

# The Development of Prosocial Behavior in Counseling College Students

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## Abstract

Prosocial behavior is selfless helping behavior that reflects moral maturity, so it is important for students to possess, especially prospective guidance counselors or counselors. Guidance counseling students are required to have a high level of prosocial attitude because their future profession focuses on mentoring, assisting, and developing individual potential. This study aims to describe the development of prosocial behavior among guidance counseling students at Padang State University. The method used was descriptive comparative with a sample of 450 students from the first to fourth years. Data analysis was performed through descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Post Hoc tests using computer services. The results showed that the prosocial behavior of Guidance and Counseling students at Padang State University was in the high category. However, the development from year to year did not show a progressive pattern. Therefore, the Guidance and Counseling Department needs to devise strategic steps so that students' prosocial behavior can develop sustainably from the early semesters of their studies. The benefits of this study are to contribute to the development of social psychology by examining the development of prosocial behavior among Guidance and Counseling students, as well as to serve as a reference for further research in understanding the factors that influence prosocial behavior.

**Keywords:** Students, Prosocial Behavior



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## Introduction

Individuals who have achieved moral maturity are not only able to avoid negative behavior, but are also motivated to perform positive actions, such as establishing cooperation, showing empathy, caring for others, being tolerant, and behaving prosocially (Husna & Fahmi, 2019). Behavior that helps others, or prosocial behavior, according to Sears, Freedman, & Peplau (1991), is any form of action taken or planned to help others without regard to the helper's motives. In line with this, Santrock (2007) argues that individuals with high prosocial behavior benefit others and have empathy for others. Individuals with high prosocial behavior tend to create a sense of security

and provide assistance to people in need. This means that individuals with high prosocial behavior will show a positive attitude and help others without expecting anything in return (Baron & Byrne 2005). Contrary to ideal expectations, the results of the study show that the prosocial behavior of students is relatively low. Research by Tsalitsah, Nainggolan, & Muslikah (2022) at the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya shows that 8.4% of students have very high prosocial behavior. Furthermore, research by Harahap, Nura'rafaa, Ridwan, & Abdillah (2024) at University X showed that 17% of individuals had high prosocial behavior at 75%.

Students are individuals who are pursuing higher education at universities, institutes, or academies (Putra & Hariko, 2023; Putra & Ahmad, 2020; Putra, 2022). Students are expected to have a high level of prosocial behavior. The phenomenon among students in the Guidance and Counseling Department of the Faculty of Education at Padang State University (hereinafter referred to as DBK FIP UNP) shows a low level of social awareness, as seen from the lack of awareness to tidy up the hall after seminars, insensitivity to friends who are having difficulties or are absent from lectures, and minimal participation in voluntary activities such as fundraising during disasters. This reflects the low level of prosocial behavior among students.

The phenomenon of low student participation in social activities reflects a lack of awareness of the importance of caring and sharing, especially among Guidance and Counseling students. In fact, Guidance and Counseling students are prepared to become teachers or counselors who have a great responsibility in accompanying, assisting, and guiding individuals in facing various life problems.

Prosocial attitudes among guidance counseling students have a significant impact in shaping and pursuing a career as a guidance counselor or counselor, given that these professions focus on helping and assisting individuals in developing their potential and dealing with various problems. Therefore, it is very important for prospective guidance counselors or counselors to have a high level of prosocial attitudes. As guidance counselors or counselors, they act as mediators who help students or individuals understand and overcome their problems by providing support, guidance, and appropriate coping strategies.

Basically, every form of individual action and behavior will also be influenced by the education they have received. Behavior is the result of all kinds of experiences and human interactions with their environment, which are manifested in the form of knowledge, attitudes, and actions (Loppies & Nurrokhmah, 2021). One internal factor that influences a person's level of knowledge is their level of education, where the higher a person's level of education, the higher their knowledge (Dafri 2020).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that students' prosocial behavior should be high, but based on previous studies, many prosocial behaviors are classified as low. The objectives of this study are to (1) describe the development of students' prosocial behavior and (2) describe the differences in prosocial behavior among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students at DBK FIP UNP.

## **Method**

The research method used was quantitative research with a descriptive comparative approach. This study compared the prosocial behavior of first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year DBK FIP UNP students. The research population consisted of first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year DBK FIP UNP students, with a total of 450 students registered in the January-June 2025 semester. The

research instrument used the Prosocial Behavior Scale adopted from Hariko's (2020) research, which has been tested and consists of 44 items. The data measurement technique used a *Likert* scale to measure prosocial behavior. Data were obtained by administering the research instrument in the form of a tested Prosocial Behavior Scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques and comparative techniques with ANOVA and Post Hoc tests using computer services.

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Prosocial Behavior of College Students

The description of the prosocial behavior of DBK FIP UNP students is summarized in **Table 1**:

Kategori	Aspek Altruistic		Aspek Anonym		Aspek Emotional		Aspek Darurat		Keseluruhan	
	Mean	Persentase	Mean	Persentase	Mean	Persentase	Mean	Persentase	Mean	Persentase
S Tinggi	58	12.9	8	1.8	64	14.2	55	12.2	34	7,56
Tinggi	311	69.1	323	71.8	236	52.4	231	51.3	313	69,56
Sedang	80	17.8	119	26.4	149	33.1	160	35.6	102	22,67
Rendah	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.7	1	0,21
S Rendah	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0,0
Mean keseluruhan:161,71 (Tinggi)										

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Overall Prosocial Behavior**

Based on **Table 1**, in general, the prosocial behavior of DBK FIP UNP students was in the high category with a mean of 161.71. Specifically, there were still 34 students in the very high category, with a percentage of 7.56%. In the high category, there are 313 people with a percentage of 69.56%. In the moderate category, there are 102 people with a percentage of 22.67%. In the low category, there is 1 person with a percentage of 0.21%, and in the very low category, there are 0 people with a percentage of 0.00%.

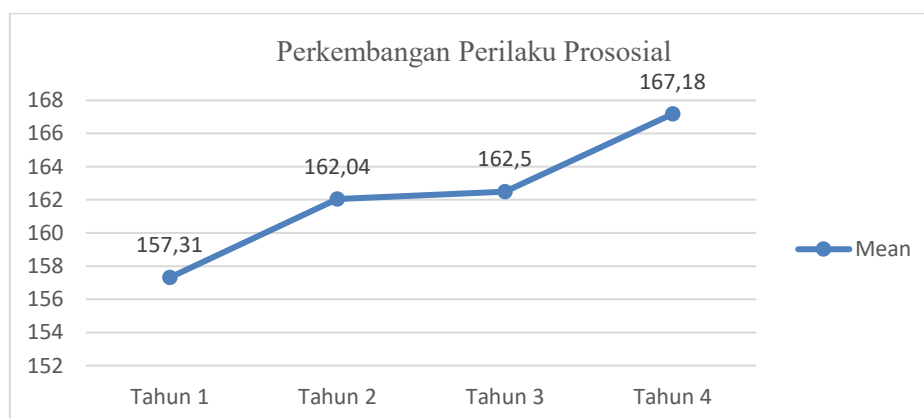
This differs from previous studies that showed low levels of prosocial behavior among students. Research by Tsalitsah, Nainggolan, & Muslikah (2022) at the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya showed that 8.4% of students had very high prosocial behavior and 23.2% had high prosocial behavior. Furthermore, the results of research by Harahap, Nura'rafaa, Ridwan, & Abdillah (2024) at University X showed that 17% of individuals had prosocial behavior. The research by Balengka, Khairun, & Rahmawati (2021) shows high prosocial behavior with a percentage of 20%. Wahyuni & Permatasari (2020) show low prosocial behavior among students, indicating that there is still a gap between learning objectives in terms of attitude and the actualization of student attitudes and behavior.

Compared to several previous studies, there is a striking difference in that the results of this study tend to be more positive than previous studies, where the percentage of students in the high category is far more dominant. This difference occurs because of the difference in respondents in the study, where the respondents in this study are DBK FIP UNP students who have an academic culture and student activities that emphasize the development of social skills, for example through field practice, group guidance, and community service. These results reflect that counseling students have demonstrated positive attitudes and actions towards others, which are strong and consistent in their daily lives and are certainly in line with the basic values of education and the counseling profession.

The results of the data processing that has been carried out, in accordance with the research question, namely how prosocial behavior develops based on the aspects of altruism, anonymity, emotion, and emergency, based on Table 1 above, can be described as follows: prosocial behavior in the aspect of altruism is in the high category. This means that DBK FIP UNP students already have a tendency to help others voluntarily without expecting anything in return. *Altruistic* prosocial behavior provides positive benefits for students in that values of caring, social sensitivity, and willingness to help have begun to develop within them. In terms of anonymity, it is in the high category. This finding indicates that DBK FIP UNP students have shown positive behavior in their ability to help without expecting recognition from others. In social situations, students tend to provide help sincerely and without needing to be known by others, reflecting maturity in their prosocial attitudes.

Based on the results of research on prosocial behavior in the emotional aspect, it is in the high category. This shows that DBK FIP UNP students have good emotional prosocial abilities and are able to respond appropriately to social situations. The emotional drive to help others has been effectively manifested in their behavior. Furthermore, the results of the study on prosocial behavior in emergency situations were in the high category. This shows that DBK FIP UNP students have a high level of concern for others, especially in emergency situations. Students tend to be responsive and ready to help others who are in urgent need or in dire need of assistance. They are not indifferent, but show empathy and a strong sense of social responsibility.

## 2. Development of prosocial behavior among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students of the DBK FIP UNP



**Table 2. Prosocial behavior in year 1, year 2, year 3, and year 4**

In the table above, it is evident that there are differences in the mean for each year, indicating an improvement in prosocial behavior as students gain more academic and social experience. However, to determine whether these differences in the mean are statistically significant, further testing such as ANOVA is required. To identify specifically which groups differ significantly, further analysis using a Post Hoc test is conducted.

After the ANOVA test showed that there was a significant difference, this was evident from the significance value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is much smaller than 0.05. This means that there was a difference in prosocial behavior in at least one pair of academic year groups. Further analysis using the Post Hoc Test showed that significant differences only occurred between first-year and fourth-

year students, with a mean difference of 9.873 and  $p = 0.000$ . This means that fourth-year students had significantly higher prosocial behavior than first-year students. The differences between the first and second years, as well as between the first and third years, were not statistically significant. Similarly, the differences between the second, third, and fourth years were also not significant.

These results indicate that an increase in prosocial behavior among students tends to occur as they progress through their studies, but a significant increase is only seen in the fourth year. This indicates that DBK FIP UNP students are not progressive in improving prosocial behavior because, in the early stages of lectures, students focus more on adapting to the academic and social environment, so that attention to the development of prosocial attitudes is still limited, considering that DBK FIP UNP students are prepared to become teachers or counselors who have a big responsibility in accompanying, helping, and guiding individuals in facing various life problems. Based on the research data, there is still a low tendency in several aspects, namely the emotional and emergency aspects. The low score in the *emotional* aspect indicates that students are not yet fully able to relate feelings of sympathy or empathy to concrete actions in daily life. Meanwhile, in the emergency aspect, it appears that students are still not quick to make decisions to help in situations that require quick action, so prosocial behavior, especially in the *emotional* and *emergency* aspects, is not yet optimal.

### 3. Implications for Guidance and Counseling

Based on the presentation of research results discussing the development of prosocial behavior among DBK FIP UNP students, it was found that the development of prosocial behavior each year was not progressive. Therefore, DBK FIP UNP needs to take steps to increase the progressive prosocial behavior of students each year by forming prosocial content from the early semesters. In line with this, providing counseling services can also increase the progressiveness of prosocial behavior. The purpose of guidance and counseling is to help individuals develop optimally in accordance with their stage of development (Prayitno, 2009). The types of services that can be provided include:

#### a) Information services

According to Prayitno & Amti (2004), information services are one type of guidance and counseling service that provides useful and beneficial information to people through direct and indirect communication. Every individual, in living their life and developing themselves, needs various information for their daily needs, both for the present and for their future life (Qomaria, Arifin, & Djonu, 2022). Guidance counselors/counselors can provide an understanding of the importance of prosocial behavior and how they can develop this attitude in accordance with their gender characteristics and also solve problems that they or others are experiencing, in line with the results of research by Puspitasari, Sinthia, & Afriwilda (2024), which states that providing information services can improve individual adjustment. By providing information, individuals can become more aware of the importance of helping others (Syukur et al., 2023).

#### b) Group counseling services

Through group counseling, topics can be tailored to needs, such as prosocial behavior. Individuals can learn to understand other people's perspectives, foster mutual support, and increase awareness of the importance of helping others without expecting anything in return.

Through group counseling, students can practice managing their emotions well, increase empathy for others, and simulate or role-play emergency situations. In line with this, group counseling services use effective sociodrama techniques to improve prosocial behavior by dramatizing behaviors related to social issues (Nurmaliza & Syukur, 2024). To provide group counseling services, it is recommended that academic advisors conduct group counseling sessions together with students. Group counseling services can improve students' prosocial behavior. Group counseling services are increasingly demonstrating their existence as one type of service in counseling that is appropriate to be provided in order to help with issues related to social problems (Dewi & Darmawansyah, 2022).

Group counseling is an effective strategy for fostering prosocial behavior among counseling students. With a limited number of participants, around 8–10 people, this service allows the material to be delivered according to individual needs (Nirwana, 2013). The group dynamics process helps students deepen their understanding of ethical values, hone their empathy, and develop social skills that support their competence as prospective counselors.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the prosocial behavior of DBK FIP UNP students is generally in the high category. However, the development of prosocial behavior between study levels does not show progressive improvement, with significant differences only occurring between first-year and fourth-year students. This non-progressive development indicates the need to strengthen counseling services from the early semesters so that the formation of prosocial behavior occurs systematically, continuously, and consistently. For future researchers, this study can be developed with a broader scope and variables other than the development of prosocial behavior. The results of this study can also be used as a source of information for further research.

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