
PROSOCIALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. THE CASE OF STUDENTS OF A CONFESSONAL UNIVERSITY IN CHILE

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SUMMARY

Prosociality is of greater interest in recent decades due to events that have questioned the socially responsible behavior of decision-makers in various organizations. The objective of this research is to describe statistically significant differences in prosocial attitudes through sociodemographic characteristics among students at a confessional university in Chile. A quantitative, descriptive, and non-experimental cross-sectional study was carried out. A non-probabilistic convenience sample of students of the last three years of studies at a confessional university located in south-central Chile was considered. The short scale of prosocial behavior was used, and a descriptive anal-

ysis, exploratory factor analysis, and inferential analysis were performed. Prosocial attitudes are composed of three new dimensions, which are grouped according to the variables scale of prosocial behavior: comfort and commitment to others, empathy and detachment, and solidarity and help. Gender and religion stand out as statistically significant variables. Future research should consider a more diverse study group, including both denominational and non-denominational universities. Likewise, it would be convenient to study the stability of prosocial attitudes throughout the life cycles and their relationship with other transcendent variables such as personality and self-efficacy.

Introduction

The health crisis resulting from the pandemic has led to the implementation of various strategies aimed at providing institutional, political, and personal responses to the challenges of the current context. This health crisis is a global phenomenon, which has forced many states to implement emergency measures due to the complexity of managing a situation that has wreaked havoc worldwide. These factors

present challenges that include aspects of human beings linked to their attitudes, preferences and behaviors, characterized by the particularities and complexities of the prevailing culture in the territories (Morse, 2020; Nayak and Waterson, 2019; Preiser *et al.*, 2018; Severino-González, Sarmiento-Peralta, Villar-Olaeta *et al.*, 2022). Such complexities are interpellated by the challenges responding to the adjustments or modifications which people have developed from their work and personal

spheres, among others (Shafi and Ran, 2021; Vigliano-Relva and Jung, 2021). In particular, the personal dimension manifested as a behavior that evidences the respect for the life of individual self-care and the consideration of health recommendations, which contribute to public health and the common good. This shows the convergence of studies that address prosociality and Covid-19 (Zagefka, 2021; Politi *et al.*, 2021; Severino-González, Gallardo-Vázquez *et al.*, 2022).

Some studies seek to explain the multiple approaches that constitute prosocial behavior (Politi *et al.*, 2021; Zeng *et al.*, 2020). These generally rely on either descriptive or prescriptive norms. This research considers descriptive norms since they refer to perceptions about the manifestation of certain events (Lin and Shek, 2022). Connected to this point, it should be noted that prosocial behavior is a multidimensional concept, which has been subjected to various theoretical

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PROSOCIALIDAD Y RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL. EL CASO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE UNA UNIVERSIDAD CONFESIONAL EN CHILE

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RESUMEN

La prosocialidad es de gran interés en las últimas décadas debido a eventos que han cuestionado el comportamiento socialmente responsable de los tomadores de decisiones en diversas organizaciones. El objetivo de esta investigación es describir diferencias estadísticamente significativas en actitudes prosociales a través de características sociodemográficas entre estudiantes de una universidad confesional de Chile. Se realizó un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo y no experimental de corte transversal. Se consideró una muestra no probabilística de conveniencia de estudiantes de los tres últimos años de carrera de una universidad confesional ubicada en la zona centro-sur de Chile. Se utilizó la escala corta de conducta prosocial y se realizó

un análisis descriptivo, un análisis factorial exploratorio y un análisis inferencial. Las actitudes prosociales están compuestas por tres nuevas dimensiones, que se agrupan de acuerdo a las variables de la escala de comportamiento prosocial: comodidad y compromiso con los demás, empatía y desapego, y solidaridad y ayuda. El género y la religión destacan como variables estadísticamente significativas. Futuras investigaciones deberían considerar un grupo de estudio más diverso, incluyendo tanto universidades confesionales como no confesionales. Asimismo, sería conveniente estudiar la estabilidad de las actitudes prosociales a lo largo de los ciclos de vida y su relación con otras variables trascendentes como la personalidad y la autoeficacia.

PROSOCIALIDADE E RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL. O CASO DOS ALUNOS DE UMA UNIVERSIDADE CONFESIONAL NO CHILE

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RESUMO

A pró-socialidade é de maior interesse nas últimas décadas devido a eventos que têm questionado o comportamento socialmente responsável dos tomadores de decisão em várias organizações. O objetivo desta pesquisa é descrever diferenças estatisticamente significativas em atitudes pró-sociais por meio de características sociodemográficas entre estudantes de uma universidade confessional no Chile. Trata-se de um estudo quantitativo, descritivo e não experimental, de corte transversal. Foi considerada uma amostra não probabilística de conveniência de estudantes dos últimos três anos de estudos em uma universidade confessional localizada no centro-sul do Chile. A escala curta de comportamento pró-social foi usada, e uma análise des-

critiva, análise fatorial exploratória e análise inferencial foram realizadas. As atitudes pró-sociais são compostas por três novas dimensões, que são agrupadas de acordo com a escala de variáveis do comportamento pró-social: conforto e compromisso com os outros, empatia e distanciamento e solidariedade e ajuda. Sexo e religião destacam-se como variáveis estatisticamente significativas. Pesquisas futuras devem considerar um grupo de estudo mais diversificado, incluindo universidades denominacionais e não denominacionais. Da mesma forma, seria conveniente estudar a estabilidade das atitudes pró-sociais ao longo dos ciclos de vida e sua relação com outras variáveis transcendentes como a personalidade e a autoeficácia.

approaches. Caprara *et al.* (2012) define it as voluntary behavior aimed at benefiting others. For their part, Auné and Attorresi (2017) add its characterization as an advanced social skill since it not only facilitates initiating interpersonal interactions, but also allows them to be consolidated and regulated. Van Kleef and Lelieveld (2022) highlight the contributory role to collective well-being.

The literature includes research that considers the personal characteristics of the research subjects, such as gender, age, education, family group

number, and economic income that reveal some particularities of their attitudes and behavior that influence their perceptions and attitudes (Lin and Shek, 2022; Sarmiento-Peralta *et al.*, 2021; Severino-González, Sarmiento-Peralta, Alcaino-Oyarce *et al.*, 2022). These elements are evidenced in research, where differences are presented according to age, gender, and economic income, for example (Kraus *et al.*, 2012; Furman *et al.*, 2020). The study of prosocial behavior and religion has been considered in various investigations, leaving spaces for its

approach through various perspectives (Saroglou and Craninx, 2021).

In this study, students of a denominational institution that declares to be Adventist are considered. In this sense, is important to point out that Adventist education is characterized by allocating its main efforts in providing a broad and comprehensive education in values and faithful in its spiritual principles, since they seek the development of spiritual and humanistic precepts and values (León, 2012). In turn, this poses the challenge of advancing in strategies that

motivate the entire educational community to provide learning spaces that promote the formation of people and professionals who are sensitive and aware of the problems of society, and who feel challenged by their surrounding social context (Blanch *et al.*, 2020; Saroglou *et al.*, 2020).

Prosocial behaviors, attitudes, and values

Prosocial behaviors are a manifestation of social practices that provide bidirectional satisfaction where values such as altruism and solidarity

converge, directly associated with virtuous behavior and social responsibility (Flores-Fernández *et al.*, 2022; Severino-González and Romero-Argueta *et al.*, 2022). It is thus possible to understand the meaning of prosocial attitudes as they facilitate the expression and identification of their own emotions along with the emotions of other people, which stimulates and contributes to optimal decision-making among future professionals (Severino-González *et al.*, 2023).

However, according to Auné *et al.* (2019), there are six dimensions that form the construct of prosocial behavior. This installs challenges and, in turn, places in tension the formative models of all higher education institutions, which are modified and contextualized according to the subject and purposes declared by the studies themselves (Mesurado, 2014; Samper, 2014; Rodríguez, 2014; Gómez and Narváez, 2018; Gómez, 2019 : 1) altruistic behavior; 2) compliant or obedient behavior; 3) emotional behavior; 4) public behavior; 5) anonymous behavior and 6) behavior in emergency situations. It is necessary to reaffirm that prosocial behavior considers the development of specific behaviors, such as helping, comforting, giving, and sharing (Pareja *et al.*, 2019; Cameron *et al.*, 2022).

Social responsibility and prosociality

The study of social responsibility in educational contexts has constituted the theory of university social responsibility (USR) (Huang *et al.*, 2021). This theory has been expanded through various theories or analysis perspectives, such as the stakeholder theory, prosociality, and sustainability, among others (Martí-Vilar *et al.*, 2014; Gomez, 2019; Ali *et al.*, 2021). In relation to this research, it is related to prosociality because the constructs of values and empathy lead a person to develop as a socially conscious individual who

enlightens society through a high social rootedness and sincere desire to help and collaborate with society, especially when there are collective problems that are public and affect the most helpless (Martí-Vilar *et al.*, 2014). For this reason, it is necessary to recognize the fundamental and transcendental role that education plays in the process of forming, developing and strengthening personalities.

The denominational universities in their institutional guidelines declare their commitment to values education (Vattimo, 2012) incorporating spiritual values in correspondence with their creeds and philosophy of life. They thus express human dignity as an essential axis of their teaching and learning processes (Gregorutti, 2012). Prosocial actions in Adventist educational institutions, as in denominational universities generally, are fostered through practices of biblical principles supported by love for God and neighbor (Rodríguez and Marín, 2018). In this sense, denominational universities are challenged to prepare students beyond academic knowledge, stimulating spiritual practice, high human values, and the defense of fundamental rights (Vattimo, 2012).

This is the scenario where the importance of studying prosociality in university students has been demonstrated, due to the links that motivation and context have on prosocial behavior and, above all, during the pandemic (Zuffianò *et al.*, 2018; FioRito *et al.*, 2021). The research subjects' sociodemographic characteristics have been considered (Wu *et al.*, 2020), demonstrating their influence on students' attitudes and perceptions corresponding to the values that support it (Kraus *et al.*, 2012; Rodríguez and Marín, 2018). The present study thus asks: Are there statistically significant differences of prosocial attitudes across sociodemographic characteristics of students at a denominational university in Chile? The objective is to describe statistically significant differences of

prosocial attitudes across sociodemographic characteristics of students at a denominational university in Chile.

Materials and Methods

The present work is an investigation that has a quantitative and sectional approach, due to the procedure used for the application of the questionnaire (Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). It is made up of dimensions, and the type of response is closed through a Likert-type scale. Finally, it is a microsociological and exploratory inquiry (Canales, 2006), which is in line with the recent installation of the university social responsibility (USR) study in denominational universities.

Participants

There are 2,278 students in this confessional university, but only the group of students in their last three years of studies is considered, adding a population of 1,064. These students are trained in various disciplines in a denominational university located in south-central Chile. This research considered a non-probabilistic convenience sample composed of 172 subjects.

Instrument

This research used the short scale of prosocial behavior published by Auné and Attorresi (2017) composed of 15 items grouped into two dimensions: Comforting (Cronbach's alpha 0.77), which is composed of seven items, and Helping (Cronbach's alpha 0.85), with eight items, which were obtained after an analysis of marginal parameters. Statements responses were on a Likert-type scale, where 1 is never, 2 is almost never, 3 is sometimes, 4 is frequently, 5 is almost always, and 6 is always.

The instrument was organized into three sections: the first was composed of two filter questions, firstly to encourage the participation of

students from a denominational university located in south-central Chile, and secondly, to ensure that they were in their last three years of studies; the second section is composed of questions revealing students' sociodemographic characteristics; and the third section is the questionnaire composed of 15 items, which evaluates prosocial behaviors under the dimensions of comforting and helping.

Procedures and analysis strategy

The instrument was administered through Google Forms® and disseminated through social networks. An informed consent sheet was provided where participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the voluntary and strictly confidential nature of participation and could refuse to respond if they so wished. The data was coded for use in the SPSS18 statistical software, evaluating the descriptive statistics and evaluated through an exploratory factor analysis. After this, indicators were applied to determine statistically significant differences according to sociodemographic characteristics.

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics

Table I shows the participants' sociodemographic characteristics, clearly indicating a strong female majority. Most of them are between 18 and 23 years old are single. Most families are made up of 1 to 2 members and the majority declares to be Adventist.

Exploratory factor analysis

The were developed to verify the effective factorial reduction (EFA). A value of 0.896 was obtained for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, while for Bartlett's test of sphericity, the values $\chi^2= 1434.295$; $gI= 91$ and $p\text{-value}< 0.000$ were obtained. All of the above,

TABLE I
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics	Categories	Quantity
Gender	Female	114
	Male	58
Age category	18 to 23 years	115
	24 or more years	57
Marital status	Single	166
	Married	6
Family members	1 and 2	21
	3 and 4	92
	5 or more	59
Religion	Adventist	73
	Catholic	50
	Evangelical	23
	Not adhered to any religion	26

according to Hair *et al.* (2019), allows us to affirm that the application of the effective factorial reduction is adequate. The questionnaire was reduced to 14 variables, eliminating V6, due to the fact that it is not grouped in the factors that correspond according to the theory proposed. The previous point aligns with values that are not considered acceptable in communalities (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Finally, they are grouped in three dimensions (Table II).

On the other hand, for an adequate understanding of the aforementioned constructs (Table III), each of the new dimensions is conceptualized in order to define the epistemological boundaries and the scope it may have in future research. All this should put tension on the current procedure of confessional and secular higher education, as well as the definition of challenges that allow the integral formation of future professionals:

1. Comfort and commitment to others: It is the set of actions that are developed in the form of help, which underlies the genuine desire to collaborate in the face of the difficulties that others may present (Armstrong-Carter and Telzer, 2021). It leads to mutual benefit, as a consequence of the recognition of personal norms, which promote socially responsible behaviors (Pareja *et al.*, 2019),

evidencing an active commitment leading to the performance of compassionate acts.

2. Empathy and detachment: These are the activities which are the result of the ability to understand the experiences, sensitivity and inner feelings of another individual, thanks to the observation of the world from the perspective of the other, activating feelings and experiences in the person (Cameron *et al.*, 2022) as a result of empathy, which is linked to understanding, reinforcement and emotional support (Auné *et al.*, 2015).

3. Solidarity and aid: These are initiatives resulting from the manifestation of support in the face of problems, providing momentary or focused help. These initiatives are related to the principle of virtue. It is the expression of attitudes linked to proximity and availability of help, which contribute to the well-being of other people. These behaviors involve aspects of empathy and solidarity (Zagefka, 2021). The variables that integrate each dimension of the short prosocial behavior scale proposed by this study appear below (Table III).

4.27; median= 4.00; SD= 1.204), due to the influence that the dimension has in terms of the ability to help and empathy in relation to the various situations that another person goes through (Auné *et al.*, 2015). This dimension is highly associated with the Solidarity and helping dimension (mean=4.08; median=4.00; SD=0.945), as they are influenced to collaborate with people in need and also perform actions for them without expecting a reward in return for the help they provide (Louis *et al.*, 2019). The explained variance is 70.093%.

Descriptive statistics

Table IV shows the means, medians, standard deviations (SD), explained variances, internal consistency coefficients and correlations between variables. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for each case is high (Soler and Soler, 2012). We can also identify that the correlations are positive and between some dimensions are moderate and high (Dagnino, 2014). Regarding the valuations related to the mean and median, the highest values are found in the dimension Comfort and commitment to others (mean=

Inferential analysis

The dimensions of prosocial attitudes and the sociodemographic characteristics of the students were considered. Normality tests were also applied considering each of the sociodemographic criteria that characterize the study subjects, followed by applying the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests, because the data respond to a non-normal distribution. Statistically significant differences were only found in relation to gender and religion. The cases where differences are identified according to

TABLE II
ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX OF THE PROSOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

Variables	Components		
	Comfort and commitment to others (CC)	Empathy and detachment (ED)	Solidarity and aid (SA)
V1	0.754		
V12	0.727		
V11	0.693		
V10	0.670		
V5	0.668		
V9	0.623		
V7		0.883	
V2		0.856	
V3		0.761	
V8		0.739	
V4		0.701	
V15			0.828
V13			0.827
V14			0.611

V: Variable.

TABLE III
SHORT PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR SCALE

Dimensions	Variables	Items
Comfort and commitment to others (CC)	V1	When I feel someone is wrong, I show them that I understand.
	V12	I care about the welfare of any individual, group, or community.
	V11	I dedicate an important part of my life to improving the world.
	V10	I commit myself to noble causes.
	V5	If a person tells me about a conflict, I try to make him/her understand the other party's point of view.
	V9	I do volunteer activities.
Empathy and detachment (ED)	V7	I advise people I know about work.
	V2	I act as a support for others.
	V3	I feel the pain of others as my own.
	V8	I relegate my personal benefit to help others.
Solidarity and aid (SA)	V15	I donate to charities
	V13	I keep just enough to live on and give away everything else.
	V14	I participate in charitable activities.

V: Variable.

TABLE IV
MEAN, MEDIAN, STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD), ALPHA AND CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES

Dimensions	Mean	Median	SD	Alpha	CC	ED	SA
Comfort and commitment to others (CC)	4.27	4	1.204	0.886	1		
Empathy and detachment (ED)	2.67	3	1.075	0.889	0.524	1	
Solidarity and aid (SA)	4.08	4	0.945	0.781	0.628	0.285	1

p-values, and the respective descriptive statistics.

In Table V, statistically significant differences can be observed in the Comfort and Commitment dimension, as well as in Solidarity and Help. Regarding the former dimension, the highest values are found in the female gender (mean=4.43; median=5.00; SD=1.160), as they are motivated by empathic attitudes that motivate the development of actions that help others to face problems, evidencing socially responsible attitudes (Esparza-Reig *et al.*, 2021), installing challenges for consideration in strategies that encourage commitment to others especially in the male group since it is found to be lowered. On the other hand, although there are no significant differences in the Solidarity and aid

dimension, it is necessary to place the values found in relevance, since they are the second highest when considering the dimensions that integrate prosociality. We can observe again that females stand out in comparison with males (mean= 4.11; median= 4.00; SD= 0.954), which refers in the

behavior that one has with other people, the ability to provide help when needed. Regarding the latter, it is necessary to recognize the tensions that may emerge in terms of the actions that are manifested when men and women face daily and sometimes everyday events. This could be an input for

designing experience-based strategies to instill values such as solidarity, otherness, and social responsibility.

Table VI shows statistically significant differences according to religion. Differences are found in the Comfort and Commitment to others and Solidarity and help dimensions. Regarding the former dimension, the highest values appear among Catholics (mean= 4.54; median= 5.00; SD= 1.199). This fact places in tension the bases which forge the ideas, principles, and conceptions on aspects that are linked to transcendence, with the meaning of life and the role that we develop in society. All the foregoing could be used as resources to review mechanisms and install actions contributing to the respective strategic orientations, navigation charts, and, above all, missionary duties. Now, recognizing that no other statistically significant differences are found, it is necessary to mention the values present in the dimension Solidarity and help, particularly for Catholic students (mean= 4.54; median= 5.00; SD= 1.199). These values are the product of actions that provide comfort in the face of the adversities that people in society must face and are also supported by the activities that account for commitments made for the neediest in society, which is connected with Catholic religious teachings. Overall, this creates a scenario of challenges that can contribute to improve self-regulation and the deployment of virtuous actions, which favors

TABLE V
MEAN, MEDIAN, STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) AND DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO GENDER

Dimensions	Gender	Mean	Median	SD	p-value
Comfort and commitment to others (CC)	Female	4.43	5	1.160	0.011
	Male	3.95	4	1.234	
Empathy and detachment (ED)	Female	2.68	3	1.092	0.951
	Male	2.66	3	1.052	
Solidarity and aid (SA)	Female	4.11	4	0.954	0.574
	Male	4.03	4	0.936	

TABLE VI
MEAN, MEDIAN, STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) AND DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO RELIGION

Religion	Statistic	Comfort and commitment to others (CC)	Empathy and detachment (ED)	Solidarity and aid (SA)	p-value
Adventist	Mean	4.010	2.840	4.010	0.028
	Median	4	3	4	
	SD	1.136	1.067	0.950	
Catholic	Mean	4.540	2.700	4.180	0.296
	Median	5	3	4	
	SD	1.199	1.111	1.004	
Evangelical	Mean	4.350	2.390	3.91	0.290
	Median	4	2	4	
	SD	1.229	0.941	0.900	

moral development and the formation of personal and individual identity.

Discussion

Research on prosociality has shown spaces for discussion due to its importance in professional practice, which has led to the design of constructs and, at the same time, to the determination of implications in religious contexts (Martí-Vilar *et al.*, 2018). In this sense, the relevance of such research is constituted in challenges that seek to install, for example, values such as human rights, peace, tolerance, solidarity (Gómez and Valero, 2017). In relation to the aforementioned, this research shows differences according to the ascription of the participants, which tributes to new research that could evidence elements of causality.

The literature discusses the incidence of sociodemographic characteristics on the prosocial attitudes of adults in various cities (Madero and Castillo (2022). In Álvarez *et al.* (2010) it is stated that adolescent females show greater empathy and prosocial behavior than males. In this sense, considering that prosocial behaviors have links with socio-emotional behavior, there is a clear tendency and a favorable inclination of women toward the values that constitute prosociality and social responsibility (Mathiesen *et al.*, 2013). In relation to the

forementioned and in terms of this research, it can be indicated that there are glimpses of favorable attitudes of women in terms of a higher valuation compared to men.

Conclusions

The arrangement of constructs lets us consider the diverse realities experienced by students of denominational universities in Chile in strategy design, which considers elements of contexts and their own socio-demographic characteristics. In this context, statistically significant differences are found according to some sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, which can be used for the design of focused strategies. In turn, this should motivate the deployment of teamwork where convergences of ideas and value-based thoughts flow, for the formation of competent and socially responsible professionals.

The study of prosociality during a pandemic and, at the same time, the consideration of social responsibility leads to theoretical contributions. These contributions install conceptions and challenges accounting for the influences of denominational university students' sociodemographic characteristics. This should encourage the development of practical actions that show the impact of the strategies linked to social responsibility implemented by higher education institutions. The preceding

elements all contribute to the consideration of the challenges faced during university students' integral formation.

It is essential that universities use the results of this research and others with similar characteristics due to the theoretical and practical contributions. These contributions are the result of the convergence of social responsibility and prosociality of university students. The aforementioned contribute to the definition of institutional strategies and training projects that seek the comprehensive development of future professionals.

It should be pointed out that the present research has some limitations, which are typical of descriptive studies due to the space that exists in the literature to create sufficient solidity and, thus, propitiate conclusive reflections. There are issues related to the number of participants and its cross-sectional nature, which is a product of the accessibility of the population and the current health crisis. Consequently, it is necessary for future research to consider comparisons between different higher education institutions, a larger number of participants, to increase the number of students and to determine causality conditions. Finally, it is necessary to have studies that consider multiple disciplines, sociodemographic characteristics, religious beliefs and, at the same time, the cultural implications that allow us to more clearly address the object of study.

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