

The Impact of Prosocial Behaviour on Life Satisfaction Levels Among Students

Sophie Geraghty (17438066)

National College of Ireland

March, 2020

Supervisor: Matthew Hudson

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name:

_Sophie_Geraghty_____

Student Number: _17438066_____

Degree for which thesis is submitted:

_Bachelor_of_Arts_(Honours)_Psychology_____

Material submitted for award

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.
 - (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
 - (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)
 - (d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
- Or* *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology Degree
National College of Ireland (NCI)

Signature of research student:

_Sophie_Geraghty_____

Date: _2/03/2020_____

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: _Sophie_Geraghty_____ Student number:
_17438066_____

School: _National_College_of_Ireland_____ Course:
_Bachelor_of_Arts_(Honours)_Psychology_____

Degree to be awarded:
_Bachelor_Arts_(Honours)_Psychology_____

Title of Thesis:
_The_Impact_of_Prosocial_Behaviour_on_Life_Satisfaction_Levels_Among_Students_____

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (<http://trap.ncirl.ie/>), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate:
_Sophie_Geraghty_____

For completion by the School:
The aforementioned thesis was received by _____ Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school

Abstract

Prosocial behaviours are extremely important types of behaviours that we make the choice to participate in often throughout our lives. Prosocial behaviour includes actions such as helping, sharing, comforting or even cooperating. There has been evidence which suggests that prosocial behaviour is beneficial for the person carrying out the behaviour as well as the individual on the receiving end. The current study aimed to find out if students who are more likely to participate in prosocial behaviour are more satisfied with their life compared to those who are less likely to participate in these types of behaviours. This study proposed that students who had higher intentions to participate in prosocial behaviour would have higher life satisfaction levels. We also consider if there is sort of relationship between life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour intentions. 76 college students between the age of eighteen and sixty participated in this study. Participants were recruited using either Facebook or email. The majority of the sample are students who currently attend National College of Ireland (NCI) and includes some students from other colleges in Dublin. Using an online survey, we measured the participant's prosocial intentions using the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale and we also measured life satisfaction using the Riverside Life Satisfaction scale. Participants completed the survey in about 5 minutes using google forms. There was no significant difference in scores with lower prosocial intentions ($M=25.1$) scoring the same as higher prosocial intentions ($M=25.1$). Overall, the results of this study suggested that there is no difference between the life satisfaction levels of students who are more likely to participate in prosocial behaviour and students who are less likely to participate in prosocial behaviour. No relationship was found between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction. One implication from the results of this study is that a student who has higher intentions to participate in prosocial behaviour are just as likely to be highly satisfied with life as students who have lower intentions to participate in these types of behaviours.

Introduction

Prosocial behaviour includes behaviours such as helping, comforting, cooperating or even sharing with others (Dunn & Munn, 1986). Prosocial behaviour is an act carried out which is aimed to benefit another person. The opportunities to participate in behaviours which benefit others are prevalent throughout our lives and it is important to find out what causes people to participate in these behaviours and if there is a particular group of individuals who are more likely to get involved in these behaviours. There are many potential factors which may cause people to carry out such behaviours as there has been many studies that have been done in this area. It is important to study the benefits of prosocial behaviour as it then could be possible to encourage more people to participate in prosocial behaviours regularly.

Prosocial behaviour has been a popular topic of study in social psychology. Prosocial behaviour has shown to be a predictor of well-being in both correlational and experimental contexts (Helliwell, Aknin, Shiple, Huang & Wang, 2017). The more studies which suggest that helping people can have a positive impact on the well-being of the givers more people may participate in these kinds of behaviours therefore people who need help/money may be more likely to receive it.

There have been many studies carried out surrounding prosocial behaviours and many of these studies have suggested that carrying out these types of behaviours actually have an emotional benefit for the individual who is helping others. Otake, Shimai and Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui and Fredrickson (2006) carried out a study including 175 undergraduate Japanese students. They aimed to find a relationship between kindness and subjective happiness. Their study measured happiness using a Japanese version of Lyubomirsky and Lepper's (1999) subjective happiness scale. Overall they found a high association between kindness and subjective happiness. It has also been suggested that helping behaviour is

strongly associated with life satisfaction (Oarga, Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015). Oarga and Colleagues (2015) carried out a study involving 39968 participants from various countries around Europe. They found that prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction were associated. Aknin, Dunn, Whillans, Grant and Norton (2013) aimed to find out the emotional benefits of prosocial spending when participants were aware of their positive impact and the results suggested that emphasising the impacts that the givers made can have positive impacts on the emotions of the giver. Although their study suggested that prosocial spending did impact the emotions of the giver the study mainly concentrates on the impact of prosocial spending on the giver at certain points in time. The participant's happiness was measured straight after they gave to charity and when they were asked to recall a time they spent money on others that had a positive impact, but the current study aims to address this gap by looking at the impact of prosocial behaviour on life satisfaction levels on the individual's life as a whole.

Thoits and Hewitt (2001) looked at the relationship between 6 aspects of well-being (including life-satisfaction) and volunteer work. Participants were encouraged to talk about volunteer work that they had participated in within the last 12 months of their lives and their levels of well-being were measured using scales. Their results suggested that participants who participated in volunteer work more often had higher levels of well-being. Thoits and Hewitt also mentioned that it could be possible that individuals with greater well-being may be more likely to put more time into volunteering etc. Nelson, Della Porta, Jacobs Bao, Lee, Chao & Lyubomirsky (2015) carried out a study on students aged between seventeen and twenty-seven. Their results also suggested that prosocial behaviour has an effect on well-being.

Pressman, Kraft and Cross (2015) carried out a study which involved an intervention to find the impact of this 'pay it forward' style kindness intervention on the well-being of the person who carrying out the acts of kindness and also the person receiving these acts of

kindness. The givers received instructions to carry out kind behaviours such as holding the door open for someone and helping someone to carry something, which are similar to the prosocial behaviours which are stated in Baumsteiger and Siegels's (2019) Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale which this study aims to use to measure prosocial behavioural intentions of the students in this study. Overall, they found that this intervention had a beneficial effect on those who were involved when they were followed up after the intervention. Their study suggests that carrying out prosocial behaviours has a beneficial effect on the giver. The findings of their study are similar Thoits and Hewitt (2001) and also Nelson and Colleague's (2015) study surrounding prosocial behaviour and well-being.

Lockwood, Seara-Cardoso and Viding (2014) found that feelings of empathy were related to prosocial behaviours. There may be a link between Lockwood, Seara-Cardoso & Viding's (2014) study with the two other studies mentioned above as empathy may be associated with prosocial behaviour because if an individual feels empathetic they may seek to relieve these feeling of empathy which may then satisfy their needs. In general, there seems to be evidence suggesting that prosocial behaviour has a positive impact on the giver whether on emotion or overall well-being but there has been little research surrounding the impact of prosocial behaviours on life-satisfaction levels alone and this project aims to address this gap.

It has also been suggested that feelings of gratitude can cause people to participate in helpful behaviours. Baragohain & Mandal (2015) carried out a study surrounding prosocial behaviour and gratitude. They compared responses of individuals receiving a favour to responses of individuals receiving a positive outcome by chance. Their research suggested that participants who received a favour from someone else and experienced gratitude displayed higher prosocial tendencies. Baragohain & Mandal's (2015) study could be related to Lockwood, Seara-Cardoso & Viding's (2014) study as people who experience gratitude for

something, for example receiving money from someone in need, could be more likely to experience empathy because they may know how it feels to need help which may cause them to help others.

It is also important to acknowledge that there may be other factors which may contribute to prosocial behavioural intentions. Personality could potentially impact whether someone is likely to carry out a prosocial behaviour as it has been suggested that a person who displays prosocial behaviour has a prosocial personality (Bierhoff, 2005). Bierhoff & Rohmann (2004) found that people with altruistic personalities were more likely to show empathy. This may suggest that individual's personality types impact they have prosocial tendencies. Therefore, this is important to acknowledge when carrying out studies surrounding prosocial behaviour. Another study carried out surrounding prosocial behaviour and motives in 2011. Pavey, Greitemeyer and Sparks (2011) did a study including 155 female undergraduate psychology students between the age of 19 and 46. They found that when relatedness was highlighted participation in prosocial behaviour increased. There seems to be evidence which suggest that there are multiple factors which may contribute to peoples prosocial behavioural intentions.

Research suggests that low levels of life satisfaction can affect the mental and physical health of individuals (Huebner, Suldo & Gilman, 2006). This project aims find out if participants who are more likely to participate in prosocial behaviours have higher life satisfaction to see whether life satisfaction scores than those who are less likely to carry out these types of behaviours. Studying the effect of prosocial behaviours on life satisfaction could potentially improve life satisfaction levels of students globally if there is more research in this area. Also, in turn this research could potentially benefit the people that are on the receiving end of the prosocial behaviour. This study also aims to recruit students only as there has been some previous studies which involve students and prosocial behaviour. These studies suggest that prosocial behaviours have a positive impact on students but, few studies

have solely concentrated on the impact of prosocial behaviour on life satisfaction levels alone.

This study proposes that students who are more likely engage in prosocial behaviours regularly will have higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who do not. It is extremely important to study life satisfaction as this is an important aspect of well-being and well-being is extremely important for the quality of life for humans. If more studies are done surrounding the impact of prosocial behaviours on mental health of those carrying out these types of behaviours people may be more likely to carry out prosocial behaviours which is which is extremely important for those on the receiving the help and also for those carrying out prosocial behaviour.

There seems to be evidence so far suggesting that prosocial behaviours have a positive impact on the individual carrying out the prosocial behaviour but the impact of prosocial behaviours on overall life-satisfaction levels alone amongst adults needs to be studied as it may be possible that the more research which suggests that prosocial behaviours have a positive impact on the individual the more likely it is that the individuals will engage in prosocial behaviours. Also, the reason that the current study aims to recruit students between the ages of 18-60 is to extend the age range as previous studies surrounding prosocial behaviours have had much smaller age ranges. For example, Lockwood, Seara-Cardoso & Vidings (2014) study included adults between the ages of 18-33 (50% males and 50% females) so this is likely to be a reliable sample for this study. Also, Nelson et al. (2015) used participants aged between 17 and 27 in their study surrounding prosocial behaviour. Therefore, this study aims to extend the age range so the results can be representative of students above the age of thirty.

Studying in this area is vital as the more research we have surrounding the benefits of prosocial behaviour may cause more people to participate in these kinds of behaviours such

as volunteering or giving money to charity and this in turn will benefit the individuals receiving this kind of help which is extremely important for them.

Overall, there have been many research studies carried out which suggest that there is an association between life satisfaction and helping others, but little research has focused solely on the impact of prosocial behaviour on the life satisfaction levels among the student population and there seems to be some evidence which suggests that students who carry out prosocial behaviours seem to have higher levels of overall well-being according to Nelson, Della Porta, Jacobs Bao, Lee, Chao & Lyubomirsky (2015). The following study proposes that students who engage in prosocial behaviours regularly will have higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who don't. The aim is to address the gaps in the literature and focus on the impact of prosocial behaviours on the life satisfaction levels of students.

Although some studies have looked at the impact of prosocial behaviours such as volunteer work on well-being, few studies have looked at the likelihood of students who are more likely to carry everyday prosocial behaviours such as helping someone find something they lost etc. Many studies have focused on behaviours such as volunteer work rather than behaviours you may have the chance to participate in more regularly.

The current study use Baumsteiger and Siegal's (2019) Behavioural Intentions Scale will be used to measure behavioural intentions among participants. Anli (2019) adapted the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale for a group of Turkish participants. Their study involved four sub-studies This study found that the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale was a reliable and valid measure of prosocial behaviours.

This study will use the Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (Margolis, Schwitzgebel, Ozer & Lyubomirsky, 2019) to measure life satisfaction levels among participants. The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) is an improved measure of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale has

been used to measure life satisfaction in some studies including Kelly's (2004) study surrounding sleep-length and life satisfaction. The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale is an improved version of the SWLS and reduces the potential for bias according to Margolis, Schwitzgebel, Ozer & Lyubomirsky (2019). Although few studies have measured life satisfaction using the Riverside Life Satisfaction scale. Çekici (2018) carried out a study on Turkish participants using an adapted version of the Margolis, Schwitzgebel, Ozer and Lyubomirsky's (2019) Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale. The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the PERMA-profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016), which is a measure of flourishing, were used in a study involving 100 undergraduate students. Overall their study suggested that the Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale is a valid and reliable measure for life satisfaction. There seems to be evidence that suggests that the RLSS is a reliable measure of life satisfaction and therefore will be suitable to measure life satisfaction in the current study.

The current study aims to find out if participating in prosocial behaviours impacts levels of life satisfaction alone amongst students. We propose that there will be a significant difference in life satisfaction levels between those who participate in prosocial behaviours regularly and those who do not participate in prosocial behaviours regularly. The aim of this study is to compare levels of life satisfaction between students who are more likely carry out pro-social behaviours and those who are less likely to participate in prosocial behaviours less often. We also consider whether there is a relationship between prosocial behaviour intentions and life satisfaction.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study included 76 undergraduate students from the National College of Ireland (NCI). This sample also consisted of participants from other colleges/universities in Dublin. The participants were aged between 18 and 60 years old with a mean age of 22. This sample consisted of 14 males (18.4%) and 62 females (81.6%).

Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants for this study. Participants were sent an email containing the link to the survey or sent a link on Facebook which also contained the survey. Participants were excluded from the study if they were not students. 81.6% of students in this sample had a part-time job and 18.4% did not have a part-time job (study was approved by the National College of Ireland ethics committee).

All participants who took part in this study were above the age of 18. Informed consent was obtained from all males and females who participated in this study. Participants did not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, but they were made aware of the importance of their contribution to the study.

Design

Quantitative research was used to collect data for this study. The current study is cross-sectional. Marolgis, Schwitzgebal, Ozer and Lyubomisky's (2018) Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) was used to measure life satisfaction levels among participants. The Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale which was developed by Baumsteiger and Siegal (2018) was used in this study to measure prosocial behavioural intentions among participants. The dependent variable in this study is life satisfaction and the independent variable is prosocial behaviour.

Materials

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale, which was developed by Marolgis, Schwitzgebal, Ozer and Lyubomisky's (2018), was used to measure Life Satisfaction levels among participants in this study. This scale included questions such as "I like how my life is

going” and “If I could live my life over, I would change many things” (See Appendix A for further details. Participants were asked to rate with each statement ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). This scale included reverse scored items and regularly scored items. An overall score was produced for each participant which represented their overall satisfaction with life. Çekici (2018) found an adapted version of the Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale to be a reliable and valid measure of life satisfaction.

Baumsteiger and Siegal (2019) Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale was used to measure each participant’s behavioural intentions. Participants were presented with statements such as “Comfort someone I know after experiencing a hardship” and “Help care for a sick friend or relative. Participants were asked to indicate how willing they would be to perform each behaviour ranging from 1 (definitely would not do this) to 7 (definitely would do this), See Appendix B for further details. Participants were divided into two groups (high prosocial behavioural intentions and low prosocial behavioural intentions). If participants scored 6.5 or above they were considered to have high prosocial behavioural intentions and if they scored lower than 6.5 they were considered to have low prosocial behavioural intentions. Anli (2019) found the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale to be short, valid and reliable.

Participants were sent either an email containing a link to the survey and some participants were sent a link on Facebook containing the survey. Participants accessed the survey by clicking on the link. Once they clicked on the link, they were brought to Google Forms and this is where the survey was completed.

Procedure

Participants accessed the survey by clicking on the link they received either by email or through Facebook. Once they clicked on the link, they were brought to Google forms where they were first presented with information surrounding the current study and an online

consent form. Participants were asked to give their consent to participating in the study.

Participants were required to answer all questions in the survey.

Once informed consent was obtained participants were presented with questions surrounding their demographics. Participants were then presented with The Riverside Life Satisfaction scale. They were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

Participants were then then presented with The Behavioural intentions scale. They were asked to rate their agreement indicate how willing they would be to carry out each behaviour from 1 (Definitely would not do this) to 7 (Definitely would do this).

Participants were then provided with a debriefing statement at the end of the survey which included contact information for both myself and my supervisor if participants has any questions surrounding the study or if the survey caused them any sort of distress. It took participants approximately five minutes to complete the survey.

Results

Descriptive and Inferential statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted for life satisfaction, prosocial intentions and age (see Table 1 below for further details).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for life satisfaction, prosocial intentions and age.

| | Mean | Median | SD | Range |
|---------------------|-------|--------|------|-------|
| Life satisfaction | 25.08 | 25 | 6.56 | 33 |
| Prosocial behaviour | 6.2 | 6.5 | 0.85 | 4 |
| Age | 21.8 | 20 | 6.44 | 42 |

The relationship between life satisfaction and prosocial behavioural intentions was investigated using pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analysis were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was no significant small, medium or large positive or negative correlation between the two variables ($r = .08, n = 76, p = < .48$). This indicates that the two variables share approximately 0.64% variance in common. The results suggest that life satisfaction is not associated with prosocial behavioural intentions.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare levels of life satisfaction between participants with higher prosocial behavioural intentions and participants with lower prosocial behavioural intentions. There was no significant difference in scores, with lower prosocial intentions ($M = 25.1, SD = 7.68$) scoring the same as higher prosocial intentions ($M = 25.1, SD = 5.46$), $t(74) = .04, p = .97$, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .06, 95% CI: -2.96 to 3.08) was extremely small (Cohen’s $d = .009$). See Table 2 below for further details.

Overall, the results of the analysis of the study suggest that there is no difference in mean life satisfaction scores of participants who have higher prosocial intentions and participants who have lower prosocial intentions, suggesting that prosocial intentions do not impact levels of life satisfaction among undergraduate students. Also, a correlation analysis suggested that there is little or no relationship between life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour.

Table 2

Group differences between higher prosocial intentions and lower prosocial intentions for life satisfaction levels

| Higher prosocial | | | Lower Prosocial | | | t | df | p | 95% CI | cohen’s d |
|------------------|----|---|-----------------|----|---|---|----|---|--------|-----------|
| M | SD | n | M | SD | n | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|------|----|------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|------------|------|
| Life satisfaction | 25.1 | 5.46 | 40 | 25.1 | 7.68 | 36 | .04 | .74 | .97 | -2.96-3.08 | .009 |
|-------------------|------|------|----|------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|------------|------|

Note: CI = confidence interval for mean difference.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that prosocial behavioural intentions have no effect on life satisfaction. There was no difference in the means of the two groups of participants (higher prosocial intentions and lower prosocial intentions). The findings of this study indicate that a student who has lower intentions to participate in prosocial behaviours is just as likely to have the same life satisfaction levels as a student who has higher intentions to participate in behaviours which benefit others. The purpose of carrying out this study was to contribute to previous research that has been done surrounding the positives of carrying out prosocial behaviours.

The results of this study found that there was no significant difference in scores with lower prosocial intentions ($M=25.1$, $SD=7.68$) scoring the same as higher prosocial intentions ($M=25.1$, $SD=5.46$). Therefore, these results suggest that students who are more likely to carry out prosocial behaviours such as helping, sharing etc. Are just as likely to have similar life satisfaction scores than the students who have lower intentions to participate in these kinds of behaviours. Also, the effect size was extremely small (Cohen's $d=.009$) which means there was little or no relationship between the two variables (life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour). There was also no significant correlation between the two variables ($r = .08$, $n = 76$, $p = <.48$) which indicates that prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction were not associated.

These findings were unexpected as there has been studies which have been done in this area which suggests that there is a relationship between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction/well-being. This study aimed to contribute to the recent findings which suggested

that there is a relationship between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction. It was expected that the findings of this study would be similar to Thoits and Hewitt's (2001) study which suggested that participants who participated in volunteer work had higher levels of well-being, as they also measured overall well-being using scales similar to the current study which used scales to measure life satisfaction. The hypotheses of Thoits and Hewitt's (2001) study was also similar to the current study suggesting that we may have found similar results. We expected to find that students who were more likely to participate in prosocial behaviours to have higher levels of life satisfaction as previous evidence was pointing towards that result. It is also important to take Thoits and Hewitt (2001) idea that greater well-being may cause people to become more involved in behaviours such as volunteering. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the possibility that it may not be carrying out prosocial behaviours such as helping or sharing that may increase an individual's life satisfaction levels as it could potentially be high life satisfaction levels which cause individuals to be more motivated to make the time and get involved in helping other. It may also be possible that individuals with higher levels of well-being may be more likely to participate in prosocial behaviours as they feel grateful for the lives that they have as it has been suggested gratitude and prosocial behaviour are related (Baragohain & Mandal, 2015). Our findings also contradict Akinin, Dunn, Whillans, Grant & Norton's (2013) study which suggested that prosocial spending impacted the emotions of the giver. The findings of the current study also contradict Nelson, Della Porta, Jacobs Bao, Lee, Chao & Lyubomirsky (2015) which found that students who carry out prosocial behaviours have higher levels of well-being. It was expected that the current study would find similar results as we also used a student sample to find out if helping others impacted the givers.

The results of the current study did not support Pressman, Kroft and Cross (2015). Their study suggested that prosocial behaviours had an impact on the giver similar to Thoits and

Hewitt (2001). Pressman, Kroft and Cross (2015) measured prosocial behaviour by asking participants to physically carry out the prosocial behaviours rather than using a prosocial behavioural intentions scale. The expected results of this study may have been obtained if we used a similar measure to their study to measure prosocial behaviour by actually asking the participants to participate in the prosocial behaviour such as helping, sharing etc. It could be possible that participants who participated in the current study may have found it easy to agree to participating in prosocial behaviours on an online survey but if they were presented with the opportunity to carry out the helpful behaviour in a real life situation, less participants may have displayed high prosocial behaviour intentions. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that there are some problems when carrying out surveys/online surveys as people can have busy lives and may be likely to say something in a short survey but when presented with the opportunity to help someone when they are busy or not feeling up to it may be unlikely. This study also contradicted Oarga, Stavrova & Fetchenhauer's (2015) as they found a relationship between prosocial behaviour and life-satisfaction. It may be possible that the sample of participants in the current study was much smaller. This study included 76 participants and Oarga and Colleagues (2015) study included 39 968 participants. The difference in the sample size may be one reason why the results of this study contradicted Oarga and Colleagues (2015) study.

Although other studies have looked at the impact of prosocial behaviours such as volunteer work and how these type of behaviours can impact the overall well-being of the individual who is carrying out these behaviours which benefit others for example Thoits and Hewitt (2001) few studies focused on carrying out prosocial behaviours that you could come across at any point in the day as you may have to make plans to volunteer on a certain day etc. That was the reason for choosing Baumsteiger and Sigel's (2019) Behavioural Intentions Scale.

Overall, there were some limitations of this study which may have interfered with the results of the study which produced the unexpected findings of this study. For example, most participants scored particularly high on the Behavioural Intentions scale with the average student scoring 6.5 on a scale of 1-7. The data collection may have impacted the results. It was expected that there would be a relatively even number of participants who scored relatively low on the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale and participants who scored relatively high. It was a challenge to compare the two groups as most participants scored high on the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale. As a result of this, participants who scored below 6.5 were considered to have lower prosocial behavioural intentions which may have impacted the results. The results may have been different if a more detailed prosocial intentions scale was used or a prosocial intentions scale with more questions/statements scale was used. Studies in the future should consider revising Baumsteiger and Siegal's (2019) Behavioural Intentions Scale or if a study is measuring prosocial behaviour intentions, they could use another scale to measure prosocial behavioural intentions which may produce different results if this study was to be replicated. Davis (1981) carried out a study to test the validity and reliability of scale to measure prosocial behaviour in young children which was developed by Smith (unpublished research). Further studies should consider altering this prosocial behaviour measure for children and make it suitable to measure the prosocial behaviour/prosocial intentions of students or adults as there is a scarce number of prosocial behavioural intentions scales used to measure the prosocial intentions of adults and prosocial behaviour is a widely studied and important area in social psychology.

Although the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Carson & Griffith, 1985) has been found to have high reliability according to Shelvin, Brunsdan and Miles (1988) the revised version of this scale (the Riverside Life Satisfaction scale) which was used to measure life satisfaction in the current study is a relatively new version of the Satisfaction

with Life Scale and few studies have actually used this new version of the scale. Even though there are few studies which have used the new Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale the fact that Çekici (2018) found this scale to be a reliable and valid measure of life satisfaction which is a benefit of the study as it shows that this scale has shown to measure what it is supposed to be measuring in previous studies. Baumsteiger and Siegel's (2019) Behavioural Intentions Scale also have shown to be a reliable and valid measure according to Anli (2009). The fact that Baumsteiger and Siegel's (2019) study suggested that the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale measures what it is supposed to be measuring (prosocial intentions) suggests that this was a reliable measure to use to measure prosocial intentions in the current study. Although the Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale and the Riverside life satisfaction scale are relatively new measures and have been used in very few previous studies there seems to be evidence suggesting that they are reliable and valid measures. More studies in the future should look at using these measures or altering there so there is more research studies which prove the validity and reliability of these measures so there are more reliable measures that can be used when carrying doing research around prosocial behaviours or life satisfaction or even both which will then broaden the research in these areas of psychology.

It could be possible that the results could have been affected as convenience sampling was used to collect data and a high number of participants to participate in this study were psychology students. Future studies should consider this and possible use other types of sampling for example random sampling as the current study used convenient sampling and this may have altered the results which produced the unexpected findings of this project. It is also important to note that Buragohain & Mandal (2015) found that individuals who were previously helped by others and experienced feelings of gratitude showed to be more helpful towards others. Our results showed that students had generally high prosocial intentions. It may be possible that students could have higher levels of gratitude. Maybe students feel more

grateful/happier than individuals that are not students and feel as though they have much help from other individuals throughout their college experience? This idea should be taken into consideration involving studies surrounding students and prosocial behaviours.

Also, it may be possible that psychology students may have higher prosocial behavioural intentions compared to other students. Future studies should look at this and take this idea into consideration when carrying out studies surrounding prosocial behaviours which involve students as little research has been done in this area. Studies in the future should also take into account that there may be other factors which may cause people to choose to not participate in prosocial behaviours such as helping someone which may cause the giver to be at risk e.g. becoming sick as a result of helping another sick individual. Bishop, Alva, Cantu, and Rittiman (1991) found that people that generally avoid victims with diseases such as aids reflects a fear of contacting the disease. This finding may suggest that individuals may avoid participating in a prosocial behaviour such as helping sick people or individuals who are contagious. This fear of being infected could potentially cause problems for individuals who are in need of care particularly during global pandemics. The more research which suggests that prosocial behaviours are beneficial to the givers, people may come together and help one another during times when diseases are more prevalent. If research suggesting that helping behaviours actually benefit the givers it could be extremely beneficial in the future for sick individuals who may not have access to healthcare e.g. people in third world countries who need help from volunteers.

Another limitation is the fact the there was only 14 males compared to 62 females in this sample. Therefore, the results of this study is not completely representative of male college students. Very little previous research has been done surrounding prosocial behaviour and gender and it may be possible that gender may be a predictor of prosocial behaviour. This may have affected the results as it may be possible that if there was an equal number of males

and females the expected results may have been produced. Although this is a possibility it has been suggested that males and females are both almost equal when it comes to prosocial behaviour (Abdullahi & Kumar, 2016). It is also important to mention that the sample was large enough to produce reliable results therefore the unexpected findings were not related to the sample size.

It is also important to note that the findings of this study can only be generalised to students. As only students that filled out the survey were included in the research and individuals that completed the survey who were not students were excluded from the study.

Conclusion

Overall prosocial behaviour is a popular topic in the field of psychology. Previous research suggests that prosocial behaviour related to well-being, gratitude and empathy. Prosocial behaviour is an extremely important topic to study as there is evidence that it has positive impact on the giver as well as the receivers. Although the current study suggested that prosocial behaviour does not impact life satisfaction, this topic of study should not be ignored. The more evidence available suggesting the benefits of participating in prosocial behaviour the more likely people will become to understand these benefits and could potentially start to help others more. If more people/students become helpful towards strangers or volunteer, this may improve the mental health of the individuals carrying out the behaviour which will also benefit the health systems all over the world. If something as small as helping someone cross the road or giving money to charity will improve a someone's overall mental health, it is definitely a worthy area of study.

References

Abdullahi, I. A., & Kumar, P. (2016). Gender differences in prosocial behaviour. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(4), 171-175.

- Aknin, L. B., Dunn, E. W., Whillans, A. V., Grant, A. M., & Norton, M. I. (2013). Making a difference matters: Impact unlocks the emotional benefits of prosocial spending. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 88, 90-95.
- Anlı, G. (2019). Adaptation of the prosocial behavioral intentions scale for use with Turkish participants: Assessments of validity and reliability. *Current Psychology*, 38(4), 950-958.
- Bierhoff, H. W. (2005). The psychology of compassion and prosocial behaviour. In *Compassion* (pp. 160-179). Routledge.
- Bierhoff, H. W., & Rohmann, E. (2004). Altruistic personality in the context of the empathy-altruism hypothesis. *European Journal of Personality*, 18(4), 351-365.
- Bishop, G. D., Alva, A. L., Cantu, L., & Rittiman, T. K. (1991). Responses to Persons with AIDS: Fear of Contagion or Stigma? 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 21(23), 1877-1888.
- Buragohain, P., & Mandal, R. (2015). Teaching of gratitude among the students of secondary school as a means of well-being. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 2(2), 179-188.
- Butler, J., & Kern, M. L. (2016). The PERMA-Profil: A brief multidimensional measure of flourishing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 6(3).
- Baumsteiger, R., & Siegel, J. T. (2019). Measuring prosociality: The development of a prosocial behavioral intentions scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, 101(3), 305-314.
- Çekici, F. (2018). THE ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION OF RIVERSIDE LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE TO TURKISH CULTURE. *PARADIGMS & UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ISSUES*, 45.
- Davis, S. (1981). Reliability and validity of a scale to measure prosocial behavior in young children.
- Dunn, J., & Munn, P. (1986). Siblings and the development of prosocial behaviour. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9(3), 265-284.
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- Helliwell, J. F., Aknin, L. B., Shiplett, H., Huang, H., & Wang, S. (2017). *Social capital and prosocial behaviour as sources of well-being* (No. w23761). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Huebner, E. S., Suldo, S. M., & Gilman, R. (2006). Life Satisfaction.
- Kelly, W. (2004). Sleep-length and life satisfaction in a college student sample. *College Student Journal*, 38(3).
- Lockwood, P. L., Seara-Cardoso, A., & Viding, E. (2014). Emotion regulation moderates the association between empathy and prosocial behavior. *PloS one*, 9(5).

- Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social indicators research*, 46(2), 137-155.
- Margolis, S., Schwitzgebel, E., Ozer, D. J., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2019). A new measure of life satisfaction: the riverside life satisfaction scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 101(6), 621-630.
- Nelson, S. K., Della Porta, M. D., Jacobs Bao, K., Lee, H. C., Choi, I., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2015). 'It's up to you': Experimentally manipulated autonomy support for prosocial behavior improves well-being in two cultures over six weeks. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(5), 463-476.
- Helliwell, J. F., Aknin, L. B., Shiplett, H., Huang, H., & Wang, S. (2017). *Social capital and prosocial behaviour as sources of well-being* (No. w23761). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Huebner, E. S., Suldo, S. M., & Gilman, R. (2006). Life Satisfaction.
- Oarga, C., Stavrova, O., & Fetchenhauer, D. (2015). When and why is helping others good for well-being? The role of belief in reciprocity and conformity to society's expectations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(2), 242-254.
- Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention. *Journal of happiness studies*, 7(3), 361-375.
- Pavey, L., Greitemeyer, T., & Sparks, P. (2011). Highlighting relatedness promotes prosocial motives and behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(7), 905-917.
- Pressman, S. D., Kraft, T. L., & Cross, M. P. (2015). It's good to do good and receive good: The impact of a 'pay it forward' style kindness intervention on giver and receiver well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(4), 293-302.
- Shevlin, M., Brunsten, V., & Miles, J. N. V. (1998). Satisfaction with life scale: Analysis of factorial invariance, mean structures and reliability. *Personality and individual differences*, 25(5), 911-916.
- Thoits, P. A., & Hewitt, L. N. (2001). Volunteer work and well-being. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 115-131.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS)

Please rate your agreement with each of the statements below.

Use the 7-point scale provided.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Moderately disagree

3 = Slightly disagree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Slightly agree

6 = Moderately agree

7 = Strongly agree

1. I like how my life is going.

2. If I could live my life over, I would change many things.

3. I am content with my life.

4. Those around me seem to be living better lives than my own.

5. I am satisfied with where I am in life right now.

6. I want to change the path my life is on.

Appendix B:

Prosocial Behavioural Intentions Scale

Instructions: Imagine that you encounter the following opportunities to help others. Please indicate how willing you would be to perform each behaviour from 1 (Definitely would not do this) to 7 (Definitely would do this). If you are more likely to complete one task (e.g., help a stranger find a key) than another (e.g., help a stranger find a missing pet), please respond to the task that you would be more likely to perform.

1. Comfort someone I know after they experience a hardship

2. Help a stranger find something they lost, like their key or a pet

3. Help care for a sick friend or relative

4. Assist a stranger with a small task (e.g., help carry groceries, watch their things while they use the restroom)

Scoring: Calculate the mean of scores on all items. The final sentence was not part of the original instructions, but is recommended for future use.