

# Helping attitude is predisposition of helping behaviour psychology essay



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Helping is something that expected to be voluntary. Helping behaviour itself can be characterized as helpful behaviours that do not expect rewards in return. However, people helped frequently to get desired response, such as materials or social rewards, is not based on sincerity (Hasan, 2010). In fact, the not-expecting-reward helping behaviour or altruism has tremendous impact to society, as shown by Mother Theresa (1910-1997) (Hasan, 2010).

Helping attitude is predisposition of helping behaviour (Hasan, 2010).

Helping behaviour can be defined as voluntary actions to help other people, with or without expectation of rewards (Hasan, 2010). Helping behaviour is part of prosocial behaviour (voluntary actions that are proposed to assist or provide benefits to other people, such as sharing, comforting, rescuing and helping) (Hasan, 2010).

There are 4 types of prosocial behaviors were identified (altruistic prosocial behaviors, compliant prosocial behaviors, emotional pro-social behaviors, and public prosocial behaviors) and they are related differently to <https://assignbuster.com/helping-attitude-is-predisposition-of-helping-behaviour-psychology-essay/>

theoretically related constructs (Carlo & Randall, 2002). Altruistic prosocial behaviors were defined as voluntary helping motivated primarily by concern for the needs and welfare of others, often induced by empathy responding and internalized doctrines consistent with helping others (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1998). Altruism is a term that derived from the Latin language, means “to others” and “of others” (Hodge, 2008). It served as an antonym for “egoism” that refers to other-regarding behaviors (Hodge, 2008). Sometimes, altruistic prosocial behaviors are costly to the helper because the helper put his or her primarily concerned with the needs of others’ welfare (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

Compliant helping is appeared more frequent than spontaneous helping (Carlo & Randall, 2002). Many of the research on compliant helping has been conducted with children rather than adolescents (Carlo & Randall, 2002). In school, teachers tended to respond positively to girls, rather than boys, who comply with requests for prosocial action (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

Conceptually, higher levels of compliant helping would be expected to be associated with greater use of approval-oriented modes of moral reasoning, but would not be expected to be associated with perspective taking, sympathy, or higher levels of moral reasoning (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

Emotional prosocial behaviors were conceptualized as an orientation toward helping others under emotionally evocative circumstances (Carlo & Randall, 2002, p. 33). For example, a boy who cries compare to another boy who doesn’t cries due to get lost in a market, the boy who cries is more emotionally evocative to get help from others. There are numbers of factors might influence the level of emotional evocativeness, such as relationship to <https://assignbuster.com/helping-attitude-is-predisposition-of-helping-behaviour-psychology-essay/>

the needy and other perceived similarity (Carlo & Randall, 2002). Perceived emotional evocativeness might influence the observer's emotional responses (Carlo & Randall, 2002, p. 33). For some individuals, highly emotionally evocative situations are likely to lead to over-arousal and personal distress (Carlo & Randall, 2002, p. 33).

Prosocial behaviors conducted in the public places are more likely to be motivated due to the desire of gaining the approval and respect of others to enhance individual's self-worth (Carlo & Randall, 2002). This means that a person will act prosocial in a public place due to social desire and external factors that beyond self (Carlo & Randall, 2002).

Nickel (1998) developed theories that argued the attitude of helping as a multidimensional scale, which consists of beliefs, feelings and behaviours. This branch of division seems like derived from the theory of attitudes that see attitude as the assessment of like or dislike the object of certain attitude, which saw the attitude in the ABC model (affect, behaviour, cognition) (Hasan, 2010). Affective response is an emotional response that expresses the level of individual preferences towards helping behaviours. Behavioural intention is an indication of verbal or behavioural tendencies of individuals to help others. Cognitive response is evaluation in human thought that govern beliefs of individuals helping behaviours. The attitude is generally a result of direct experience or learning through observation of the environment, a view that is positive or negative. People can also experience conflict or ambivalent in attitude, where they simultaneously have positive and negative attitudes on a particular object.

## Gratitude

Gratitude has escaped systematic attention by psychologists almost entirely (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002), but recently an advance measurement have been made at the level of gratitude as an affective trait (McCullough et al., 2002). Grateful trait is defined as a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with positive emotions (appreciation, thankfulness) to the role of other moral agents' generosity in the positive experiences (Neto, 2007, p. 2315).

Gratitude is defined as an individual's emotional trait that has general predisposition to recognize and respond with grateful emotion according to the roles of other people's benevolence in the optimistic experiences (McCullough et al., 2002, p. 112). Therefore, gratitude can be considered as a moral barometer that measure the benefits or help received from another moral agent, especially when the cost is high to the benefactor (Chen, Chen, Kee & Tsai, 2008). Furthermore, gratitude also served as a moral reinforcement which similar to reciprocal altruism (Chen et. al, 2008). For example, the response of beneficiary (saying " thank you" to benefactor) will reinforce the benefactor's benevolence and more likely to receive the support from the benefactor again in the future (Chen et. al, 2008). Moreover, there are researcher stated that the reciprocal altruism would be accumulate as the time pass and becoming the social resources and supports in the future (Chen et. al, 2008).

Human knowing of gratitude possibly matures by age of 10 (Emmons & Sheldon, 2002). Gratitude may helps adolescents' development by fostering both a general sense of connectedness to others, the community and society  
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at large as well as a motivation to use one's strengths to broadly contribute to these entities (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010). Expressions of gratitude toward a relationship partner can be interpreted as a indication of intimacy or dependence (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). Grateful may build and reinforce social bonds and friendships (Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Fredrickson, 2004).

## **Forgiveness**

Recently, there are evidence shows that personality plays a role in the study of forgiveness, but the literature has been restricted (Neto, 2007). Although theorists have explained the distinction between forgiveness and related constructs, but the exact definition of what constitutes forgiveness and the way to measure it is still open for debate (eg. Neto, 2007; Leever, 2006). There are no agreed upon definition of forgiveness exists (Worthington, 2005). More longitudinal and experimental studies on the precursors of forgiveness are needed in this field of study, because there are only little existing research studies on the factor the influences forgiving (McCullough, 2000). More convergent and discriminant validity data are needed on the existing measures of forgiveness (McCullough, 2000).

Compare to previous research done on forgiveness, the research nowadays are offers more than just a spiritual or religious benefit and focused on emotional well-being (Malone, Meyer, Tarlton, Wasielewski, Reuben, West, & Mitchell, 2011). Malone, et al. (2011) suggested that forgiveness can possibly affect emotional well-being indirectly. Toussaint & Jorgensen (2008) shown that there are positive correlations between forgiveness and well-being. Besides, Psychotherapy that involved forgiveness lead to

improvement in psychology well-being (McCullough, 2000). Forgiving is <https://assignbuster.com/helping-attitude-is-predisposition-of-helping-behaviour-psychology-essay/>

associated with positive health and well-being (McCullough, 2000). People who forgive the transgressors are more likely to restore relationships with the transgressors, whereas people who cannot forgive those who hurt them will probably have broken relationships (McCullough, 2000).

Forgiving is not an easy decision but instead may prove to be extremely difficult because it involves working through, not avoiding, emotional pain (Fincham & Beach, n. d.). Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi asserted that “ The weak can never forgive because forgiveness is the attribute of the strong” (Fincham & Beach, in press).

## **Gratitude and Helping Attitude**

Self-report and informant report measures of the grateful disposition were correlated positively with the Empathic Concern and Perspective-Taking subscales of the empathy measure (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010). In addition, the measures of the grateful disposition were correlated positively with informants' reports of participants' prosocial behaviors (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010). Participants who were rated by themselves (and by their informants) as being more grateful were reported to perform more prosocial behaviors (e. g., providing favors, as well as emotional and tangible support) for their informants than were less grateful people. Moreover, informants rated grateful people as having more prosocial traits generally than did the informants of less grateful people (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010).

In a self-report measure, participants who rated themselves (or who were rated by others) as having a grateful disposition perceived themselves (and were perceived by others) as having prosocial characteristics (Froh, Bono &

Emmons, 2010). They were more empathic and were perceived as providing more concrete and emotional help to their peers (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010). McCullough et al. (2001) also hypothesized that gratitude motivates prosocial behavior. However, the correlations between informant ratings of gratitude and prosocial behavior may be caused by halo error, even though the amount of halo error in correlations of rated dimensions is less than was once believed to be the case (Murphy, Jako, & Anhalt, 1993 as cited in Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010).

McCullough et al. (2001) suggested that people were more likely to behave prosocially to the benefactor or a third party when he or she experienced a grateful mood or emotion (as cited in Chen et al., 2008). Bartlett and DeSteno (2006) provided evidence that gratitude plays an important role in facilitating costly helping behaviour in a manner distinct from a general positive state or simple awareness of prosocial norms. Experimental research supports the prosocial nature of gratitude (Tsang, 2006).

Participants reported being more motivated by gratitude when they had received a favour, compared to individuals who had received the same positive outcome by chance (Neto, 2007). In a study, the amount of money given as a measure of prosocial behavior, the participants in the gratitude condition gave more money (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008).

In the field of psychology study, gratitude has been represented in varied ways, such as a positive emotion, a personality trait, a positive attitude toward others, a moral virtue, and a constructive approach to interpersonal relations (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Heider, 1958). Emmons and

McCullough (2004) concluded, despite these different perspectives, gratitude  
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can be conceptualized in terms of three propositions. First, the object of gratitude is always an “other”, whether a mankind being, a nonmankind natural being (e. g., an electronic device), or a supernatural being (e. g., Spiritual). Second, gratitude is a response to a perceived personal benefit (e. g., a birthday gift) resulting from another’s actions, a benefit that has not necessarily been earned or deserved. Third, gratitude stems from appraising the benefactor’s actions as intentionally designed to benefit the recipient, even if the intention is metaphorical, as in the case of good weather (“Thank you for not raining on while I am doing outdoor activities”) (Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2008). Gratitude results from recognizing another’s goodwill and appreciating the other’s generous action as an altruistic gift (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). Tsang (2006) agreeing with this conception, defined gratitude as “a positive emotional reaction to the receipt of a benefit that is perceived to have resulted from the good intentions of another” (p. 139).

Moreover, positive psychology views gratitude as inner resource and character strength (Seligman, 2002). In support of this view, Emmons and McCullough (2004) found that priming thoughts of gratitude each day after a period of weeks will improved people’s sense of health and well-being.

McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) constructed a self-report scale to measure individual differences in dispositional gratitude (the Gratitude Questionnaire-6 or GQ-6). They viewed the “grateful disposition” as a tendency to recognize others’ generous contributions to one’s own accomplishments and to feel thankful (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). People who score high on dispositional gratitude are expected to feel more grateful than low scorers in positive events (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). In support of <https://assignbuster.com/helping-attitude-is-predisposition-of-helping-behaviour-psychology-essay/>

the statement, Watkins, Woodward, Stone, and Kolts (2003) found that grateful people tended to experience greater “abundance” in their lives, feel grateful for others’ contributions to their personal well-being, and even appreciate small pleasures in life.

In support of a hypothesized link between dispositional gratitude and prosocial behavior, McCullough et al. (2002) found that people who scored higher on the GQ-6 were more empathic toward others who were distressed. Moreover, such people engaged more frequently in prosocial behavior and were rated as more generous and helpful by their friends and relatives (McCullough et al., 2002). However, these findings do not provide strong evidence for the causal hypothesis that gratitude increases the occurrence of helping behavior, because they were based on self-reports of helping behavior and on cross-sectional research designs to correlate the variables (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). Bartlett and DeSteno (2006) and Tsang (2006) recently overcame these methodological limitations by experimentally manipulating gratitude and then assessing actual helping behavior.

In an experimental study, participants in a gratitude condition were needed to carry out a tedious, repetitive, and aversive eye-hand coordination task. However, after completing it, they were told that they would need to perform it again due to a computer problem (Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006). The result of the study found that participants in the gratitude condition spent more time helping the benefactor or the stranger than participants in the neutral and positive mood conditions (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). In Tsang’s (2006) study, participants in the gratitude condition gave more money to the confederate than participants in the chance condition and were more likely

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to express appreciation or gratitude. Although these two studies demonstrate that experimental manipulations of gratitude can facilitate prosocial behavior, but they do not take into account of possibility that people differ in their reactions to receiving a valued benefit from others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). For example, one person may react to the helping with appreciation, whereas another may doubt the benefactor's intentions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). Hence, one person may express gratitude as a way of strengthening the relationship with the benefactor, while another may believe that such expression is a threat to his or her sense of personal freedom and dignity (" I was so weak that I needed help") (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). Moreover, the designers of these studies did not consider that research participants may vary in relationship history, their mental representations of other people, or their personality to feel empathic concern for other's needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). Such individual differences may regulate people's reactions to generous behavior and the extent to which gratitude leads to prosocial behavior (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008).

## **Gratitude and Forgiveness**

Gratitude and forgiveness play an important role in major world religions, especially the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Fincham & Beach, n. d.). Emergence of interest in gratitude and forgiveness can be traced to the rise of the positive psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Results of a study confirmed that personality, particularly agreeableness and neuroticism correlate with enduring resentment and overall tendency to forgive (Neto, 2007). The results using

multiple regression models showed that gratitude explained a significant amount of variance of overall propensity to forgive (Neto, 2007). There is also an association between trait gratitude and trait forgiveness (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). People who indicated experienced gratitude are reported higher trait of forgiveness (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

## **Helping Attitude and Forgiveness**

Empathy and perspective-taking facilitate many prosocial qualities such as willingness to help others, apparently, forgiving (McCullough, 2000). Previous research showed that forgiveness promotes prosocial cognition, affection, and behavior toward the offender (Karremans, Van Lange & Holland, 2005). The research studies of Karremans, Van Lange & Holland (2005) revealed that forgiveness compared to unforgiveness is generally associated with higher levels of a generalized prosocial orientation, as indicated by higher levels used of first-person plural pronouns (e. g., we, us, in a language task) and greater feelings of relatedness toward others in general. In addition, forgiveness was even associated with greater probability of donating to charity and greater willingness to engage in volunteering when compare with unfogiveness (Karremans, Van Lange & Holland, 2005).

In the study of Karremans, Van Lange & Holland (2005), the analysis revealed that participants who were being reminded of a forgiven offense presented a marginally higher willingness to volunteer than participants who were reminded of a unforgiven offense. These findings provide strong support for the hypothesis that level of forgiveness may influence on prosocial behavior that is not related to the offender.

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Conceptual model positing that forgiveness is prosocial change in the motivations to avoid or to seek revenge against a transgressor (McCullough, 2000). Forgiving is similar to other prosocial psychological changes that occur in social life (McCullough, 2000). Karremans, Van Lange & Holland (2005) conclude that forgiveness restores generalized prosocial orientation to baseline levels within the relationship, whereas unforgiveness decreases the tendencies toward generalized prosocial orientation. Prosocial process is the willingness to sacrifice (Van Lange et al., 1997), which is the “propensity to forego immediate self-interest, to promote well-being of a partner or relationship.”

The measure of Forgiveness (Self, Others, Situation) does not enhance the prediction of subjective well-being whereas, altruism does enhance the prediction of subjective well-being (Pareek & Jain, 2012, p. 138). In male sample, results revealed that forgiveness of self and Forgiveness of Situation as predictors do affect the subjective well-being as a dependent or criterion variable (Pareek & Jain, 2012). However, altruism and forgiveness of others do not enhance subjective well-being in male sample (Pareek & Jain, 2012). Male adolescents high on subjective well-being, with a high life satisfaction have Forgiveness of Situation and Self traits higher to enhance their subjective well-being (Pareek & Jain, 2012). The male adolescents who easily forgive the situations which cause difficulty and themselves for any mishap are high on subjective well-being (Pareek & Jain, 2012). On the other hand, female adolescents high on subjective well-being, with a high life satisfaction have altruistic behaviour to enhance it very much. The altruism enhances their subjective well-being in a very effective way.

In female sample of adolescents, multiple regression confirms that the predictive values of Forgiveness (Self, Others, Situation) are questionable or the measures of Forgiveness (Self, Others, Situation) do not enhance the prediction of subjective well-being whereas, Altruism does enhance the prediction of subjective well-being (Pareek & Jain, 2012). In overall sample, altruism as a predictor does affect the subjective well-being as a dependent or criterion variable, but forgiveness (self, others and situation) does not enhance subjective wellbeing (Pareek & Jain, 2012).

## **Theoretical Framework**

Many theories try to give explanations about helping behaviours (Baron & Bynne, 2000). The theoretical perspectives included kin selection theory, reciprocal altruism, negative state relief model, social exchange theory and the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Hasan, 2010).

Kin selection theory argued that helping behaviour is based on natural genetic inheritance, but other theories (reciprocal altruism, negative state relief model, social exchange theory) explain the helping behaviours based on the influence of environment and argued that helping behaviour can be learned through a system of incentives or rewards from the environment (Hasan, 2010). Kin selection theory explained altruism in terms of evolutionary perspectives (Bell, 2001; McAndrew, 2002). Natural selection occurs to filter out species that do not have the ability to adapt changing environment. Good nature and superiority of genes inheritance is important for future generations' survival. Kin selection refers to the tendency to perform behaviours that can improve the survival chances of people with the same genetic basis. Experiments conducted in the UK support this kin <https://assignbuster.com/helping-attitude-is-predisposition-of-helping-behaviour-psychology-essay/>

selection theory. Results show that person is more willing to provide assistance to others with higher relationship, and this happens to both sexes and various cultures. The results also showed gender differences in kin selection, where male are more affected on the basis of genetic similarity than women.

Kin selection is an evolutionary theory that proposes that people are more likely to help those who are blood relatives because it will increase the odds of gene transmission to future generations. The theory suggests that altruism towards close relatives occurs in order to ensure the continuation of shared genes. The more closely the individuals are related, the more likely people are to help.

Evolutionary theories propose that gratitude is an adaptation for reciprocal altruism (the sequential exchange of costly benefits between nonrelatives) and, perhaps, upstream reciprocity (a pay-it-forward style distribution of an unearned benefit to a third party after one has received a benefit from another benefactor) (McCullough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008). Gratitude therefore may have played a unique role in human social evolution (McCullough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008). Gratitude is typically followed by the perception that one has benefited from another person's generosity (McCullough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008). Gratitude is predicated upon receiving a benefit from another social agent (McCullough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008).