

## The description of prosocial behavior in terms of gender among middle school students in Padang City.

### Gambaran perilaku prososial ditinjau dari jenis kelamin pada siswa sekolah menengah pertama di Kota Padang

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the description of the prosocial behavior based on gender among junior high school students in Padang City. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The research instrument used a questionnaire in the form of a scale based on indicators of prosocial behavior. The participants were 400 junior high school students in Padang City, consisting of 164 male students and 236 female students. The results showed that there were 205 students in the high category, meaning that students were able to display and demonstrate prosocial behavior; and as many as 195 students in the low category, meaning that students have not been able to display and show prosocial behavior. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the prosocial behavior of male and female students. This research can be used as a basis for schools to design more targeted prosocial behavior development programs, especially for students with low prosocial levels and based on gender.

#### ABSTRACT

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengetahui gambaran perilaku prososial berdasarkan jenis kelamin pada siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama di Kota Padang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survey. Instrumen penelitian menggunakan kuesioner berbentuk skala berdasarkan indikator perilaku prososial. Partisipan penelitian adalah siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama di Kota Padang yang berjumlah 400 orang, terdiri dari 164 siswa laki-laki dan 236 siswa perempuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 205 siswa dalam kategori tinggi, artinya siswa mampu menampilkan dan menunjukkan perilaku prososial; dan sebanyak 195 siswa pada kategori rendah, artinya siswa belum mampu menampilkan dan menunjukkan perilaku prososial. Selanjutnya terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara perilaku prososial siswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai dasar bagi pihak sekolah untuk merancang program pengembangan perilaku prososial yang lebih terarah, terutama bagi siswa dengan tingkat prososial yang rendah dan berdasarkan jenis kelamin.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a developmental transition period between childhood and adulthood that influences physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development. During this transition, adolescents are highly vulnerable to various environmental influences that help in their cognitive, physical, and psychosocial growth. One of the environments that impacts cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development is the school environment (Astuti et al., 2023). Nurfirdaus & Sutisna (2021) explain that the school environment plays a role in shaping students' character and behavior, including their ways of thinking, attitudes, and behavior, one of which is prosocial behavior.

Every adolescent has developmental tasks that need to be fulfilled. One of these tasks, as expressed by Havighurst, requires individuals to achieve socially responsible behavior (Agustiani, 2009). However, this is not always the case in reality. This is evident from the rising cases of juvenile delinquency in Padang. According to *Tribunnews.com* (2020), dozens of school-aged teenagers were sent to social welfare institutions after being found in groups in the early morning, suspected of planning brawls at various locations in Padang. Moreover, during the month of Ramadan in 2021, amid the pandemic, teenagers began engaging in morning brawls and an increase in illegal street racing (*Antaranews.com*, 2021). These delinquent behaviors have become uncontrolled and violent, involving the use of sharp weapons. In February 2020, three teenagers were arrested with sharp weapons while wandering around the Gor Agus Salim area, Padang (*Langgam.id*, 2020). Such behavior is classified as antisocial behavior, which is the opposite of prosocial behavior.

Prosocial behavior is generally known as the voluntary desire to provide benefits to others, which also reduces aggressive and antisocial behaviors (Carlo et al., 2010; Hofmann & Müller, 2018). Prosocial behavior increases during early adolescence due to the expansion of interpersonal relationships compared to earlier stages (Carlo, Eisenberg & Knight, 1992).

Eisenberg & Mussen (2003) state that prosocial behavior is a voluntary action aimed at helping or benefiting others, whether individuals or groups, which can manifest in several actions such as sharing, cooperating, donating, helping, honesty, generosity, and considering the rights and well-being of others. The aspects of prosocial behavior according to Eisenberg & Mussen (2003) include: (1) Sharing, the willingness to share feelings with others in both joyful and sorrowful situations, (2) Helping, the willingness to assist others in need, whether morally or materially. Helping involves supporting or offering something that facilitates the activities of others, (3) Cooperation, the willingness to work together with others to achieve a common goal. Cooperation usually involves mutual benefits, giving, helping, and calming each other, (4) Acting honestly, the willingness to do one's best without cheating others, (5) Donating, the willingness to voluntarily give part of one's belongings to those in need, (6) Considering the welfare of others, providing means for others to ease their burdens, showing care by acknowledging and addressing others' problems.

There are six aspects of prosocial behavior. First, altruism, which refers to helping behavior driven by sympathy and empathy. Second, compliant, referring to individuals who provide help when they receive verbal or nonverbal stimuli. Third, emotional, referring to individuals who help based on the emotional state they experience. Fourth, public, referring to helping behavior performed in front of others to gain recognition and respect. Fifth, anonymous, which refers to helping behavior done without the recipient knowing. Sixth, dire, referring to helping behavior in difficult, crisis, or emergency situations (Carlo & Rendall, 2002).

One individual characteristic that can influence prosocial behavior is gender (Van der Graaff et al., 2018; Kamas & Preston, 2021; Yarizky & Maryam, 2024). Prosocial behavior does not arise spontaneously but is influenced by several factors, such as attractiveness, model influence, time pressure, the nature of the need, empathy, mood, gender, and personality (Sarwono, 2002). Several studies show that girls tend to demonstrate more prosocial behavior and empathy toward others compared to boys (Van der Graaff et al., 2018; Kamas & Preston, 2021; Yarizky & Maryam, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore prosocial behavior in terms of gender among middle school students in Padang.

## **2. METHODS**

The aim of this research is to explore the prosocial behavior of middle school students in Padang City. The participants of the study consist of 400 middle school students. This research employs a quantitative approach with a survey method. Although prosocial behavior has significant implications for adolescent development (Nurwahyudi, 2023), research specifically examining prosocial behavior among adolescents in school environments in Indonesia, particularly in Padang, remains limited. Additionally, while there are studies showing differences in prosocial behavior based on gender (Lamboan, 2019; Sitepu, J. M., Masitah, W. Nasution, M., Hasibuan, L. P., 2023), the relationship between rising juvenile delinquency and low prosocial behavior among middle school students has yet to be explored. Further research is needed to understand the specific factors influencing prosocial behavior in adolescents in Padang, especially within the school context as a crucial social environment for their psychosocial development.

The population of this study includes all middle school students in Padang City. The sampling technique used is cluster random sampling, where the clusters (areas) used in this study consist of 11 districts in Padang City. The randomly selected districts are Nanggalo District and Pauh District.

The instrument used for prosocial behavior is the Prosocial Tendencies Measure Revised (PTMR), which the researcher modified based on the theory by Carlo et al., (2003). The research scale consists of 19 items using different types of prosocial behavior as the basis for scale development: public prosocial behavior (2 items), anonymous prosocial behavior (4 items), dire prosocial behavior (3 items), emotional prosocial behavior (5 items), compliant

prosocial behavior (3 items), and altruism prosocial behavior (2 items). This scale uses a Likert scale format ranging from 1 to 5. The response options are: not at all like me, slightly like me, somewhat like me, fairly like me, and very much like me. The reliability score obtained from statistical testing using Cronbach's Alpha is 0.766. Data analysis was conducted quantitatively, calculating the percentage level of prosocial behavior. To determine the differences in prosocial behavior between male and female students, an independent sample t-test was conducted using SPSS.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULTS

The participants of this study were 400 junior high school students in Padang City, with details of 164 male students (41%) and 236 female students (51.2%).

**Table 1.** Demographic Data of Research Subjects

Gender	Number of Students	Percentages (%)
Male	164	41.0
Female	236	51.2
Total	400	100

The description of the research results explains about prosocial behavior. The following is an initial description of the prosocial behavior of junior high school students in Padang City. The results of the recapitulation of the categorization of the level of prosocial behavior of junior high school students who were used as research samples are as follows:

**Table 2.** Initial Overview of Prosocial Behavior of Junior High School Students in Padang City

Categorization	Interval	Number of Students	Percentages (%)
High	$X \geq 69$	205	51.2
Low	$X < 69$	195	48.8
Total		400	100

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the prosocial behavior of Junior High School students is in the high category, namely from 400 students who were sampled in this study, as many as 51.2% (205 students) were included in the high category. As for the low category, as many as 48.8% (195 students).

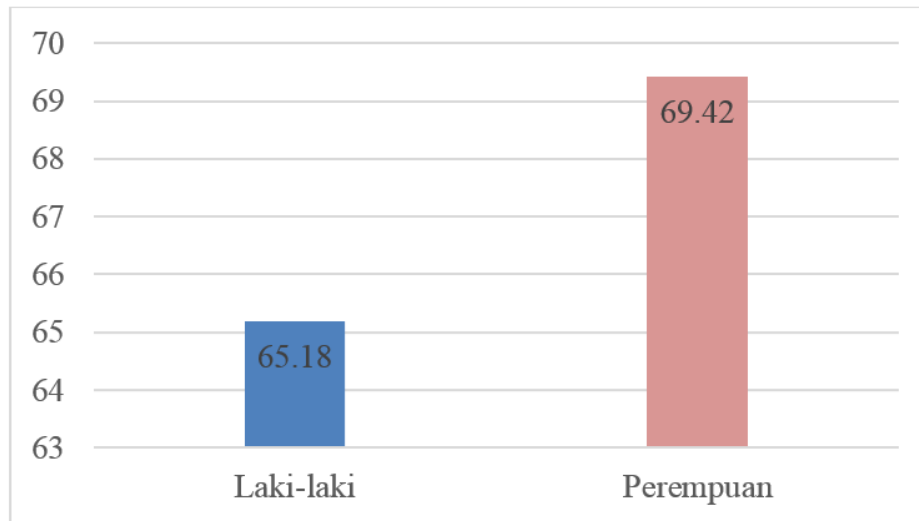
**Table 3.** Differences in Prosocial Behavior Based on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Prosocial Total Score	Equal variances assumed	19.145	.000	-3.710	398	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.492	272.627	.001

## The description of prosocial behavior in terms of gender among middle school students in Padang City.

Rozi Sastra Purna

Based on the results above, it is found that the Sig. value of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which indicates that the data variance between males and females is heterogeneous. The interpretation of the Independent Sample t-test output is based on the values found in the "Equal variances not assumed" table. According to the "Equal variances not assumed" output, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is  $0.001 < 0.05$ , meaning that there is a significant difference in prosocial behavior between male and female students.



**Graph 1.** Description of Prosocial Behavior Based on Gender

Based on the graph above, it can be seen that the mean response of female students is higher than the mean response of male students. This difference shows that female students have higher prosocial behavior abilities compared to male students.

## DISCUSSION

In general, the prosocial behavior of junior high school students in Padang is categorized as high. A total of 205 out of 400 students (51.2%) included in the study fall into the high category, meaning that these students are capable of displaying prosocial behavior, such as being enthusiastic about helping others in need, assisting others in an emotionally touching situation, and helping others without revealing their identity. On the other hand, 48.8% (195 students) are categorized as low, indicating that these students are not yet able to exhibit prosocial behavior, such as helping others when observed by others.

Prosocial behavior can be driven by self-interest and altruism (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2010). Altruism refers to the desire to help others, even at a cost or sacrifice to the helper, and it involves helping without any expectation of benefit. Additionally, helping can be advantageous in several ways: (1) it increases the likelihood that someone will help us in return, (2) helping someone can be seen as an investment in future social exchange, (3) it

alleviates personal distress caused by seeing others in need, and (4) helping others can result in social rewards and boost our self-worth (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2010).

Furthermore, the study's results indicate that the mean response from female students is higher than that of male students, suggesting that female students exhibit more prosocial behavior compared to male students. Significant differences were found between male and female students' prosocial behavior, consistent with previous research showing that females tend to be more prosocial, empathetic, cooperative, and inclined to help and share compared to males (Yarizky & Maryam, 2024; Bierhoff, 2002; Carlo & Randall, 2002; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Females are also more motivated to engage in prosocial behavior than males (Einolf, 2001).

Zahn-Waxler & Smith (in Lomboan, 2019) stated that girls tend to show more prosocial behavior and empathy toward others than boys. This is thought to be due to girls' greater orientation towards the needs and well-being of others. Estrogen, the hormone found in females, affects their psyche and feelings, fostering empathy, while testosterone in males makes them more daring, competitive, and willing to engage in challenges and risks.

Gender differences in prosocial behavior can also be explained by social role theory (Bierhoff, 2002). Women are believed to be more responsive, empathetic, and prosocial, whereas men tend to be more independent and achievement-oriented (Eisenberg, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006). Bierhoff (2002) noted that women are associated with warmth, interpersonal sensitivity, and social relationships. Schroeder & Granziano (2017) further explained that women are more likely to offer compassion, care, and social support, while men emphasize action and taking physical risks in dangerous situations.

Carlo et al. (2003) found that adolescent girls tend to engage in prosocial behavior related to altruism and emotional prosociality. Altruism refers to helping behavior done without expecting anything in return, purely for the benefit of others, and emotional prosociality refers to helping in emotionally charged situations. In contrast, boys tend to engage in public prosocial behavior, which involves helping when others are watching.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding the prosocial behavior of junior high school students above, it can be concluded that, in general, the prosocial behavior of junior high school students in Padang City is categorized as high. This means that the students are already capable of demonstrating prosocial behavior, such as doing good deeds without being noticed by others and not delaying when others ask for help. In terms of gender, female students exhibit higher prosocial behavior compared to male students. Furthermore, aspects of prosocial behavior such as anonymous prosocial behavior, direct prosocial behavior, and emotional prosocial behavior can be considered in the development of character education at schools.

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