

CHAPTER 6

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS IN TERMS OF BIOLOGICAL, MORAL AND EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVES¹

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INTRODUCTION

Helping behaviors contributes society's well-being and continuity (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Prosocial behaviors reinforce the individual who perform these behaviors because of the reciprocity when the individuals help another they will be likely to get help from others. Helping and prosocial behaviors have been examined by social scientists for decades in terms of individual and society both. Adam Smith's "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" and Emile Durkheim's "Division of Labor in Society" both contributed the development of understanding the importance of helping for the society (Bierhoff, 2002). Prosocial behaviors are defined as "behaviors that benefit other people, such as helping, sharing, donating, volunteering" (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006).

Prosocial behaviors are examined in not only psychology literature but also in economics, sociology, biology and so on. In 1960's Latané and Darley (1968) examined Kitty Genovese case who were stabbed in her apartment. Although her neighbors were in their homes while she was stabbed, no one helped to rescue her from the attack. So researchers examined this case in terms of helping behaviors, they conceptualized this situation as diffusion of responsibility which means when the number of people increases, people's chance to get help from others decreases. In similar vein, prosocial behaviors occurrence can be changed according to the size of the community, Balish, Rainham and Blanchard (2016) showed that volunteering behaviors are significantly higher in smaller communities in terms of population than larger ones. Besides the size of the community, helping behaviors may differ in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Strand, Pula and Downs (2015) showed that children who were from collectivistic background were found to be more cooperative than the children who were from individualistic background.

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make individual to behave concordantly to the moral standards (Haidt, 2003). Besides being classified as moral emotion, feelings of guilt is also classified as self-conscious emotion (Tracy & Robins, 2004).

According to Cialdini et al. (1982), when individuals feel guilty, they try to get rid of this negative emotion (as cited in Bierhoff, 2002). Therefore, helping behaviors give chance to the individual to get rid of this negativity through compensation of their wrong behavior. Studies showed that experience of guilt feelings is related with prosocial behaviors (De Hooge, 2008; De Hooge, Zeelenberg and Breugelmans, 2007; Ketelaar and Au, 2003).

In this review, prosocial behaviors were tried to explained in terms of biological, moral and emotional perspectives. It is thought that future studies may examine the prosocial behaviors in relation with guilt and other moral emotions empirically. Prosocial behaviors are significant for the society's well-being, so it is important to study the development of prosocial behaviors. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, individual's behavior is explained in terms of micro and macro system effects (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, in order to understand these social behaviors, cultural variables also should be counted and included.

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