a sense of fulfilment and contentment may encourage individuals to contribute more actively to the welfare of others.

Table 7. Correlation between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction of students

		Prosocial Behaviour	Life Satisfaction
Prosocial Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	0.168*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.017
	N	202	202
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.091	
	N	202	202

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

From an Islamic perspective, this relationship reflects the concepts of *sa'ādah* (true well-being) and *sakīnah* (inner tranquillity) in which lasting happiness arises not only from personal contentment but also from fulfilling social and spiritual responsibilities. The Qur'an describes believers as those "who give in charity, seeking thereby the countenance of Allah, and they will soon be well-pleased" (al-Layl 92:18–21), suggesting that helping others brings both spiritual reward and inner satisfaction. Acts of selfless service (*khidmah*) are regarded as a means of attaining blessings (*barakah*) and psychological peace, which can reduce stress and enhance mood, paralleling findings that helping others provides emotional relief and fulfilment (Khanna et al., 2017). Thus, prosocial behaviour not only benefits society but also nurtures an individual's sense of purpose and happiness, aligning with Islam's holistic view of well-being.

4.3 Extent of Students' Involvement in Prosocial Behaviour

As shown in Table 8, participants reported prosocial behaviour levels that were significantly higher than the expected benchmark. The mean score for prosocial behaviour ($M = 69.34$) was statistically greater than the test value of 48, indicating that the undergraduate students in this study display a strong tendency towards helping and cooperative actions.

Table 8. Level of prosocial behaviour Mean, Standard deviations, t-obtained values

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-obtained	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Differences
Prosocial Behaviour	202	69.34	7.504	40.419	201	<.001	21.342

Test Value: 48

Mean: $69.34 > 48$

Several factors may explain this elevated level of prosociality. First, social connectedness and perceived social support among students likely encourage prosocial engagement. Universities that foster a sense of community and provide robust support systems tend to cultivate greater interpersonal trust and a stronger willingness to participate in prosocial activities (Su & Wang, 2023).

Second, many students in this sample actively participate in clubs and co-curricular programmes that complement their studies and provide opportunities for volunteering, which can further enhance prosocial behaviour. Chit (2020) found that universities promoting voluntary initiatives, such as campus-based service clubs, consistently observe higher levels of prosocial activity among students. Finally, religious orientation may also play a role.

Kausar et al. (2023) reported that students with stronger religious commitments are more inclined to engage in prosocial acts, as their beliefs frame helping others as both a spiritual duty and a moral obligation. Such motivations can strengthen the willingness to act for the benefit of others and reinforce higher levels of prosociality within the student population.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examines the determinants of prosocial behaviour among undergraduate students at a Malaysian public university located in the Klang Valley. The findings revealed that H1 was supported, as altruistic tendency emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor of prosocial behaviour. In contrast, H2 was not supported, because religious practice did not significantly predict prosocial behaviours. Similarly,

H3 was not supported, as life satisfaction was not a significant predictor, although it demonstrated a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with prosocial behaviour. Finally, H4 was supported, with altruistic tendency, religious practice, and life satisfaction collectively accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in prosocial behaviour. These results suggest that internalised altruistic dispositions play a more critical role in shaping prosocial behaviour than external factors, such as religious practice or overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, the high average level of prosocial behaviour indicates that students generally display socially responsible and helpful behaviours that extend beyond expected levels.

From an Islamic perspective, these findings resonate with the principle of *īthār*, the act of prioritising others' needs above one's own, which the Qur'an regards as a hallmark of true faith (Fatimah, 2021; Setiawan & Abrilian, 2024). Charitable acts and social engagement are understood as forms of worship that strengthen communal harmony and support sustainable development (Thalgi, 2024), and Bagasra (2021) similarly notes that Islam links spiritual devotion to active service and social justice. The prominence of altruistic tendency in this study reflects these teachings: when students internalise Islamic values of compassion and selflessness, prosocial behaviour tends to flourish, even in the absence of consistent outward religious practice. In this sense, the high average level of prosocial behaviour suggests that these undergraduates largely embody the Islamic ethos of social responsibility and collective well-being, one that extends beyond ritual observance alone.

It is also worth noting that this study captured only a single snapshot of student life at one point in time. This is a meaningful limitation, given that the vast majority of participants (86.1%) were first-year students. Over the course of a four-year degree, students grow, encounter new challenges, and mature, and without tracking them over time, we cannot know how their altruism, religious practice, or life satisfaction might shift as they move toward graduation. It remains unclear, for instance, whether students naturally become more helpful as they get older, or whether it is the university experience itself that shapes these behaviours over time. Future research would benefit from following the same cohort of students from their first semester through to graduation to capture this developmental picture more fully.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships among altruism, religiosity, life satisfaction, and prosocial behaviour. The sample was also drawn from a single public university and was heavily skewed toward female, Malay, and first-year students (82.2% female), which limits how far the results can be generalised to other demographic, cultural, or institutional settings. In addition, because the study relied on self-reported measures, responses, particularly on sensitive constructs like religiosity and prosocial behaviour, may have been shaped by social desirability bias rather than actual behaviour. Finally, the model examined only three predictors: altruism, religiosity, and life satisfaction. Other factors that plausibly shape prosocial behaviour, such as empathy, moral reasoning, peer influence, and personality traits, were not included, which may explain the model's limited explanatory power.

The pronounced gender imbalance in the sample (82.2% female) deserves closer attention, as it may have shaped the results in several ways. The elevated baseline level of prosocial behaviour observed here ($M = 69.34$) could partly reflect this imbalance, since prior research suggests women are often socialised toward relational helping, empathy, and comforting behaviours more than men. Gender may also moderate the underlying psychological dynamics, for instance, some studies find that the link between life satisfaction and prosocial engagement is stronger among women. Given that female participants dominate this dataset, the strong predictive role of altruistic tendency, and the non-significant contributions of religiosity and life satisfaction, may say more about female-centric patterns than about a gender-neutral phenomenon. Future studies would benefit from more gender-balanced samples to test whether these predictive relationships hold consistently across both male and female undergraduates.

5.2 Implications of the Study

Despite its limitations, this study offers several meaningful implications for higher education policy, curriculum design, and student development initiatives. The finding that altruism is the strongest predictor of prosocial behaviour suggests that universities should prioritise the cultivation of internalised moral values and social responsibility. Programmes such as service-learning, peer mentoring, and community engagement initiatives could serve as effective platforms for developing altruistic dispositions in students.

The weak but significant correlation between life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour points to the importance of promoting student well-being as part of a holistic educational experience. Student affairs offices, counsellors, and academic advisors should be encouraged to integrate mental health and well-being support into academic life, which may indirectly enhance social responsibility and civic engagement.

The non-significant role of religious practice in predicting prosocial behaviour invites a re-examination of how religious and moral education is approached within university settings. It suggests that surface-level engagement with religious rituals may not be sufficient to promote ethical and prosocial conduct. A shift toward value-based and experiential moral education may be more effective in shaping students' prosocial orientation.

Finally, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of youth social behaviour in the Malaysian context and provides a foundation for future research that incorporates a broader range of psychological, social, and cultural variables. Policymakers and educators should leverage these insights to design interventions that not only develop academic excellence but also nurture socially responsible and empathetic graduates.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the scope and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research are recommended. First, future studies should consider employing a longitudinal research design to better understand the developmental trajectory of prosocial behaviour over time, particularly in relation to dynamic variables such as life satisfaction and evolving personal values. Longitudinal data would offer greater insight into causal relationships that cannot be established through a cross-sectional approach. Second, expanding the sample to include diverse institutional contexts, such as private universities or institutions in rural regions, would enhance the generalisability of findings across different socio-cultural and educational environments in Malaysia. Future research could also adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrate qualitative interviews or focus group discussions to capture the deeper psychological and contextual nuances behind students' prosocial behaviours.

Moreover, it is recommended that subsequent studies explore additional psychological constructs such as empathy, moral reasoning, social norms, peer influence, and personality traits that may serve as stronger or complementary predictors of prosocial behaviour. These variables could provide a more comprehensive explanatory model. Furthermore, cross-cultural comparative studies may yield valuable insights into how cultural and religious values influence prosocial tendencies among students in different national or regional contexts. Finally, future research should also consider involving educators or peers as secondary informants to mitigate potential biases inherent in self-reported data and to validate students' reported behaviours with observable actions.

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7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Aishah Hanim Abd Karim: carried out the research, conceptualised the central research idea, and provided conceptual framework. **All authors** were responsible for data collection. **Harith Irfan Husrin:** performed the statistical analyses and prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. **All authors** contributed to the revision of the manuscript, critically reviewed the content, and approved the final version for submission.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

During the preparation of this work, the authors used generative AI technologies, specifically Gemini Notebook, solely to improve the language clarity, readability, and overall English phrasing of the manuscript's draft. After using these tools, the authors reviewed, edited, and verified the content to ensure accuracy and take full responsibility for the final published work and its scientific integrity.

DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The dataset used and/or analysed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All participants provided written informed consent prior to data collection. Participation was completely voluntary, and respondents' anonymity and data confidentiality were strictly maintained.

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