


RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Prosocial behavior in early adulthood: A Big Five Personality Trait analysis

 <https://doi.org/10.32505/inspira.v6i1.11748>

 Fikriyah Iftinan Fauzi<sup>1</sup>,  Yunita<sup>2</sup>,  Angelia Sekar Langit<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Universitas Medan Area, North Sumatra, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, Universitas Medan Area, North Sumatra, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Department of Psychology, Universitas Medan Area, North Sumatra, Indonesia

## Corresponding Author:

Fikriyah Iftinan Fauzi (email: [fikriyahiftinan@staff.uma.ac.id](mailto:fikriyahiftinan@staff.uma.ac.id))

## ABSTRACT

Prosocial behaviors, such as helping, sharing, and cooperating, constitute crucial aspects of social interaction and societal cohesion. However, individuals exhibit variations in the frequency and contexts in which they engage in prosocial acts. Personality is hypothesized as a key psychological factor influencing prosociality. This study examined differences in prosocial levels observed across Big Five personality types among young adults. A quantitative research approach was employed. Participants comprised 150 individuals, who were obtained using quota sampling. The targeted sample size was 150, with 30 participants per Big Five personality type. The research design employed was comparative. Data analysis utilized one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), with the Big Five personality types—Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Agreeableness—serving as the classification factor. Data interpretation revealed significant differences in prosocial levels across the Big Five personality types: Agreeableness ( $M = 98.40$ ), Extraversion ( $M = 92.83$ ), Openness to Experience ( $M = 82.33$ ), Conscientiousness ( $M = 66.77$ ), and Emotional Stability ( $M = 54.13$ ). Consequently, the Agreeableness and Extraversion personality types demonstrated high prosocial levels, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness types exhibited moderate prosocial levels, and the Emotional Stability type displayed a low prosocial level.

## Article History:

Received 20 May 2025

Revised 30 May 2025

Accepted 20 June 2025

**Keywords:** agreeableness; Big Five Personality Traits; early adulthood; prosocial behavior; rural psychology

## INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social creatures, requiring social support and contact for survival. Individuals engage in increasingly complex social networks from birth, ranging from minor units like families to broader communities such as friendship groups, schools, workplaces, and society. Through socialization, individuals learn to recognize and adhere to prevailing norms, values, and behavioral patterns in their environment. This process enables adaptation and active participation in communal life. Without social interaction, collective existence would be impossible (Soekanto, 2017).

## How to cite (APA 7th Edition)

Fauzi, F. I., Yunita, Y. & Langit, A. S. (2025). Prosocial behavior in early adulthood: A Big Five Personality Trait analysis. *INSPIRA: Indonesian Journal of Psychological Research*, 6(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.32505/inspira.v6i1.11748>



This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Copyright ©2025 by Fikriyah Iftinan Fauzi, Yunita & Angelia Sekar Langit

Appropriate social conduct includes positive social interactions, such as mutual assistance among humans. Prosocial behavior—actions benefiting others more than oneself, with positive social impacts to enhance others' physical and psychological well-being (Darmadji, 2014)—must be cultivated to sustain healthy societal functioning. Myers describes it as the willingness to help others without self-interest (Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono, 2002), while Sears characterizes it as helping purely for personal reasons without expecting rewards (Sears et al., 1985). Prosocial behavior encompasses helping, sharing, and empathy (Eisenberg et al., 2015), all critical to social life and moral development (Eisenberg et al., 2015). In young adulthood (ages 18–30), prosociality plays a vital role in forming healthy social relationships, strengthening networks, and enhancing psychological well-being (Luengo Kanacri et al., 2017).

Mussen et al. outline key features of prosociality: (a) helping others to alleviate their burdens, (b) expressing emotions to convey others' feelings, (c) cooperation in joint plans to achieve goals, (d) donation through kindness and provision, and (e) concern for others' welfare, including awareness of their struggles (Nashori, 2008). Personality traits significantly influence prosocial behavior. Individuals' empathetic and prosocial tendencies often remain consistent across temperament and personality. The Big Five Personality trait theory categorizes personality into five dimensions: Agreeableness, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability (Goldberg, 1990).

Agreeableness measures cooperativeness, care, and susceptibility. High scorers tend to be generous, trusting, and receptive to others' views; low scorers are competitive, skeptical, and less attentive to others' feelings. Extraversion assesses sociability, assertiveness, and activity. High scorers are energetic, social, and enjoy others' company; low scorers are shy, reserved, and prefer solitude. Openness to Experience gauges openness and imagination. High scorers are creative, curious, and embrace novelty; low scorers are conventional, practical, and less interested in new experiences. Conscientiousness evaluates organization, diligence, and reliability. High scorers are responsible, disciplined, and achievement-oriented; low scorers are relaxed, disorganized, and less motivated. Emotional Stability reflects emotional resilience. High scorers remain calm, rarely anxious, and unaffected by mood shifts; low scorers are tense, restless, and emotionally volatile.

Research indicates that high Agreeableness correlates with prosociality (e.g., altruism; Caprara et al., 2012), and both Agreeableness and Conscientiousness consistently predict prosocial behavior (Caprara et al., 2012; Habashi et al., 2016). Highly agreeable individuals exhibit empathy and compassion, while conscientious individuals uphold social norms and responsibility.

Agreeable individuals are also cooperative in groups (Graziano et al., 2007), adept at understanding others' emotions, and attentive to others' welfare (Graziano & Tobin, 2009). However, Extraversion and Openness to Experience show mixed associations: Extraverts engage more in social activities and sharing due to their sociability (Zhao et al., 2016), while open individuals may prioritize humanitarian values (Mooradian et al., 2011). Conversely, high Neuroticism (low Emotional Stability) often predicts lower prosociality, potentially due to negative emotions like anxiety and anger (Ashton et al., 2002).

Understanding personality and prosocial development in young adulthood is crucial, as this stage involves pivotal transitions (e.g., education, career, serious relationships). Thus, examining links between Big Five traits and prosociality in young adults holds theoretical and practical significance. Given empirical observations, expert insights, and prior research, personality differences likely yield varying prosocial levels—some traits may predict high prosociality, while others correlate with low or negligible expression. This necessitates research on prosocial differences across Big Five personality types.

## METHOD

This study employed a comparative quantitative approach, grounded in positivist philosophy and aimed at hypothesis testing through numerical data and statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2019). Comparative research examines differences in one or more variables across two or more distinct samples, assessed either concurrently or at different timepoints (Sugiyono, 1967). Sampling utilized the quota sampling technique, wherein participants with specific characteristics are selected until a predetermined quota is fulfilled (Sugiyono, 2019). The target sample size was 150 respondents, distributed equally (30 participants per group) across the five Big Five personality types: Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Agreeableness.

Participants comprised 150 individuals aged 20–30 years. Age and gender distributions are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution sample based on sex and age (n = 150)

Characteristics	n (%)
Sex	
Male	72 (48.00)
Female	78 (52.00)
Age (year)	
20-22	66 (44.00)
23-25	44 (29.33)
26-28	33 (22.00)
29-30	7 (4.67)

The collected data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), with Big Five personality types as the classification factor. Before hypothesis testing, data analysis commenced with assumption checks—normality and homogeneity tests—to ensure the validity of ANOVA results.

## RESULT

A one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences in prosocial levels across Big Five personality types. This conclusion is supported by  $F(4, 145) = 457.338, p < .001$ . Thus, the hypothesis positing significant differences in prosocial behavior across Big Five personality types is accepted. The detailed ANOVA results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** One-way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	70056.227	4	17514.057	457.338	< .001
Within Groups	5552.867	145	38.296		
Total	75609.094	149			

Consistent with the research objectives, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to categorize participants into three predefined groups. This analysis provides essential foundational data for classification. The general descriptive statistics—including minimum and maximum scores, means (M), and standard deviations (SD)—for Big Five personality types and prosocial behavior levels among young adults are summarized in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Prosocial level based on Big Five Personality

Type of Personality	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Agreeableness	30	87	125	98,40	16,941
Conscientiousness	30	56	93	66,77	16,877
Extraversion	30	83	100	92,83	14,473
Emotional Stability	30	45	85	54,13	10,969
Openness to Experience	30	68	88	82,33	13,536

The factor loadings for the six-item Indonesian adaptation of the Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6), designed for adolescents, ranged from .523 to .825. Factor loadings represent the relationships between observed indicators and their underlying latent construct. Brown (2015) proposes .30 as the minimum acceptable threshold for factor loadings, whereas Ford et al. (1986) advocate a more conservative cutoff of .40. All factor loadings in the Indonesian BASE-6 exceeded both established benchmarks. This indicates that the scale's items effectively captured the target construct—psychological adjustment. These robust psychometric properties provide additional empirical support for the measure's construct validity in our study context.

**Table 4.** Fit Indices

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	1.000
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	1.000
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	.007
Standardised root mean square residual (SRMR)	.042
Goodness of fit Index (GFI)	.996

Descriptive analysis revealed distinct prosocial behavior profiles across Big Five personality types ( $n = 30$  per group). For Agreeableness, scores ranged from 87 to 125 ( $M = 98.40$ ,  $SD = 16.94$ ). Conscientiousness showed scores between 56–93 ( $M = 66.77$ ,  $SD = 16.88$ ), while Extraversion ranged from 83–100 ( $M = 92.83$ ,  $SD = 14.47$ ). Emotional Stability demonstrated the lowest scores (45–85;  $M = 54.13$ ,  $SD = 10.97$ ), and *Openness to Experience* ranged from 68–88 ( $M = 82.33$ ,  $SD = 13.54$ ).

These patterns indicate hierarchical prosocial tendencies: Agreeableness exhibited the highest prosocial level, followed by Extraversion. *Openness to Experience* and Conscientiousness displayed moderate prosocial levels, while Emotional Stability showed the lowest prosocial tendency. This three-tier classification was derived through a standard distribution model using  $\pm 0.5SD$  thresholds from the mean, where scores exceeding  $M + 0.5SD$  were categorized as high, between  $M \pm 0.5SD$  as moderate, and below  $M - 0.5SD$  as low.

To assess variations in prosocial levels among young adults across Big Five personality types, each group's empirical mean ( $M_{emp}$ ) was systematically compared to a hypothesized population mean ( $M_{hyp}$ ), with classification determined by the magnitude of deviation relative to the variable's standard deviation ( $SD$ ). Prosociality was categorized as high when  $M_{emp}$  exceeded  $M_{hyp}$  by more than one  $SD$  (i.e.,  $M_{emp} - M_{hyp} > SD$ ), and low when  $M_{emp}$  fell below  $M_{hyp}$  by more than one  $SD$  (i.e.,  $M_{hyp} - M_{emp} > SD$ ). Conversely, prosociality was classified as moderate if the absolute difference between means did not exceed one  $SD$  ( $|M_{emp} - M_{hyp}| \leq SD$ ). This  $SD$ -anchored method accounts for distributional variability, ensuring classifications reflect statistically meaningful deviations rather than arbitrary thresholds. For example, an Agreeableness group with  $M_{emp} = 98.40$  and  $SD = 16.94$  would be deemed high if  $M_{hyp} = 80$  (difference =  $18.40 > SD$ ), but moderate if  $M_{hyp} = 100$  (difference =  $1.60 < SD$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study examined differences in prosocial behavior among young adults based on Big Five personality types (*Openness to Experience*, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability). The analysis revealed significant variations across personality dimensions, with particularly high prosocial levels observed in Agreeableness and Extraversion.

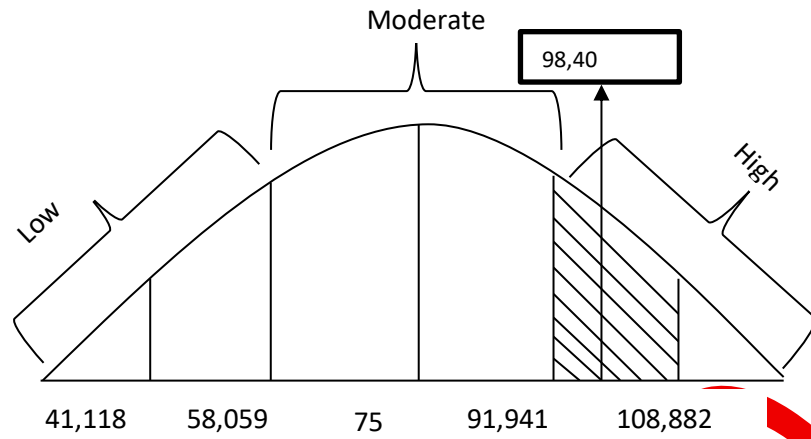


Figure 1. Agreeableness

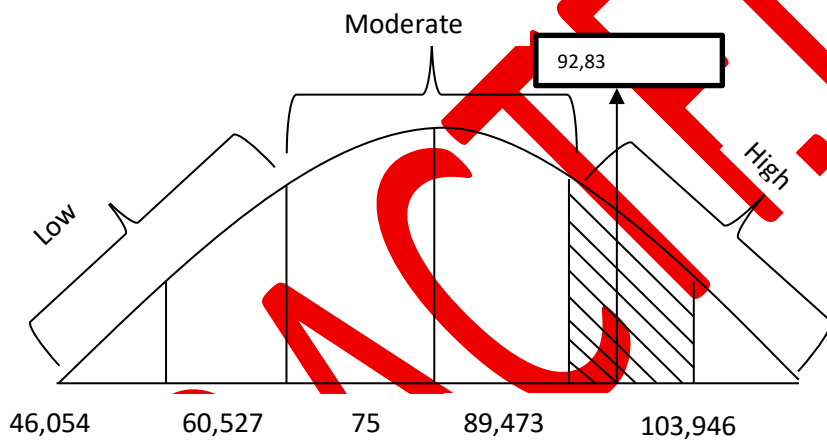


Figure 2. Extraversion

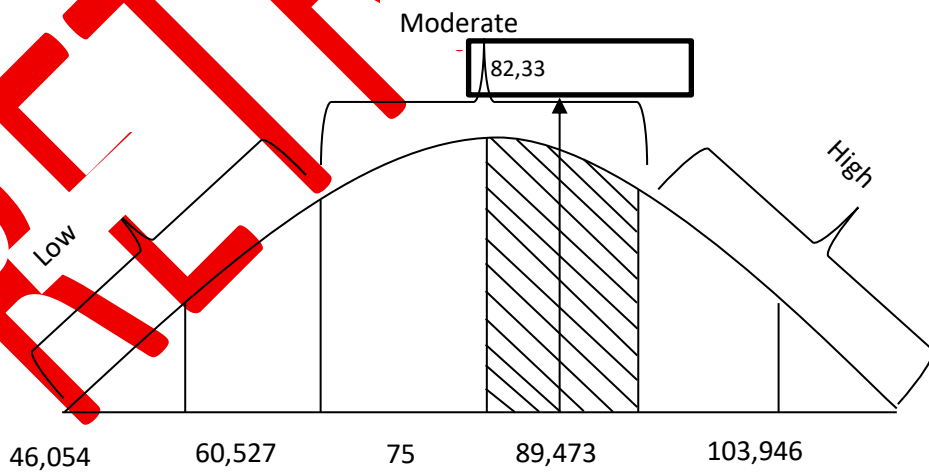


Figure 3. Openness to Experience

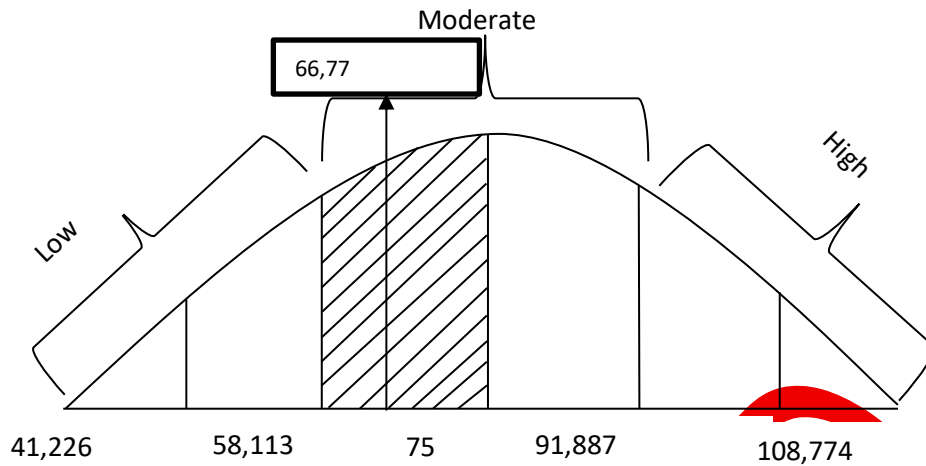


Figure 4. Conscientiousness

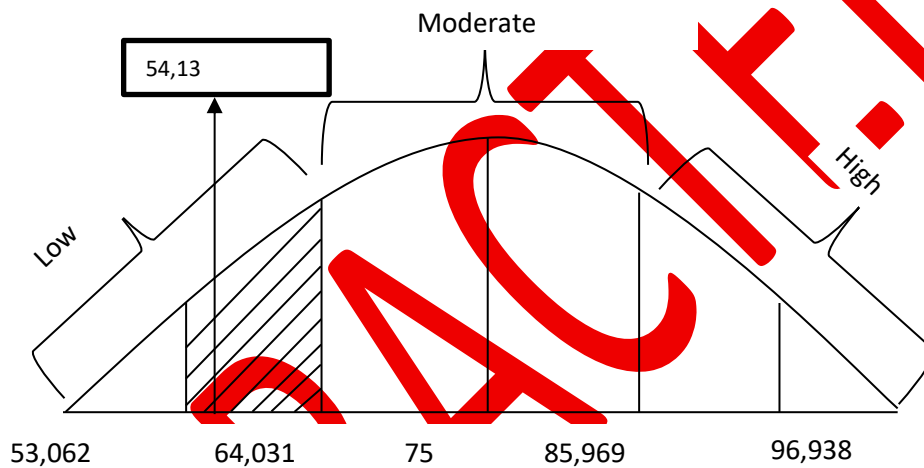


Figure 5. Emotional Stability

The Agreeableness group ( $M = 98.40$ ) demonstrated high prosociality, as its empirical mean exceeded the hypothetical mean plus one standard deviation ( $M_{emp} > M_{hyp} + SD$ ). Similarly, the Extraversion group ( $M = 92.83$ ) exhibited high prosociality under the same criterion. This aligns with established theory: Highly agreeable individuals display elevated empathy, cooperativeness, and helping behaviors due to strong moral values and interpersonal priorities (Graziano & Tobin, 2009). Extraverts' prosocial tendencies correspond to their social initiative and responsiveness to others' needs (Penner et al., 2005), manifesting in village contexts through proactive social participation.

Conscientiousness ( $M = 66.77$ ) and Openness to Experience ( $M = 82.33$ ) showed moderate prosocial levels, where  $|M_{emp} - M_{hyp}| \leq SD$ . Conscientious individuals engaged in structured prosocial acts (e.g., volunteering, scheduled community work), consistent with findings linking responsibility to planned helping (Luengo Kanacri et al., 2014). However, this trait's influence appeared context-dependent, emerging more in long-term initiatives than spontaneous aid. Openness to Experience displayed weaker and inconsistent associations with prosociality, potentially reflecting cultural mismatch: While openness predicts prosociality in multicultural settings, its innovative orientation may resonate less in a conservative milieu.

Emotional Stability ( $M = 54.13$ ) correlated with low prosociality ( $M_{\text{emp}} < M_{\text{hyp}} - SD$ ), possibly due to emotional regulation challenges. Neuroticism (low Emotional Stability) may divert attention toward internal distress over others' needs, particularly in environments with limited mental health resources.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, significant differences in prosocial levels were observed across Big Five personality types among young adults, with Emotional Stability demonstrating substantially lower prosociality compared to Agreeableness, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Conscientiousness. Individuals with Agreeableness and Extraversion exhibited markedly higher prosocial behavior than others. Those characterized by friendliness, cooperativeness, and sociability showed greater engagement in social assistance and community activities. While Conscientiousness displayed prosocial tendencies, these were primarily directed toward structured and planned initiatives. Openness to Experience demonstrated context-dependent associations with prosociality, moderated by sociocultural factors. Conversely, emotional stability consistently correlates with lower prosocial engagement. These results underscore the fundamental role of personality dimensions in shaping prosocial conduct. Consequently, understanding personality profiles provides an empirical foundation for designing targeted social interventions—particularly in community empowerment contexts—where leveraging innate traits could optimize prosocial outcomes.

## DECLARATION

### Acknowledgment

The author expresses profound gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable insights and constructive feedback, which significantly enhanced the scholarly rigor of this article. Special appreciation is extended to the editorial team for their meticulous guidance and expert copyediting throughout publication.

### Author contribution statement

Fikriyah Iftinan Fauzi led the intellectual development of this study, assuming primary responsibility for conceptualizing the research framework, drafting the initial manuscript, and critically revising it for substantive intellectual content. As project guarantor, she oversaw all aspects of the work—ensuring rigorous investigation of accuracy-related inquiries and resolution of integrity concerns throughout the research process. Angelia Sekar Langit contributed substantially to the study's conception and methodological design, spearheaded data collection efforts, and conducted formal statistical analysis with interpretive rigor. Yunita provided critical validation of analytical outcomes, developed visual representations of key findings, and granted final approval of the publishable version.

### Funding statement

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or nonprofit sectors.

### Data access statement

The data described in this article are from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

## REFERENCES

- Ashton, M. C., Lee, K., & Paunonen, S. V. (2002). What is the central feature of extraversion? Social attention versus reward sensitivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(1), 245–252. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.1.245>
- Brown, T. A. (2015). *Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research, 2nd ed.* The Guilford Press.
- Caprara, G. V., Alessandri, G., & Eisenberg, N. (2012). Prosociality: The contribution of traits, values, and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(6), 1289–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025626>
- Darmadji, A. (2011). Perilaku prososial vs kekerasan sosial: Sebuah tinjauan pendidikan Islam. *El-Tarbawi*, *4*(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol4.iss1.art3>
- Eisenberg, N., Spinrad, T. L., & Knafo-Noam, A. (2015). Prosocial development. In *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Socioemotional processes, Vol. 3, 7th ed.* (pp. 610–656). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy315>
- Ford, J. K., MacCallum, R. C., & Tait, M. (1986). The application of exploratory factor analysis in applied psychology: A critical review and analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, *39*(2), 291–314. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1986.tb00683.x>
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative "description of personality": The Big-Five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*(6), 1216–1229. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.59.6.1216>
- Graziano, W. G., Habashi, M. M., Sheese, B. E., & Tobin, R. M. (2007). Agreeableness, empathy, and helping: A person × situation perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*(4), 583–599. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.4.583>
- Graziano, W. G., & Tobin, R. M. (2009b). Agreeableness. In *Handbook of individual differences in social behavior*. (pp. 46–61). The Guilford Press.
- Habashi, M. M., Graziano, W. G., & Hoover, A. E. (2016). Searching for the prosocial personality: A Big Five approach to linking personality and prosocial behavior. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *42*(9), 1177–1192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216652859>
- Luengo Kanacri, B. P., Eisenberg, N., Thartori, E., Pastorelli, C., Uribe Tirado, L. M., Gerbino, M., & Caprara, G. V. (2017). Longitudinal relations among positivity, perceived positive school climate, and prosocial behavior in Colombian adolescents. *Child Development*, *88*(4), 1100–1114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12863>
- Luengo Kanacri, B. P., Pastorelli, C., Eisenberg, N., Zuffianò, A., & Caprara, G. V. (2013). The development of prosociality from adolescence to early adulthood: The role of effortful control. *Journal of Personality*, *81*(3), 302–312. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12001>
- Mooradian, T. A., Davis, M., & Matzler, K. (2011). Dispositional empathy and the hierarchical structure of personality. *The American Journal of Psychology*, *124*(1), 99–109. <https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjpsyc.124.1.0099>
- Nashori, F. (2008). Psikologi sosial Islami. Refika Aditama. <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1970304959946765063>
- Penner, L. A., Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., & Schroeder, D. A. (2005). Prosocial behavior: Multilevel perspectives. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *56*, 365–392. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070141>
- Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono, A. (2002). *Psikologi sosial: Individu dan teori-teori psikologi sosial*. Balai Pustaka.
- Sears, D. O., Peplau, L. A., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social psychology*. Prentice Hall.
- Soekanto, S. & Sulistyowati, B. (2017). *Sosiologi suatu pengantar Edisi revisi*. Rajawali Press.

Sugiyono. (2019). *Statistika untuk penelitian*. Alfabeta.

Zhao, K., Ferguson, E., & Smillie, L. D. (2016). Prosocial personality traits differentially predict egalitarianism, generosity, and reciprocity in economic games. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01137>

RETRACTED