



Prosocial Behavior And Wellbeing Among Middle-Aged Individuals

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Abstract : This qualitative study aimed to investigate the relationship between prosocial behavior and well-being among middle-aged adults residing in Bhopal city. The research followed a narrative approach, focusing on individuals who met specific inclusion criteria related to their consistent engagement in helping others. The study sought to understand the motivations, experiences, and perceptions of these individuals who have actively contributed to society through their involvement with NGOs, social work, or instances where they risked their lives to assist others. A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify and recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria. In-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse group of middle-aged adults, ensuring representation from various socioeconomic backgrounds, genders, and occupational domains. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and themes in the narratives provided by the participants. Preliminary findings revealed several common themes, including the intrinsic motivation to help others, personal growth and fulfillment derived from prosocial acts, and the impact of social support networks on well-being. The narratives provided insights into the participants' experiences of altruism, empathy, and the challenges they encountered while engaging in prosocial behavior. The findings will have practical implications for policymakers, NGOs, and community organizations in designing interventions and programs that promote prosocial behaviors and enhance the well-being of individuals in the community.

IndexTerms - Prosocial behavior, Well-being, Middle-aged adults, Bhopal city, Qualitative study, Narrative approach

I. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

As people age, they tend to display more prosocial behavior and empathy. Studies have shown that older adults are more willing to exert physical effort to help others, and this is associated with positive feelings (Lockwood, 2021). Empathic concern increases with age, leading to greater prosocial behavior, especially in distressing situations (Sun et al., 2018). Older adults (40 and above) are more likely to engage in helping behaviors than young adults (Thu et al., 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals initially displayed higher levels of prosocialness, but as stress increased over time, older adults showed a decrease in prosocial behavior (Shillington et al., 2022; Harris et al., 2022). Prosocial behavior is linked to well-being and happiness, and a reciprocal relationship exists between them (Khanna et al., 2017; Aknin et al., 2018). Engaging in prosocial acts has numerous benefits, including improved mental and physical health (Yeung et al., 2018), reduced mortality risk, and positive effects on gene expression (Bower et al., 2022). Prosocial behavior can also mitigate the negative effects of chronic stress (Haller et al., 2022) and reduce loneliness during the pandemic (Inagaki et al., 2022).

Prosocial activities, such as volunteering and helping others, are associated with improved well-being, particularly those involving physical effort (Chi et al., 2021; Berge, 2019). The existence of true altruism, driven solely by selfless motives, remains a topic of debate in psychology (Kay et al., 2020). Various theories attempt to explain altruism, including the Kin Selection Theory, empathy-altruism hypothesis, and psychological egoism (Abounader, 2018). Understanding the motivations behind altruistic behavior can contribute to creating a more prosocial society based on positive relationships and a sense of belonging.

NEED OF THE STUDY.

The significance of conducting a qualitative study on the prosocial behavior and well-being of middle-aged individuals using the narrative method is multifold. Firstly, middle adulthood is a critical phase of life characterized by various social, psychological, and physical changes. Exploring the prosocial behavior and well-being of individuals in this stage can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to their overall happiness and positive social engagement. Understanding the motivations, experiences, and challenges related to prosocial behavior among middle-aged individuals can inform the development of interventions and programs aimed at enhancing their well-being. Secondly, the use of the narrative method allows for a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of participants' personal experiences and perspectives. By conducting semi-structured interviews and utilizing a questionnaire tailored to the study's objectives, researchers can capture rich qualitative data that goes beyond quantitative measures. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the individual stories, values, and beliefs that shape prosocial behavior in middle adulthood.

Thirdly, focusing on a specific population of Indian middle-aged individuals from the city of Bhopal adds cultural and contextual relevance to the study. India is a diverse country with unique social, cultural, and economic dynamics that may influence prosocial behavior and well-being. By selecting participants who engage in prosocial activities such as NGO workers, the study aims to capture a range of experiences and perspectives related to volunteerism, philanthropy, activism, and helping strangers. This diversity within the sample can shed light on the various forms of prosocial behavior prevalent in the Indian context and their impact on individual well-being. Moreover, the study's inclusion criteria, which involve identifying participants through newspaper stories, local contacts, and the internet, ensure a diverse and representative sample of middle-aged individuals engaged in prosocial activities. This approach allows for the inclusion of participants with different backgrounds, experiences, and levels of involvement in prosocial behaviors. By incorporating a range of perspectives, the study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between prosocial behavior and well-being among middle-aged individuals. In conclusion, this qualitative study on the prosocial behavior and well-being of middle-aged individuals using the narrative method holds significance in contributing to the existing knowledge on the subject. The study's focus on a specific Indian population, along with the inclusion of diverse participants engaged in prosocial activities, aims to provide a culturally relevant and comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing prosocial behavior and its impact on well-being during middle adulthood. The findings can have implications for the development of interventions and policies that promote prosocial behavior and enhance the well-being of individuals in this stage of life.

Problem Statement:

- What are the experiences of prosocial behavior among middle-aged individuals?
- What descriptions do middle-aged individuals have about their feelings after involvement in prosocial actions?
- How can prosocial activities be an intervention to boost well-being among middle-aged individuals?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

The study is situated in the city of Bhopal located in the Madhya Pradesh State. The universe of the study includes all the middle-aged adult prosocial Indian citizens residing in Bhopal City. The participants will be of both genders and will be of diverse educational and socioeconomic background. The method of sampling used for this study will be non-probability convenient sampling. A total of 6 samples will be selected from the population of the study. Only the Middle-Aged Persons and who fit the criteria for prosocial behavior will be selected. Middle adulthood is typically defined as the life stage between 40 and 65 years old. The criteria for participant selection will focus on individuals who actively engage in prosocial activities such as NGO workers, volunteers, philanthropists, activists, or individuals who have intervened to save a stranger's life in danger. Participants will be identified through various sources, including newspaper stories, local contacts, and online platforms related to community engagement and social work.

3.2 Design

This qualitative study aimed to explore the prosocial behavior and well-being of middle-aged individuals using a narrative method. The narrative method allowed participants to share their experiences and perspectives in-depth, providing rich and contextualized data. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain insights into the motivations, experiences, and outcomes related to prosocial activities among middle-aged individuals in the city of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

3.3 Theoretical framework

Narrative Inquiry and Narrative Identity Construction:

This qualitative study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Narrative Inquiry and Narrative Identity Construction. Narrative inquiry posits that individuals construct meaning and make sense of their experiences through storytelling (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It acknowledges that narratives are central to human identity and provide a vehicle for individuals to articulate their lived experiences. In this study, the narrative method is employed to capture and explore the stories of middle-aged individuals regarding their prosocial behavior and well-being. Through semi-structured interviews and the construction of narratives, the research aims to delve into the motivations, experiences, and outcomes related to prosocial activities.

Life Course Perspective and Middle Adulthood:

The study also aligns with the Life Course Perspective, which recognizes that human development and behavior are influenced by the interplay of individual experiences and societal contexts over time (Elder, 1998). Middle adulthood, typically defined as the life stage between 40 and 65 years old, represents a critical phase characterized by various life transitions and developmental challenges (Baltes, 1997). The study acknowledges that these transitions and challenges can shape individuals' narratives about their prosocial activities and well-being during middle adulthood.

Cultural and Contextual Embeddedness:

Furthermore, the research incorporated cultural and contextual embeddedness by focusing on middle-aged Indian individuals residing in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. It recognizes the importance of understanding how unique social, cultural, and economic dynamics influence prosocial behavior and well-being (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). By collecting narratives within this specific cultural context, the study aims to uncover culturally specific factors that contribute to the construction of prosocial identity and the impact on well-being.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

The study employed thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method, to identify and analyze recurring themes, patterns, and categories within the narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method aligns with the narrative inquiry approach by allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants' stories and the emergence of themes from the data.

Ethical Considerations and Research Ethics:

Lastly, the study adhered to ethical guidelines, reflecting the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for autonomy (Emanuel et al., 2000). It ensures the well-being, privacy, and confidentiality of participants by obtaining informed consent, and maintaining anonymity.

3.4 Measures or Instruments:

The primary instrument for data collection in this study was a semi-structured interview questionnaire. After referring to the literature and based on personal observations and experiences, the researcher identified certain questions that would fit into the questionnaire. The constructed questionnaire was validated by Qualitative Research Experts. The questionnaire had been specifically designed for this study to capture detailed narratives regarding participants' prosocial behaviors, motivations, experiences, and the impact of their actions on their well-being. The questionnaire included open-ended questions to encourage participants to provide rich and detailed responses, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of their of their prosocial activities and well-being.

3.5 Procedures:

The researcher visited the selected participants in Bhopal to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded, with participants' consent, to ensure the accurate capture of their narratives. Mobile phones were used to document the data gathering. Uniformity was maintained by following the similar method in the data gathering. Before the interviews, for the purpose of data gathering, verbal consent was taken from the participants. Participants were also provided with informed consent forms explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality of their responses. Once the consent forms were signed, the interviews commenced, guided by the semi-structured interview questionnaire. The researcher encouraged participants to share personal stories, reflect on their motivations and experiences, and discuss the impact of their prosocial activities on their well-being. The data gathering was conducted during the time of day in a setting which was convenient for the participant. The researcher himself did the data gathering. The researcher introduced the purpose of the interview to the participants beforehand and clarified all their concerns. The participants were made aware of the objectives of this research and how their stories and experiences could make a significant difference in developing an understanding of Prosocial Behavior. The participant responses were transcribed verbatim, and the researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcriptions to become acquainted with the research content and its scope. Subsequently, codes were identified and assigned to the relevant segments. Data management and coding were facilitated using the QDA Miner Lite qualitative data analysis software. These codes were then organized under appropriate and pertinent themes, which were further identified and compared among all six participants in the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

No statistical procedures were applied to the data as the sample size was pretty small. It didn't allow for the drawing of meaningful inferences from such a small sample. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim, ensuring the accurate representation of participants' narratives. Thematic analysis was employed to identify and analyze recurring themes, patterns, and categories within the data. The researcher immersed themselves in the data, repeatedly reading and coding the transcripts to derive meaningful insights. Codes were developed inductively, allowing emergent themes to guide the analysis process. The identified themes were organized into a coherent narrative, supported by relevant quotes from participants. The emerged themes were compared and contrasted with the existing literature. The findings were presented descriptively and supported by rich qualitative evidence.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Results:**

The emotional experiences described by the participants after engaging in prosocial actions were predominantly positive, with feelings of fulfillment, joy, and a sense of purpose being commonly reported. The participants expressed a deep satisfaction derived from helping others and a belief that their actions had a positive impact on both the recipients and themselves. Moreover, prosocial activities were perceived as a means of enhancing personal well-being, as participants reported increased self-esteem, a sense of connectedness, and improved overall life satisfaction.

1. Family and social support:

Participants highlighted the influential role of family and social support in their prosocial experiences. Family influence and encouragement, as well as upbringing and childhood experiences, were significant factors shaping their prosocial behaviors. Previous research has consistently emphasized the importance of family support in fostering prosocial behaviors (Carlo et al., 2012). Middle-aged adults, similar to other age groups, rely on the support and guidance of their families to engage in prosocial activities (Padilla-Walker et al., 2018).

2. Religious and cultural influence:

Religion and cultural factors emerged as influential aspects in the prosocial experiences of middle-aged adults. Participants discussed how religion and religious beliefs, as well as cultural barriers, influenced their prosocial behavior. Additionally, they mentioned the role of religious role models in shaping their prosocial attitudes and actions. Previous studies have consistently found a positive association between religiosity and prosocial behavior (Hill et al., 2000). A previous study by Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) supports the finding that the moral and ethical values embedded in religious

teachings and the influence of cultural norms contribute to individuals' prosocial tendencies. The study provides a comprehensive social-psychological perspective on the relationship between religion and individual behavior.

3. Decision-making and empathy:

Participants emphasized the importance of decision-making processes and empathy in their prosocial experiences. Factors influencing their decisions to engage in prosocial behavior included the decision-making process itself, the importance of consent, and the concepts of altruism and empathy. Previous research has highlighted the role of empathy in promoting prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983). Middle-aged adults, similar to other age groups, consider empathetic responses and ethical considerations when making decisions to help others (Batson et al., 2004).

4. Challenges and risks:

Participants discussed various challenges and risks associated with their prosocial behavior. These challenges included difficulties encountered during prosocial behavior, a lack of acknowledgment and recognition, administrative and government challenges, as well as legal and authority-related obstacles. The theme of risks and selflessness was also evident, as participants acknowledged the potential personal risks involved in helping others. Previous studies on prosocial behavior have consistently highlighted the risks and challenges involved in helping others. Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) emphasized the potential difficulties and obstacles individuals may encounter when engaging in prosocial behavior. Bureaucratic obstacles, legal constraints, and the potential for personal harm can act as barriers to engaging in prosocial acts (Stürmer et al., 2005).

5. Prosocial activities and responsibility:

Middle-aged adults described engaging in various prosocial activities, driven by a sense of responsibility. They expressed the nature of prosocial activities they participated in, including helping without discrimination, being selective in providing assistance, and demonstrating unconditional help and altruism. Previous research has highlighted the diverse range of prosocial activities individuals engage in, such as volunteering, donating, and offering emotional support (Clary et al., 1998). Middle-aged adults, like other age groups, perceive prosocial behavior as a responsibility and demonstrate a willingness to contribute to society. According to a study by Okun and Schultz (2003), middle-aged adults, similar to other age groups, perceive prosocial behavior as a responsibility and demonstrate a willingness to contribute to society. The study examined age-related differences in the motives for volunteering and found that middle-aged individuals showed a strong sense of responsibility towards their communities and a desire to make a positive impact.

Role of Class

The theme of the role of class and its influence on prosocial behavior has emerged in the study. This finding is in line with previous studies done. One study that examined the role of social class in prosocial behavior is by Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng, and Keltner (2010). In their research, they investigated how social class influences individuals' tendency to engage in prosocial behavior. The study found that individuals from lower social class backgrounds exhibited higher levels of empathy, compassion, and prosocial behavior compared to individuals from higher social class backgrounds. The researchers proposed that this pattern could be attributed to the greater reliance on social support and cooperation within lower social class contexts. Furthermore, the study also revealed that individuals from higher social class backgrounds showed a tendency to exhibit more unethical behavior and were less likely to help others in need. The researchers suggested that this might be due to the sense of entitlement and self-focused orientation often associated with higher social class positions.

6. Support and collaboration:

Support and collaboration emerged as important factors in the prosocial experiences of middle-aged adults. Participants emphasized the significance of teamwork, encouragement, availability of resources, and collaborative efforts in facilitating their prosocial behaviors. Previous studies have emphasized the role of social support and collaboration in promoting prosocial behavior (Borgonovi, 2008). Research has shown that the presence of supportive relationships is associated with higher levels of engaging in prosocial behavior. These social networks create an important environment where individuals can actively demonstrate prosocial actions. Additionally, there is a conceptual connection between emotional well-being and prosocial behavior, suggesting that experiencing social support contributes to the development of social-emotional skills (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990).

7. Personal factors:

Personal factors, such as altruistic attitudes, witnessing impactful events, early childhood experiences, and family support and encouragement, were identified as influential in participants' prosocial experiences. Previous research has consistently highlighted the role of personal factors, including individual characteristics, life experiences, and upbringing, in shaping prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg et al., 2005). Middle-aged adults' prosocial tendencies can be influenced by their altruistic values, exposure to significant events, and the support they receive from their families.

8. Social dynamics:

Participants discussed social dynamics that influenced their prosocial experiences. These dynamics included social support and cooperation, societal pressure and expectations, the influence of social organizations, and the sense of responsibility towards society. Previous studies have highlighted the impact of social dynamics on prosocial behavior, emphasizing the importance of social norms, social influence, and social roles (Van Lange et al., 2013). Middle-aged adults navigate social pressures and expectations while engaging in prosocial acts and demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards their communities (Carlo et al., 2012).

9. Spiritual and religious motivation:

The theme of spiritual and religious motivation emerged, indicating the influence of spiritual beliefs, religious texts, and the belief in a higher power on participants' prosocial experiences. Previous research has shown that religious and spiritual motivations can inspire individuals to engage in prosocial behaviors (Pichon et al., 2007). Middle-aged adults, similar to other age groups, draw on their spiritual and religious beliefs as a source of motivation and guidance for their prosocial actions.

The results of the study revealed several themes that encompass the prosocial experiences of middle-aged adults. These findings align with previous research, highlighting the importance of family and social support, the influence of religion and culture, decision-making processes and empathy, challenges and risks, prosocial activities and responsibility, support and collaboration, personal factors, social dynamics, and spiritual and religious motivations in shaping prosocial behaviors.

In response to the question "*What are the Descriptions of Feelings after involvement of Middle-Aged Adults*" several themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of interviews with six participants. These themes provide insights into the feelings experienced by middle-aged adults following their involvement in various activities. The following themes were identified:

1. *Emotional fulfillment and satisfaction*

Participants expressed a sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment in their involvement. They reported experiencing a strong sense of purpose, which contributed to their overall emotional well-being. The participants described a feeling of happiness and worth that stemmed from their engagement in meaningful activities. They expressed that their involvement provided a sense of emotional fulfillment and contributed to their overall satisfaction in life.

Previous studies have supported these findings by highlighting the positive emotional outcomes associated with engaging in prosocial activities. For instance, research by Post (2005) found that individuals who engage in prosocial behavior experience increased levels of well-being and life satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Aknin, Dunn, and Norton (2012) revealed that spending money on others, a form of prosocial behavior, leads to higher levels of happiness. These findings align with the emotional fulfillment and satisfaction reported by the middle-aged adults in our study.

2. *Sense of Purpose & Meaning in Life*

Another theme that emerged was a sense of purpose and meaning in life. The participants expressed a deep understanding of the meaning and purpose behind their actions, which contributed to their overall sense of fulfillment and dedication. They reported a strong sense of purpose that guided their choices and motivated them to actively engage in their work and other activities.

Previous studies have also emphasized the significance of a sense of purpose and meaning in life for individuals' well-being and emotional experiences. Research conducted by Steger, Kashdan, and Oishi (2008) found that individuals who have a clear sense of purpose in life experience higher levels of happiness, well-being, and psychological adjustment. Moreover, a study by Ryff and Singer (2008) highlighted the positive associations between a sense of purpose and various aspects of psychological well-being, including positive emotions, life satisfaction, and personal growth. These findings from previous studies align with the experiences reported by middle-aged adults in our study, where they described a profound sense of purpose and dedication that contributed to their positive emotional states.

3. *Compassion & Empathy*

The participants displayed a heightened awareness of others' plight and demonstrated sensitivity to pain and suffering. They described experiencing emotional understanding and connection with those they helped, emphasizing the importance of being compassionate and empathetic. Their involvement in prosocial activities fostered a deeper connection with humanity as they recognized the shared experiences and emotions of others.

Previous studies have consistently emphasized the role of compassion and empathy in prosocial behavior and the associated emotional experiences. Research conducted by Batson et al. (1997) found that individuals who exhibit higher levels of empathy are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior and experience positive emotions as a result. A study conducted by Sprecher and Fehr (2005) investigated the link between empathy, compassion, and prosocial behavior. The results revealed that individuals who scored higher on measures of empathy and compassion were more likely to engage in prosocial actions. This finding suggests that individuals with a greater capacity for compassion are more inclined to exhibit helpful behaviors towards others. These findings from previous studies align with the experiences reported by middle-aged adults in our study, where they described a strong sense of compassion and empathy towards others, leading to emotional understanding and a connection with humanity.

4. *Emotional Processing and Coping Mechanisms*

The theme of emotional processing and coping mechanisms emerged from the interviews with the participants. All of them reported experiencing intense emotions while engaging in prosocial behavior, but their responses to those emotions varied. One participant reported having no time to process emotions while engaging in prosocial behavior, while another reported experiencing emotional numbing. However, all participants reported a sense of fearlessness while helping others.

The participants shared their experiences of various emotional responses during their involvement in prosocial activities. They expressed feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion towards those they were helping. These emotional responses served as motivating factors for their engagement in prosocial behavior. Previous studies have also highlighted the link between emotional responses and prosocial behavior. For instance, Batson et al. (1991) found that empathic concern, a component of empathy, is positively associated with helping behavior.

The theme of emotional numbing emerged in participants' narratives, indicating a sense of emotional detachment or desensitization during their involvement. They mentioned becoming less affected by the emotional distress of others over time, possibly as a coping mechanism to protect themselves from becoming overwhelmed. This aligns with previous research that has identified emotional numbing as a potential consequence of repeated exposure to distressing situations (Bonanno et al., 2007). Some participants expressed a sense of fearlessness or reduced fear when engaging in prosocial activities. They described being able to overcome their own fears and concerns, focusing instead on providing assistance to others. This finding aligns with studies on the "helper's high" phenomenon, where individuals experience a positive emotional state and reduced fear while engaging in acts of helping (Post, 2005). Some participants mentioned that they often found themselves lacking time to fully process their emotions due to the demanding nature of their prosocial engagements. They described being engrossed in helping others without taking the necessary time for self-reflection or

emotional processing. In their research, Batson et al. examined the empathic responses and altruistic behavior of individuals in helping situations. They found that when participants were faced with an opportunity to help someone in need, their empathic concern and willingness to assist were often prioritized over personal emotional processing. Participants displayed a strong desire to provide immediate aid, even if it meant temporarily suppressing or setting aside their own emotional reactions.

Overall, the results highlight the complex emotional landscape experienced by middle-aged adults during their involvement in prosocial activities. While they demonstrate emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and a sense of fearlessness, they also face challenges such as limited time for emotional processing and emotional numbing.

5. *Sense of Identity & Recognition*

- **Sense of Identity:** One prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the sense of identity experienced by middle-aged adults. Participants expressed a strong connection to their personal identity, which influenced their feelings after involvement in prosocial activities. They described how engaging in prosocial behavior enhanced their self-awareness and provided a sense of purpose and fulfillment (Participant 1). A study by Grant & Dutton (2012) examined how reflecting on one's identity as a beneficiary or benefactor influenced prosocial behavior. The findings showed that individuals who reflected on their identity as benefactors, rather than beneficiaries, were more likely to engage in prosocial behavior. This suggests that a strong sense of identity as someone who has the ability to contribute positively to others can motivate individuals to exhibit prosocial behavior.
- **Respect and Recognition:** Another important theme that emerged was the significance of respect and recognition in shaping the feelings of middle-aged adults. Participants expressed the desire for their contributions and efforts to be acknowledged and appreciated by others. They emphasized the importance of receiving respect and recognition from their communities and social networks as a validation of their involvement in prosocial activities (Participant 2). One study conducted by Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) examined the impact of volunteering on the self-esteem and self-worth of volunteers. They found that volunteers who received recognition and appreciation from others had higher levels of self-esteem and self-worth compared to those who did not receive such recognition. This suggests that recognition and appreciation for prosocial behavior can have a positive impact on the individual's sense of self-worth and may contribute to continued engagement in prosocial behavior.
- **Societal Trust:** The theme of societal trust emerged as participants discussed their feelings after involvement in prosocial activities. They expressed a sense of trust and belief in the collective goodness of society, which motivated their continued engagement in prosocial behavior. Participants highlighted the importance of trust in fostering cooperation and collaboration among individuals, leading to positive outcomes for both individuals and society as a whole (Participant 3).

6. *Happiness & Positive Emotion*

Happiness and Enhanced Self-esteem: The participants reported a sense of happiness and enhanced self-esteem as a result of their involvement in prosocial activities. They described feelings of fulfillment and personal satisfaction, which contributed to their overall happiness. This finding aligns with previous research that has highlighted the positive effects of prosocial behavior on individuals' well-being. For example, a study by Aknin, Dunn, and Norton (2013) found that spending money on others, a form of prosocial behavior, was associated with increased happiness and life satisfaction.

In a study conducted by Arora and Rastogi (2018) on the correlation between prosocial behavior and self-esteem, it was discovered that individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to exhibit a helping attitude. These individuals do not require approval from others to offer assistance to those in need. Additionally, the study found that individuals who engage in prosocial behavior tend to have higher levels of self-esteem. These findings align with previous research conducted by Nadav Klien in 2016, which also concluded that participants who engaged in prosocial behavior exhibited higher levels of self-esteem and reported a greater sense of meaning in life.

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8. *Challenges & Negative Emotions*

Challenges Faced in Prosocial Behavior: The participants described various challenges they encountered while engaging in prosocial behavior. These challenges ranged from logistical difficulties to emotional and psychological hurdles. Previous studies have also identified similar challenges faced by individuals involved in prosocial activities. A study by Lee & Morrell (2012) investigated the challenges and barriers to prosocial behavior among young adults. The study found that the most commonly reported challenges were lack of time, lack of resources, and fear of negative consequences. Additionally, participants reported that they often felt conflicted between their desire to help others and their own personal needs and goals. The study highlights the importance of addressing these challenges and providing support and resources for individuals engaging in prosocial behavior.

- #### 9. *Need for Emotional and Practical Support:* The interviews highlighted the participants' need for emotional and practical support during their prosocial engagements. They expressed the importance of having a support system that could provide understanding, encouragement, and guidance. Previous research has emphasized the significance of social support in facilitating prosocial behavior. Supportive relationships have been associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior, indicating that the presence of a social network plays a crucial role in enabling and promoting prosocial actions.

Furthermore, there is a conceptual connection between emotional well-being and prosocial behavior, as research suggests that experiencing social support can enhance social-emotional skills (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990).

10. **Lack of Gratitude:** One of the challenges expressed by the participants was the perceived lack of gratitude from the recipients of their prosocial acts. They described instances where their efforts went unnoticed or unappreciated, leading to negative emotions and a sense of discouragement. Previous studies have also explored the issue of gratitude in the context of prosocial behavior. McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson (2001) conducted a study in which they proposed that gratitude prompts individuals to behave prosocially. The researchers explored the relationship between gratitude and prosocial behavior, specifically focusing on how feelings of gratitude influence individuals' inclination to engage in helpful and kind actions towards others. They found that individuals who experienced higher levels of gratitude were more likely to exhibit prosocial behavior, such as offering assistance, expressing gratitude to others, and engaging in charitable acts.
11. **Negative Emotions:** The participants acknowledged experiencing negative emotions during their involvement in prosocial activities. These emotions included frustration, disappointment, and sadness. Previous research has highlighted the potential emotional challenges associated with prosocial behavior. According to a study conducted by Hua et al. (2021), caregiving for individuals with dementia or neurodegenerative diseases (PWD) is linked to higher rates of depression and anxiety. The study also highlighted a correlation between high levels of emotional empathy and poorer mental health among caregivers, indicating potential risk factors. It is important to note that empathy is considered a driving force behind prosocial behavior.

The present study aimed to explore the effectiveness of prosocial activities as an intervention and its impact on individuals' well-being and the promotion of positive change within communities. Through qualitative interviews and analysis, several key themes emerged. The themes include the feeling of purpose and pathway towards purpose, empowerment and self-sufficiency, promoting positive change, social dynamics, and organizational and institutional support. These themes shed light on the various aspects of prosocial activities as an intervention, highlighting the benefits it brings to individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

1. Employment Opportunities and Empowerment

The theme of empowerment and self-sufficiency emerged as an important aspect of prosocial activities as an intervention. It highlighted the impact of providing employment to individuals in need and how it contributes to their sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency. Participants expressed their belief in the transformative power of providing employment opportunities to those in need. They emphasized that such interventions not only offer financial support but also empower individuals by enabling them to regain control over their lives and enhance their self-esteem. The participants reported that gaining employment through prosocial activities helped individuals become more self-sufficient. It enabled them to support themselves and their families, reducing their dependence on external assistance and increasing their sense of self-worth. Participants consistently mentioned that providing employment to individuals in need can act as a catalyst for positive change. It not only offers them a means of earning a livelihood but also instills a sense of purpose and direction in their lives. Participants noted that the provision of employment opportunities positively impacted the overall well-being of individuals. It contributed to their mental and emotional well-being, reducing stress, and promoting a sense of stability and security. Gedikli et al. (2021) conducted a study that found a negative correlation between unemployment and life satisfaction. Consistent with previous research, the detrimental impact increased with longer durations of unemployment. The findings highlight the importance of promoting employment opportunities for the unemployed as a means of enhancing their well-being. Specifically, priority should be given to addressing the needs of long-term unemployed individuals, as they experience the greatest loss in well-being.

2. Purpose and Well-being:

Participants reported experiencing a strong sense of purpose and a clear pathway towards fulfilling that purpose through their engagement in prosocial activities. They expressed that these activities provided them with a sense of meaning and direction in their lives. This finding aligns with previous research that has demonstrated the positive relationship between having a sense of purpose and well-being (Damon, 2008; Martela & Steger, 2016).

Furthermore, engaging in prosocial activities was found to enhance positive emotions and improve overall well-being. Participants described feelings of joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction as a result of helping others and making a positive impact in their communities. This finding is consistent with studies that have highlighted the positive emotional outcomes associated with prosocial behavior. Research findings suggest that engaging in prosocial behaviors can generate positive emotions and increase happiness, even when the acts are performed remotely (Akin et al., 2018; Curry et al., 2018; Martela & Ryan, 2016). Studies examining the effects of prosocial acts have consistently shown that such behaviors yield greater gains in positive emotion compared to self-focused actions. For instance, individuals who prioritize giving to others over themselves consistently report higher levels of happiness, regardless of the monetary value or size of the gifts, as well as regardless of the source of the funds involved (Dunn et al., 2008; Harbaugh et al., 2007; Geenen et al., 2014; Akin et al., 2020)

Taylor, Lyubomirsky, and Stein (2007) observed that positive emotions have the potential to mitigate the physiological and psychological impact of negative emotions, leading them to propose that positive emotions could be an effective treatment for depression and anxiety. Moreover, the benefits of prosocial activities were found to extend across different age groups. Participants emphasized that prosocial engagement is recommended for individuals of all ages, suggesting that it has a universal appeal and can contribute to well-being at any stage of life. This finding is in line with research that has demonstrated the positive effects of prosocial behavior across various age groups (Carlo et al., 2014; Okun et al., 2013).

Participants also highlighted the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of engaging in prosocial activities. They reported improvements in their mental and physical health, including reduced stress levels, increased vitality, and enhanced overall wellness. Several research studies have provided evidence that engaging in acts of kindness and helping others has positive effects on the mental health and well-being of the individuals who provide the support (Curry et al., 2018). These benefits seem to be applicable to people of different genders, ages, and desired outcomes. In a recent investigation focusing on everyday stressors, Raposa et al. (2016) discovered that engaging in prosocial behaviors such as kindness, support, and

collaboration helped mitigate the negative impact of stress on emotional well-being. The researchers found that on days when individuals exhibited prosocial behaviors, the detrimental effects of stress on positive and negative emotions as well as overall mental health were reduced. In essence, by assisting others during times of stress, individuals may also be helping themselves. Additionally, Miles et al. (2022) reported that engaging in prosocial acts can yield enduring benefits for emotional well-being and mental health, albeit these benefits may be modest in scale.

Lastly, participants described a sense of unlimited energy and a lack of fatigue when they were involved in prosocial activities. This finding suggests that engaging in acts of kindness and altruism may have energizing effects and mitigate the experience of fatigue or burnout. This aspect needs further research and exploration. This finding holds promise for the use of prosocial activities as interventions to enhance well-being and combat exhaustion in various settings.

3. Promoting Positive Change

- **Encouraging small steps:** One recurring theme that emerged from the interviews was the recognition of the importance of encouraging small steps in prosocial activities. Participants described how even simple acts of kindness and generosity, such as helping a neighbor or volunteering for a local cause, can have a significant impact on individuals and communities. This finding aligns with the concept of "micro-prosocial behavior," which suggests that even small, everyday acts of kindness can contribute to positive change. Studies have shown that even small acts of kindness can have a significant impact on both the giver and the recipient. Engaging in micro-prosocial behavior has been associated with increased positive emotions, enhanced social connections, and improved overall psychological well-being (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010)
- **Peace through helping:** The participants expressed a sense of peace and inner satisfaction that comes from engaging in prosocial activities. They described how helping others and contributing to the well-being of their communities brought them a deep sense of fulfillment and contentment. This finding is consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the positive impact of prosocial behavior on mental health and subjective well-being. This study contributes to the existing literature that supports the psychological advantages of engaging in prosocial behavior (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). The results align with previous research indicating that allocating resources to benefit others brings about greater happiness compared to self-oriented spending (Dunn et al., 2008). Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that one possible mechanism underlying the well-established relationship between prosocial behavior and enhanced well-being is the promotion of positive emotional experiences. Acts of kindness and altruism have been associated with increased positive affect and life satisfaction (Nelson et al., 2016).
- **Positive impact on mental health:** Another important theme that emerged was the positive impact of prosocial activities on mental health. Participants described how engaging in acts of kindness and altruism helped them cope with stress, anxiety, and negative emotions. This finding aligns with previous studies that have shown the association between prosocial behavior and improved mental health outcomes. Engaging in prosocial activities has been linked to reduced symptoms of depression, increased positive emotions, and enhanced psychological well-being. Vidhi Khanna et. al. (2017) conducted a study to examine the link between Prosocial Behavior and Well-being. A significant positive correlation between Prosocial behavior and well-being was found. In their study, Rosli and Perveen (2021) discovered a positive association between prosocial behavior and psychological well-being. The findings revealed that engaging in prosocial behavior is linked to the domain of psychological well-being, particularly in terms of fostering positive relationships with others.
- **Perspective shifting:** Participants reported a shift in their perspective and worldview as a result of engaging in prosocial activities. They described how these activities helped them develop a greater sense of empathy, compassion, and understanding towards others. Batson, Early, and Salvarani (1997) conducted a study that demonstrated the distinction between two types of perspective taking: imagining oneself in a given situation and imagining how someone else feels in that situation. These two forms of perspective taking were found to elicit different types of prosocial and altruistic behavior. Specifically, imagining how someone else feels in a particular situation evoked an empathic response, while imagining how one would feel oneself in that same situation resulted in personal distress. Engaging in acts of kindness may broaden individuals' perspectives and foster a greater sense of interconnectedness with others.
- **Prosocial Intervention:** The concept of prosocial intervention emerged as a theme in the participants' responses. They highlighted the potential of prosocial activities as intentional interventions to address social issues, promote well-being, and foster positive change. This aligns with the growing field of prosocial interventions, which aim to systematically promote prosocial behavior and its positive outcomes (Mesurado et al., 2018). Prosocial interventions have been applied in various settings, including schools, workplaces, and communities, and have shown promising results in promoting positive change.

The participants' narratives revealed several themes within the category of 'Social Dynamics' highlighting the role of society and community, the process of transforming ideas into actions, the sense of making a difference, the importance of continuous service, and the impact of social structure on engagement and contribution. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the social aspects of prosocial behavior and provide insights into the effectiveness of prosocial activities as an intervention strategy.

4. Social Dynamics

- **A Social System:** Participants emphasized the significance of viewing prosocial activities as part of a broader social system. They acknowledged the interconnectedness of individuals within society and recognized that their actions had a ripple effect on others. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned, "When we engage in acts of kindness, it creates a positive chain reaction, inspiring others to do the same." This perspective aligns with previous studies highlighting the role of social networks and social contagion in promoting prosocial behavior (Smith & Christakis, 2008).

- **Role of Society/Community in Prosocial Activities:** The participants highlighted the influential role of society and community in fostering and supporting prosocial activities. They emphasized the importance of having a supportive social environment that encourages and provides opportunities for individuals to engage in prosocial behaviors. Participant 2 mentioned, "Our community organizes regular volunteering events and actively promotes social initiatives, which motivates individuals to participate." This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the impact of social norms and social support on promoting prosocial behavior. In a study conducted by Bailey R. House (2018), the influence of norms on prosocial behavior was examined. Social norms refer to established guidelines that dictate behavior within social groups or societies. They shape our actions based on the behaviors and expectations of others in our community, allowing us to learn appropriate behaviors and avoid potential consequences for deviating from these norms. Cooperative social norms play a significant role in motivating various forms of costly prosocial behavior, which are behaviors that involve selfless acts of helping others and are not easily explained by other factors.
- **Idea to Action:** Participants described the process of transforming ideas into action as a crucial step in engaging in prosocial activities. They mentioned that having an idea or intention alone is not sufficient; it is essential to take concrete steps to translate those ideas into meaningful actions. Participant 3 emphasized, "It's not enough to just think about helping others; we need to actively pursue opportunities and make a real impact."
- **Making A Difference:** The participants expressed a strong motivation to make a difference in the lives of others through their prosocial activities. They found personal fulfillment and a sense of purpose in their efforts to positively impact individuals and communities. Participant 1 stated, "Knowing that I can bring joy or support to someone in need gives me a sense of accomplishment and happiness." This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the positive psychological outcomes associated with engaging in prosocial behaviors (Post et al., 2005).
- **Continuous Service:** The participants recognized the importance of ongoing and sustained engagement in prosocial activities. They emphasized that sporadic or one-time acts of kindness were valuable but insufficient in creating lasting change. Participant 2 mentioned, "We need to commit ourselves to continuous service and strive for long-term solutions to social issues." This finding resonates with previous studies highlighting the importance of sustained prosocial engagement for individual well-being and societal impact. In their research, Bigland and Hinds (2009) found compelling evidence supporting the implementation of comprehensive community interventions aimed at enhancing nurturance within communities. Nurturing communities are characterized by various factors, including the reduction of biologically and socially harmful events, the provision of abundant positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior, and the cultivation of psychological acceptance. These interventions have the potential to not only promote prosocial behavior but also contribute to the overall sustainability of neighborhoods.
- **Social Structure: Engagement and Contribution:** Participants acknowledged that social structures, such as organizations or community networks, played a crucial role in facilitating their engagement and contribution to prosocial activities. They mentioned that being part of a structured system provided support, resources, and a sense of collective purpose. Participant 3 stated, "Joining an NGO helped me connect with like-minded individuals and amplified my impact through collective efforts."

The findings in these categories underscore the importance of considering social dynamics in understanding the effectiveness of prosocial activities as an intervention strategy. The participants' narratives shed light on the interconnectedness between individuals, the influence of society and community, the process of transforming ideas into actions, the sense of making a difference, the need for continuous service, and the impact of social structures on engagement and contribution. These findings align with previous studies and provide valuable insights for the development of interventions and programs aimed at promoting prosocial behavior and well-being. ng motivation to make a difference in the lives of others through their prosocial activities. They found personal fulfillment and a sense of purpose in their efforts to positively impact individuals and communities. Participant 1 stated, "Knowing that I can bring joy or support to someone in need gives me a sense of accomplishment and happiness." This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the positive psychological outcomes associated with engaging in prosocial behaviors (Post et al., 2005).

5. Organizational & Institutional Support

The results of the study on prosocial activities as an intervention revealed several important themes related to organizational and institutional support. These themes include the presence of an organized system, the identification of individuals in need, community and institutional coordination, and the fulfillment of social responsibilities. These findings align with previous research that emphasizes the significance of well-structured systems, targeted interventions, collaborative efforts, and a sense of duty towards society. The participants emphasized the need for an organized system that can effectively support and facilitate prosocial activities. This finding resonates with previous studies that highlight the importance of structured frameworks in promoting prosocial behavior. Furthermore, accurately identifying individuals or groups in need emerged as a crucial factor in tailoring interventions for maximum effectiveness. This aligns with research that underscores the significance of understanding the specific needs of the target population. The theme of community and institutionalized coordination emerged as an important aspect of facilitating prosocial activities. The participants emphasized the need for collaboration among various stakeholders to maximize the impact of interventions. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of coordinated efforts and partnerships in promoting prosocial behavior and community well-being. Lastly, the participants expressed a sense of social responsibility and duty towards their communities, emphasizing the importance of contributing to the welfare of others. This finding aligns with research that highlights the role of social responsibility in driving prosocial behavior.

Experiences of Prosocial Behavior Among Middle-Aged Individuals:

The experiences of prosocial behavior among middle-aged individuals are influenced by various psychological theories and frameworks. These individuals often learn prosocial behaviors through Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1977). Family upbringing and social support play pivotal roles, aligning with the theory's emphasis on learning from observing others and being influenced by reinforcement and consequences.

Additionally, Religiosity and Prosocial Behavior are closely related (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). The participants' descriptions of the influence of religion and moral values on their prosocial behavior align with research on the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior. Similarly, the emphasis on empathy and ethical considerations in participants' prosocial experiences is in line with the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis proposed by Daniel Batson (Batson et al., 2004). This theory suggests that people help others because they genuinely care about their well-being and empathize with their suffering.

The mention of social dynamics, societal pressures, and the sense of responsibility toward society reflects the influence of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This theory posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, and their behavior is influenced by their identification with these groups. Middle-aged adults may feel a sense of responsibility toward their social group or community, which motivates their prosocial actions.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes that middle-aged individuals' positive emotional experiences and fulfillment stem from intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence. This aligns with their reported sense of well-being and life satisfaction associated with prosocial actions.

The role of family and social support in shaping prosocial behaviors is consistent with Attachment Theory (Carlo et al., 2018). This theory suggests that early attachment experiences with caregivers influence individuals' social and emotional development. The theme related to social class and its influence on prosocial behavior aligns with research on social class and prosocial behavior. Studies such as Piff et al. (2010) found that individuals from lower social class backgrounds exhibit higher levels of empathy and prosocial behavior, while those from higher social class backgrounds may exhibit less prosocial behavior due to a sense of entitlement.

Feelings After Involvement in Prosocial Actions:

Their experience of emotional fulfillment and satisfaction is driven by intrinsic motivation, aligning with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Their sense of purpose and fulfillment align with the idea of Meaning-Making Theory that finding meaning in life events contributes to psychological well-being (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Compassion and empathy drive their actions, consistent with the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis proposition that genuine care for others motivates prosocial behavior (Batson et al., 1997).

Their strong connection to personal identity and the desire for recognition highlight the influence of self-concept and identity on their behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the desire for recognition and appreciation reflects the role of social support and positive reinforcement in motivating prosocial behavior (Thoits, 1986).

Themes related to happiness, increased self-esteem, and religious satisfaction are in line with the principles of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), which focuses on positive emotions and well-being.

The theme of emotional processing and coping mechanisms reflects the psychological processes involved in emotional regulation and coping. The theme of emotional processing and the varying emotional responses participants reported align with theories exploring the relationship between emotions and helping behavior. Negative emotions and challenges reflect the potential obstacles and emotional difficulties associated with prosocial behavior.

Prosocial Activities as Interventions to Boost Well-Being:

When considering how prosocial activities can serve as interventions to boost well-being among middle-aged individual. We can empower middle-aged individuals through prosocial activities that align with their values and provide autonomy can enhance their sense of self-determination and overall well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

By engaging in prosocial activities that align with their sense of purpose can lead to increased life satisfaction and well-being. Prosocial activities promoting kindness and altruism can enhance positive emotions, mental health, and overall well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Also, encouraging small acts of kindness can contribute to positive changes in well-being (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010). We can also create social norms that promote prosocial behavior and fostering supportive social environments are key to encouraging prosocial engagement. One can also view engaging in prosocial activities as fulfilling a social responsibility to contribute to the welfare of others and society as a whole.

Implications of the Study:

The study's theoretical implications provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing prosocial behavior in middle-aged individuals. The findings contribute to existing literature by emphasizing the roles of family, religion, empathy, and social dynamics in promoting prosocial behavior. Support systems, collaboration, and personal factors also emerged as important in shaping individuals' engagement in prosocial activities. Practically, the study's findings have implications for designing interventions and programs aimed at fostering prosocial behavior among middle-aged individuals. The identified themes can guide the development of strategies that promote a sense of purpose, enhance well-being, empower individuals, and create supportive environments. Organizational and institutional support is recognized as crucial in facilitating prosocial activities through resource provision, identifying those in need, and fostering community coordination.

Limitations of the Study:

The study has limitations to consider. The small sample size, consisting of only six participants, limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim for a larger and more diverse sample to ensure a comprehensive understanding of prosocial behavior among middle-aged individuals. Additionally, relying on self-reported interviews may introduce bias and social

desirability effects. Future studies should consider using multiple data collection methods and triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of findings.

Implications for Further Research:

The study's findings lay a foundation for further research on prosocial behavior and well-being among middle-aged individuals. Future studies could explore the influence of additional factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural differences, and individual personality traits on prosocial behavior. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of prosocial interventions and the stability of prosocial tendencies over time.

Reflexivity:

In this qualitative research study, acknowledging the researcher's reflexivity is essential. The researcher's backgrounds, biases, and perspectives may have influenced the study's design, data collection, and interpretation of findings. The researcher remained conscious of their own backgrounds, beliefs, and biases throughout the research process. Efforts were made to maintain objectivity and minimize personal biases during the analysis and interpretation process. The researcher engaged in discussions and debriefing sessions with peers and subject experts to explore and challenge their interpretations, critically examining their own biases and assumptions.

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