

## Influence of Gender, Spiritual Involvement/Belief and Emotional Stability on Prosocial Behavior among Some Nigerian Drivers

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### Abstract

Past studies focus less on the relationships among emotional stability, spiritual involvement and belief and prosocial behavior, especially among Nigerian Drivers. Therefore, this study investigated the extent at which emotional stability (High and Low), spiritual involvement and belief (High and Low) and gender difference (Male and Female) influenced prosocial behavior among Drivers in Ondo State. A 2×2×2 ANOVA was adopted to study 200 (100 males and 100 female Drivers). Questionnaire was used to gather information and the ages of the respondents ranged between 20 and 56 years (mean = 36.38; SD = 9.722). Results of the 2x2x2 ANOVA employed indicated that drivers who reported high spiritual involvement/belief were found to be high on prosocial behavior compared to those who are low [ $F(1,192) = 10.825, p < 0.01$ ]. Also, emotional stability has a significant influence on prosocial behavior [ $F(1,192) = 4.431, p < 0.05$ ]. However, gender had no significant effect on prosocial behavior among Drivers. There were no significant interaction effects between these variables and prosocial behaviour. It was recommended that in order to enhance prosocial behavior, the level of spiritual involvement and emotional stability among Drivers need to be increased. Besides, it was recommended that appropriate government agencies should be contacted in case of any emergency.

**Key words:** Emotional stability; Spiritual involvement and belief; Gender, Prosocial; Behavior; drivers; Oyo State

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### INTRODUCTION

In any contemporary society, it has been observed that every individual behavior that occurs is as a result of one factor or the other and this behavior can be positive or negative or rather beneficial or otherwise. Since, helping attitude has been regarded as a form of behavior demonstrated towards another person by an individual. It is then of good use to check how prosocial behavior can be of benefit. Prosocial behavior refers to “voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p.3). It is also a voluntary behavior intended to benefit another (Afolabi, 2013). It consists of actions which benefit other people or society. In fact, these prosocial behaviors comprise a broad spectrum of activities, like sharing, comforting, rescuing, and helping. (Arthur and Motowildo, 1986). These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others (Santock, & John, 2007) as well as for egoistic or practical concern. Prosociality is central to the well-being of social groups across a range of scales in which empathy is a strong motivating factor in eliciting prosocial behavior. (Decety, 2011).

On the other hand, some worrying trends are becoming more and more expressly present in our society: habituation to the world’s misery, a lack of commitment to others, and so on (Mortelmans, Damen & Sinardet, 2008). Although these indications might lead us to think that helping behavior does not stand a chance in this world, there are elements that provide evidence to the contrary. Therefore, it should be pointed out that this tendency to

prosocial behavior, such as volunteer work and donating to charity and helping in the situation of emergencies as regularly faced by the drivers, does not have to be the opposite of these worrying trends. Although in theory it stands at right angles to it. The previous experience can be associated with the way an individual will feel demonstrating a particular behavior when it comes to other people's affair and this could have a positive or negative influence on our thinking and acting in respect to prosocial behavior. Drivers tend to face more of circumstances that really require them getting involved in one form of helping attitude or the other, by caring and providing necessary help. Situations like accidents victims on the road and stranded individuals either as a result of faulty vehicle or robbery attack on the road.

Prosocial behavior can be influenced by increased positive or negative mood (Schaller & Cialdini, 1990) which shows that individual's emotional condition could actually influence prosocial behavior towards others, or by increased feelings of empathic concern (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). There is an extensive list of variables that might play a significant role in predicting prosocial behavior. For example, past behavior is believed to be the best predictor for future behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Due to previous experience of trying to help, another person in trouble, some individuals have found themselves in serious problems. Besides the life experiences that has affected prosocial behaviour, socio-demographic variables also play important roles as well (Afolabi, 2013). The relation between various socio-demographic variables and prosocial behavior has also been widely demonstrated (Damen, et al., 2000; Jencks, 1987).

Gender has been found to have a strong bearing on helping behaviour. Studies focusing on individual differences in helping behaviour have found that gender influences helping propensity in complex ways. When dealing with strangers it was revealed that males are in general more helpful than females (Eagly and Crowley, 1986), while women are more likely to give help in the form of emotional support, especially to their male friends (Kuttler, LaGreca, Prinstein., 1999). Males seldom provide emotional support to same-sex friends, but in a male-dominated environment, statements by women receive a quick response (Rollman, Krug & Parente, 2000). Gender is seen as one of the most consistent correlates of prosocial behavior. Across many studies, girls and women have been found to be more prosocial than boys and men (Pursell, Laursen, Rubin, Booth-LaForce and Rose-Krasnor, 2008; Rushton, 1982). Thus, apparent gender difference in the frequency of showing concern for others may be as much a function of perception as reality. It is generally believed that females are more frequent in helping. Specifically, it was found that women placed more importance on the social psychological value of prosocial behavior than did men. This means that the difference could be due to the differences in socialization of men and

women. Women are socialized to have concern for others and to take care of one another, while men are mainly socialized to be in competition with each other.

Socialization involves individual understanding of self and others' emotional experiences and ability to effectively regulate emotions. Several researchers have found that individuals who effectively support competent emotional functioning are more empathic, sympathetic, helpful, and kind. Maternal explanations and discussions about emotions, openness to and encouragement of emotional expressivity, but limit-setting on emotions that might be hurtful to others have been associated with various indices of prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Garner, 2003). Alternative means of control, through emotional manipulations such as disapproval and love withdrawal, were not thought to be as strongly associated with internalization of prosocial values, although others have suggested these might promote reparative prosocial acts after transgressions by eliciting guilt (Zahn-Waxler & Kochanska, 1990). Ability of each individual (driver) to manage their emotional conditions in any form of situation may likely increase the likelihood of exhibiting an act that tends to benefit another.

Besides these, research has consistently shown positive correlations between spirituality and prosocial behavior. Rossano (2007) claimed that the belief in supernatural forces in life (gods, ancestors, spirits) influenced our predecessors to work together and behave more socially responsibly than they would have otherwise. Thus beliefs and convictions have influence on every individual behavior. Beliefs are considered as a very important predictor in the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this theory they claim that intentions are shaped from salient beliefs about the outcomes of an act. Every individuals beliefs can have a great impact on the willingness to help. Drivers who holds a particular believe based on their religion might find it easy wanting to help no matter the circumstances surrounding the action. This is similar to what Simmons and Lerner (1968, p.224) stated: "Altruistic behavior will occur to the extent that the desire for justice is elicited and in amounts which reflect the perceived discrepancy between a dependant person's fate and the fate he deserved."

The perceptions that contemporary society have of today's drivers paint a pessimistic picture of society's future. Drivers are seen as selfish, irresponsible, and narcissistic, this attitude in turn has claims a lot of lives and cause irreparable damages to some. With this view permeating much of our society, it is on this note that people start to wonder whether we can still see individuals (drivers) standing out to help others in need when it comes to the road emergencies (accident, being stranded and any form of help). Lots of individuals' have lost their lives and properties on the road. This could not have been so had it being they get the needed help from all the road users on time.

This research work is to determine how emotional stability and spiritual involvement and beliefs can influence the prosocial attitude among drivers. To examine the relationship between gender and prosocial behavior; to investigate how well person's emotional state could affect helping attitude; to know if there are any effect person's spiritual beliefs and involvement and the gender had on prosocial behavior

Based on the above reasons it is therefore of necessity to test the following hypothesis that:

There would be main and interaction effects of gender, spiritual involvement/belief and emotional stability on prosocial behaviour among a sample of Nigerian Drivers.

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## 1. METHOD

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### 1.1 Design

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted in this study. This is because participants across various areas/settlements in Ondo State were sampled. The variables of the study were not actively manipulated. The independent variables were gender (male and female), spiritual involvement/beliefs (low and high) and emotional stability (low and high) are tested to know their effects on the dependent variable, prosocial behavior.

### 1.2 Participants

A total number of 200 individuals (100 males and 100 females) who are either private or commercial drivers participated in this study. Their ages ranged between 20 and 56 years (Means = 36.38; SD = 9.722). The participants also varied in terms of their academic qualifications as 19 (9.5%) had school certificate, 62 (31.0%) had ND/NCE, 95 (47.5%) had first degree, 22 (11.0%) had their second degree and 2 (1.0%) had post graduate degree. Based on their religious affiliation, 158 (79.0%) are Christians, 40 (20.0%) are Muslims and 2 (1.0%) practiced other forms of religion.

### 1.3 Instruments

The instruments used to gather information was a carefully designed questionnaire comprising of sections A to D. Section A tapped information on demographic variables concerning age, sex, religion, educational level and marital status.

Section B of the questionnaire measured emotional stability. It is a 10-item scale developed by Gosling, Rentfrow and Swann (2003). It is scored on a 7-point Likert format with response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). The authors reported an alpha reliability co-efficient of .56 for the scale. One item (item 6) was removed from the scale because it was not valid and reliable from analyses. Also the response format was modified to 5-point ranging from Strongly

Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). For the present study, an alpha reliability co-efficient of .62 was established. Individual scores of 30 and above represent high level of emotional stability based on the mean score. Sample items from the scale include "I see myself as somebody reserved and quiet" "I see myself as somebody who is disorganized and careless" "I see myself as someone who is calm and emotionally stable".

Section C of the questionnaire measured spiritual involvement/beliefs. It is a 26-item scale developed by Robert, Burg, Naberhaus and Hellmich (1998). It was scored on a 5-point Likert format with response ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The authors reported reliability co-efficient of .76. The scale yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.75. Sample items from the scale include "I examine my actions to see if they reflect my values" "Last month, I participated in spiritual activities with at least one other person" "Spiritual activities have not helped me become closer to other people".

Section D of the questionnaire tapped information on prosocial behavior. It is a 12-item scale developed by Afolabi (2013) and is scored on a 5-point Likert format with response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The scale had coefficient alpha of .81, test - re-test reliability of .77 and a split half reliability of .72. Besides, the scale also correlated positively with social responsibility scale by Rossi (2001) with  $r = .81$ . Sample item in the scale include: *I enjoy helping others; I stopped helping people because there is no gain in it; Helping others can put you in trouble.*

### 1.4 Procedure

Permission was taken from the appropriate units in the organizations to be able to have access to their Drivers and other members of staff who own cars and drive it themselves. The individuals include commercial Drivers in some Motor Parks in Akungba-Akoko, Ikare-Akoko, Owo and Akure. These represent the commercial Drivers. The private drivers were randomly selected among some members of staff of Adekunle Ajasin University and some Local Government Areas in Ondo State. Copies of the study questionnaire were administered to about 216 Drivers. They were made up of 134 private Drivers in the organisations and 66 private drivers randomly selected from the selected motor parks. At the end of the exercise, a total of 203 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved but 200 copies were filled completely and found useful for analysis.

Confidentiality was provided by writing on the research instrument instructing respondents not to identify themselves in anyway so as to guarantee their anonymity. The participants were also informed that the exercise was for research purposes only, and the results of the research would not be released in any individually identifiable way.

### 1.5 Data Analysis

The hypothesis was tested using 2×2×2 Analysis of Variance. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to establish the level of inter-correlation among the variables of study.

### 1.6 RESULTS

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the types of relationship that exist among the variables of study. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Mean, SD and Inter-Variable Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	36.38	9.722	1							
2. Religion	-	-	0.21	1						
3. Marital Status	-	-	-.681**	-.099	1					
4. Highest Education Qualification	-	-	-.044	.001	.130	1				
5. Gender	-	-	.067	-.072	-.122	-.107	1			
6. Spiritual Involvement and Belief	95.47	11.261	.017	-.195**	.001	-.042	.210**	1		
7. Emotional Stability	34.61	4.822	.038	.015	-.038	-.060	.090	.231**	1	
8. Prosocial behavior	49.06	6.080	-.171*	-.014	-.151*	-.247**	.079	.322**	.232**	1

Note: \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ .; \* =  $p < 0.05$ .; N = 200

**Table 2**  
Mean, SD of Each Group on Prosocial Behavior

Sex	Spiritual Involvement and Belief	Emotional Stability	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	
Male	Low	Low	45.48	5.807	31	
		High	48.21	5.912	29	
		Total	46.80	5.968	60	
	High	Low	50.40	5.705	15	
		High	51.76	4.381	25	
		Total	51.25	4.892	40	
		Low	47.09	6.167	46	
	Female	Total	High	49.85	5.510	54
			Total	48.58	5.955	100
		Low	Low	48.00	6.936	20
High			48.90	3.878	20	
Total			48.45	5.565	40	
High		Low	48.75	7.040	20	
		High	51.02	6.208	40	
	Total	50.27	6.527	60		
	Low	48.38	6.909	40		
Total	Total	High	50.32	5.598	60	
		Total	49.54	6.196	100	
	Low	Low	46.47	6.329	51	
		High	48.49	5.144	49	
		Total	47.46	5.839	100	
	High	Low	49.46	6.464	35	
		High	51.31	5.551	65	
		Total	50.66	5.921	100	
		Low	47.69	6.516	86	
	Total	High	50.10	5.537	114	
Total		49.06	6.080	200		

As shown in table 2, male drivers with high level of emotional stability and spiritual involvement and beliefs (Mean = 49.85, SD = 5.510) exhibited the highest level of prosocial behavior compared with low emotional stability and spiritual involvement and belief (Mean = 47.09, SD = 6.17).

On the other hand,, Table 2 above shows that, female drivers with high level of spiritual involvement and belief and emotional stability (Mean = 50.32, SD = 5.59) display

high level of prosocial behavior compare with female drivers who are low on emotional stability and spiritual involvement and belief (Mean = 48.38, SD = 6.90).

The hypothesis which predicted that there would be main and interaction effects of gender, spiritual involvement/belief and emotional stability on prosocial behaviour. The hypothesis was partially confirmed as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of 2×2×2 ANOVA Showing the Main and Interaction Effects of Gender, Emotional Stability and Spiritual Involvement/Beliefs on Prosocial Behaviors**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Gender	1.950	1	1.950	.057	> .05
Spiritual involvement and belief	369.371	1	369.371	10.825	< .01
Emotional stability	151.199	1	151.199	4.431	< .05
Gender * Spiritual involvement/ belief	89.824	1	89.824	2.633	> .05
Gender * Emotional stability	2.367	1	2.367	.069	> .05
Spiritual involvement and belief * Emotional stability	.000	1	.000	.000	> .05
Gender * Spiritual involvement/belief * Emotional Stability	21.517	1	21.517	.631	> .05
Error	6551.186	192	34.121		
Total	7357.280	199			

Table 3 above shows that gender does not have any significant effect on prosocial behavior [ $f(1,192) = 0.57, p > 0.05$ ]. This implies that drivers' gender (male or female) does not serve as a determinant of prosocial behavior. Therefore, the main effect of gender was not confirmed. Also, spiritual involvement/beliefs has a significant effect on prosocial behavior [ $f(1,192) = 10.825, p < 0.05$ ]. This means that drivers level of spiritual involvement/belief greatly affect helping attitude. Therefore, the main effect of spiritual involvement and belief was confirmed.

Also, the main effect of emotional stability on prosocial behaviour was significant [ $f(1, 192); p < .05$ ]. This implied that emotional stability had significant effect on prosocial behaviour among Nigerian Drivers.

However, the interaction effects of gender and spiritual involvement/belief, gender and emotional stability, spiritual involvement/belief and emotional stability and that between gender, spiritual involvement/belief and emotional stability were not significant.

### 1.7 Discussion

The major objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which emotional stability, spiritual involvement/belief and gender will influence prosocial behavior among a sample of Nigerian drivers. The hypothesis states that there would be main and interaction effects of gender, spiritual involvement and emotional stability on prosocial behaviour.

The result indicated that gender does not have a significant effect on prosocial behaviour. This implies that driver's gender is never a determinant of helping attitude.

Krebs (1970) supports this when he found out that there were no gender differences in the actual performance of altruistic behaviors. Similarly, Chou (1998) examined the effect of gender and participation in volunteer activities on prosocial behaviors. He found that there was no gender difference for the frequency of prosocial behavior. Afolabi (2013) too, found no significant effect of gender on prosocial behaviour among a sample of Nigerian undergraduates. These results contradicted the findings of Eisenberg (2006), Pursell, Rubin, Booth-LaForce and Rose-Krasnor (2008), which found that women tends to display higher level of helping attitude in comparison with their male counterparts. This outcome could be as a result of the new roles of women which is quite different from the normal domestic works at home. Now women are also involved in office jobs that make them take the roles of men along that of women.

It was found that emotional stability had a significant effect on prosocial behavior among drivers. This outcome is in support of Smitson (1974) who found that emotionally stable individual formed and maintain relationships that in turn determine helping others in need. Also, Moore (2012) found that teens that were emotionally stable were calm and were more likely to use coping techniques that aimed at solving a problem (problem-focused coping). Also, these teenagers were more engaged in prosocial behavior like helping others, volunteering and donating things. This finding could as a result of the fact that when one is good at regulating his/her emotions, the individual is less concerned about himself or herself and more considerate of other people.

On the other hand, impulsive individuals are more self-focused and have difficulty engaging in problem-focused coping. However, this did not find support in the work of Afolabi (2013) who established that there were no significant relationship between emotional stability and prosocial behaviour among Nigerian undergraduates.

Also, the main effect of spiritual involvement/belief was significant on prosocial behavior. The result found support in the work of Christopher (2011) who revealed that religion and spirituality were most important among the most prosocial individual who have integrated both their religious beliefs and their commitment to helping others. This implies that drivers whose spiritual involvement/belief is high tend to display prosocial behavior. Einolf (2013) found that daily spiritual experiences are a statistically and substantively significant predictor of volunteering, charitable giving, and helping individuals one knows personally. In another study, Anderson (2001) established in his study that spirituality was the only variable found to account for some of the variance of prosocial behavior. Positive correlations were found between prosocial behavior and spirituality. It is thought that if one believes his or her behavior is being monitored by a supernatural force, then selfishness will be reduced and prosocial behavior will be increased.

It was also established that the interaction effects of gender and spiritual involvement on prosocial behaviour was not significant. This implies that driver's gender when combined with spiritual involvement/beliefs does not have anything to do with helping attitude among drivers. This does not support the work of Schwartz (2003) in his research findings which demonstrated that individuals that were more likely to help others in need "were older and female and tended to be church elders, they also practiced more prayer activities, reported more satisfaction with prayer life, and engaged in positive religious coping. The interaction effects of gender and emotional stability on prosocial behaviour was also not significant. This showed that drivers' gender when combined with emotional stability does not predict any form of prosocial behavior. This is against the study by Lehdonvirta, Lehdonvirta and Baba (2011) which says gender is found to influence helping in ways that deviate from expected gender roles: female are more likely than males to provide assistance in the form of material support and labour, and no more likely than males to provide emotional support. Females are more likely to give help to male when they are emotionally stable than other females.

Lastly, the interaction effect of gender, spiritual involvement/belief and emotional stability was also not significant. The finding revealed that the three variables combined did not determine helping behavior among drivers.

### 1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shown that drivers with high

emotional stability and spiritual involvement/beliefs will be highly involved in the level at which they render help or assistance to other people in the environment who really needed the help. Therefore, high level of prosocial behavior among drivers to some extent depends on their emotional conditions and their involvement in religious activities and holding unto those beliefs learnt in the various spiritual settings. The practical implication of these findings is that high spiritual involvement and belief including high emotional stability is a great determinant of helping attitude of drivers and thus reduce the level of victims of any kind when the help can easily be gotten.

### 1.9 Recommendations

It is therefore recommended in this study that helping attitude when rendered should be free from extra consequences that people are made to suffer in the course of displaying help to another individual. Also, victims settings faked in order to attack the honest hearted one that really wants to help should be avoided as this could stop people from helping when the true intentions of the victims is unknown. This could actually affect negatively the real victim's scene from getting help. Besides, the bystander effect should not have influence on individuals thereby preventing them from helping the victim in case of emergency on our roads. Lastly, appropriate Law Enforcement Agents should be contacted in case of any emergency like accident, robbery attack and so on.

### 1.10 Limitations of Study

Amidst numerous factors that could influence prosocial behavior, only gender, emotional stability and spiritual involvement/belief were selected. Also, there is limit to its generalizability because only few (200) participant were used in the study. Besides, this is a self-reported detail which has the possibility of being biased by the respondents. In the future, it is recommended that other relevant variables like self esteem, personal control, age, educational background etc can be investigated to know their relevance to prosocial behaviour.

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