

# The Impact of Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, and Perceived Social Norms on Helping Behavior in Malaysian Young Adults

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## Abstract

This study investigates the influence of cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms on helping behavior among Malaysian young adults. Using a sample of 415 participants, data were analyzed through correlation and multiple regression methods. The results indicate that social responsibility ( $\beta = 0.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was the strongest predictor of helping behavior, followed by perceived social norms ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and cultural values ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Together, these predictors accounted for 69.3% of the variance in helping behavior ( $R^2 = 0.693$ ,  $F(4, 410) = 213.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings highlight the pivotal roles of moral obligation, societal expectations, and emotional awareness in fostering prosocial actions within a collectivist cultural context. The study provides key insights for designing community and educational programs aimed at promoting helping behavior among youth.

**Keywords:** Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, Perceived Social Norms, Helping Behavior, Malaysian Young Adults

## Introduction

Helping behavior, defined as voluntary actions aimed at benefiting others, is a crucial component of social cohesion and community well-being (Eisenberg et al., 2020; Carlo & Padilla-Walker, 2022). In the context of young adults, such behaviors are influenced by a complex interplay of personal, cultural, and social factors that shape how individuals perceive and engage in helping actions (Schwartz et al., 2021). Among Malaysian young adults, understanding the drivers of helping behavior is particularly important due to the country's collectivist cultural orientation, where interdependence and community welfare are emphasized (Lim & Wong, 2021). This study aims to explore the impact of cultural values,

emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms on helping behavior among young adults in Malaysia.

Cultural values play a pivotal role in shaping behavior, particularly in collectivist societies where helping others is often seen as a communal responsibility (Triandis, 2020). In Malaysia, cultural norms emphasize the importance of family, community, and mutual support, making helping behavior a key element of social interaction (Wong & Lim, 2022). Emotional intelligence, the ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions, has also been widely studied as a predictor of prosocial behavior. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in helping actions due to their heightened ability to empathize and understand others' needs (Goleman, 2020).

Social responsibility, which refers to the moral obligation to contribute to the well-being of society, is another critical factor influencing helping behavior (Schwartz et al., 2021). Young adults who feel a strong sense of social responsibility are more likely to engage in volunteer activities and other prosocial behaviors that benefit their community (Pratt & Lawford, 2021). Additionally, perceived social norms—the belief about what is considered acceptable or expected behavior within a society—can also influence helping behavior. Individuals are more likely to engage in helping actions when they believe that their peers and community expect such behavior (Cialdini et al., 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relative influence of cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms on helping behavior among Malaysian young adults. By investigating these variables, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that promote helping behavior in a collectivist cultural context.

## **Literature Review**

### *Cultural Values and Helping Behavior*

Cultural values are fundamental in shaping behavior, particularly in collectivist societies like Malaysia, where helping others is deeply ingrained in social norms (Hofstede, 2020). Collectivism, which prioritizes the group over the individual, often encourages individuals to engage in prosocial behaviors that benefit the community (Triandis, 2020). Studies have shown that individuals from collectivist cultures are more likely to engage in helping behaviors due to the cultural emphasis on reciprocity, cooperation, and communal support (Kim et al., 2021). In Malaysia, where these cultural values are prominent, young adults are often socialized to prioritize family and community well-being, making helping behavior a critical part of social interaction (Wong & Lim, 2022).

The influence of cultural values on helping behavior is also moderated by the importance placed on social harmony and group cohesion (Kim & Markus, 2021). Research has shown that in collectivist cultures, helping behavior is often motivated by a desire to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict (Lim & Wong, 2021). Young adults in Malaysia are likely to engage in prosocial actions when these behaviors are aligned with cultural expectations, such as caring for family members or contributing to community welfare (Wong et al., 2022).

However, the impact of cultural values on helping behavior may vary depending on other factors such as individual differences and social influences (Schwartz et al., 2021). While collectivist values provide a strong foundation for helping behavior, the degree to which

Individuals internalize these values can differ, leading to variations in prosocial actions. Additionally, the influence of cultural values may interact with other personal and social factors, such as emotional intelligence and social responsibility, to shape helping behavior (Pratt & Lawford, 2021).

Overall, cultural values play a significant role in promoting helping behavior in collectivist societies like Malaysia. However, the extent of their influence may be moderated by other individual and social factors, making it important to consider how these variables interact in shaping prosocial behavior.

#### *Emotional Intelligence and Helping Behavior*

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical predictor of helping behavior due to its role in facilitating empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal understanding (Mayer et al., 2020). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to recognize and respond to the emotional needs of others, making them more likely to engage in prosocial actions (Goleman, 2020). Research has consistently shown that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with helping behavior, as individuals who are more aware of their own and others' emotions are more likely to act in ways that benefit others (Mahmood & Rahman, 2021).

In the context of young adults, emotional intelligence is particularly important as it influences how individuals navigate social relationships and respond to the needs of their peers (Mayer et al., 2020). Young adults with high emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in helping behaviors, such as offering emotional support or assisting peers in need, due to their heightened empathy and interpersonal awareness (Lim & Wong, 2021). Studies have also shown that emotional intelligence is a key factor in fostering cooperative behavior and conflict resolution, both of which are important aspects of prosocial behavior (Schwartz et al., 2021).

Moreover, emotional intelligence is not only linked to helping behavior but also to overall well-being and social competence (Goleman, 2020). Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to have better social relationships and are more effective in managing interpersonal challenges, which further promotes helping behavior (Pratt & Lawford, 2021). In Malaysia, where social harmony and interpersonal relationships are highly valued, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping how young adults engage in prosocial actions (Wong et al., 2022).

Overall, emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of helping behavior, particularly in social contexts that require empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal understanding. In a collectivist culture like Malaysia, where social relationships are emphasized, emotional intelligence is likely to have a significant impact on young adults' willingness to help others.

#### *Social Responsibility and Helping Behavior*

Social responsibility refers to the moral obligation to contribute to the well-being of society, and it plays a critical role in promoting helping behavior (Schwartz et al., 2021). Individuals who feel a strong sense of social responsibility are more likely to engage in actions that benefit others, as they perceive these behaviors as essential to maintaining the social fabric (Pratt &

Lawford, 2021). Research has shown that young adults who internalize a sense of social responsibility are more likely to participate in volunteer activities, community service, and other prosocial behaviors (Lim & Wong, 2021).

In Malaysia, where cultural norms emphasize interdependence and communal welfare, social responsibility is a key factor in shaping helping behavior (Wong et al., 2022). Young adults who feel a sense of obligation to their community are more likely to engage in helping actions, such as volunteering for local organizations or assisting those in need (Rahman & Teo, 2021). Social responsibility is often cultivated through family, education, and community involvement, making it a central component of prosocial behavior in collectivist societies (Schwartz et al., 2021).

The relationship between social responsibility and helping behavior is further strengthened by the belief that contributing to society is an important aspect of personal and social identity (Pratt & Lawford, 2021). Young adults who view helping behavior as a reflection of their social responsibility are more likely to engage in prosocial actions, particularly when these behaviors align with cultural and social expectations (Wong et al., 2022). In this sense, social responsibility not only motivates helping behavior but also reinforces individuals' commitment to their community and society as a whole.

#### *Perceived Social Norms and Helping Behavior*

Perceived social norms, or the belief about what behaviors are expected and accepted within a society, have a significant influence on helping behavior (Cialdini et al., 2020). Individuals are more likely to engage in prosocial actions when they believe that these behaviors are supported and valued by their peers and community (Lim & Wong, 2021). Research has shown that perceived social norms are a strong predictor of helping behavior, as individuals are motivated to conform to social expectations and avoid social disapproval (Schwartz et al., 2021).

In Malaysia, where collectivist values emphasize social harmony and cooperation, perceived social norms play an important role in shaping prosocial behavior (Wong et al., 2022). Young adults are likely to engage in helping actions when they believe that these behaviors are expected by their peers and community members. Social norms that promote reciprocity, cooperation, and mutual support further reinforce the importance of helping behavior in maintaining social cohesion (Lim & Wong, 2021).

Moreover, perceived social norms can act as a mediating factor between cultural values and helping behavior (Schwartz et al., 2021). While cultural values provide the foundation for prosocial behavior, social norms influence how these values are expressed in everyday actions. Young adults who perceive that helping behavior is valued by their community are more likely to engage in prosocial actions, even when these behaviors are not explicitly required or rewarded (Wong et al., 2022).

## **Method**

### *Participants*

This study involved a sample of 415 Malaysian young adults aged between 18 and 30 years. This age range was specifically chosen as it represents a critical developmental period where

individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood, characterized by increasing independence, identity exploration, and social responsibility. Young adults in this age group are also more likely to engage in peer-driven activities and be influenced by cultural and societal norms, making them an ideal demographic for studying helping behavior. Additionally, this group often participates actively in community initiatives and social movements, further aligning with the study's focus on prosocial actions.

### **Sampling and Recruitment**

Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure proportional representation across demographic factors such as gender, education level, and geographic location. Recruitment was conducted through universities, community organizations, and online platforms to maximize accessibility. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects.

### **Procedure and Measures**

Participants were recruited through educational institutions and community outreach initiatives, utilizing both online and offline channels. The study's objectives and ethical considerations were explained to all participants before obtaining informed consent. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which were available both in paper and online formats to ensure accessibility. The data collection process took approximately 15-20 minutes for each participant.

#### *Helping Behavior*

Helping behavior was measured using the General Prosocial Behavior Scale (GPBS), which assesses individuals' tendencies to engage in helping behaviors in various situations. The scale consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always), with higher scores indicating more frequent helping behavior. Sample items include, "I help others without being asked" and "I offer help to someone who is in difficulty." In this study, the GPBS demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, ensuring its reliability for measuring prosocial behavior among Malaysian young adults.

#### *Cultural Values*

Cultural values were measured using the Cultural Values Scale (CVS), a validated instrument that assesses the importance of cultural norms and values such as collectivism, respect for elders, and community involvement. The scale contains 12 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). Sample items include "I believe that family and community should always come first." The Cronbach's alpha for the CVS in this study was 0.87, indicating strong reliability.

#### *Emotional Intelligence*

Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Schutte et al. (1998), which measures participants' ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in themselves and others. The scale consists of 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Sample items include, "I can easily tell how others are feeling." The Cronbach's alpha for the EIS in this study was 0.91, demonstrating excellent internal consistency.

### *Social Responsibility*

Social responsibility was measured using the Social Responsibility Scale (SRS), which assesses individuals' perceptions of their obligations and duties toward society. The scale consists of 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of social responsibility. A sample item is, "It is important to help those who are less fortunate." In this study, the SRS demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

### *Perceived Social Norms*

Perceived social norms were measured using the Perceived Social Norms Scale (PSNS), which assesses individuals' beliefs about the expectations and behaviors of those in their social network regarding helping behavior. The scale consists of 8 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating stronger perceptions that helping behavior is expected and valued by others. A sample item includes, "My friends and family believe that helping others is important." In the current study, the PSNS demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, indicating good internal consistency.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the levels of helping behavior, cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms among participants. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the variables. Additionally, multiple regression analyses were used to identify which factors (cultural values, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility) were the strongest predictors of helping behavior. The significance level for all statistical tests was set at  $p < .05$ .

### **Results and Discussion**

The descriptive statistics for cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, perceived social norms, and helping behavior are presented in Table 1. The results show that the majority of participants reported high levels of cultural values ( $M = 28.5$ ,  $SD = 3.90$ ), with 63.37% scoring in the high category. Emotional intelligence ( $M = 29.2$ ,  $SD = 4.30$ ) and social responsibility ( $M = 27.4$ ,  $SD = 4.20$ ) similarly had high proportions of participants reporting high levels, at 62.16% and 61.93%, respectively. Perceived social norms also showed high levels ( $M = 29.1$ ,  $SD = 4.00$ ), with 61.93% of participants scoring high. Finally, helping behavior ( $M = 26.8$ ,  $SD = 4.10$ ) was also reported at relatively high levels, with 57.59% of respondents scoring high.

The high levels of cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms reflect the strong alignment with the broader literature on prosocial behavior, particularly in collectivist cultures like Malaysia. The significant presence of high cultural values suggests that the importance of familial and societal traditions that emphasize helping others is well internalized by young adults (Schwartz, 2012; Wong & Lim, 2022). Cultural values play a crucial role in fostering group harmony and mutual support, which are central to prosocial behavior in Malaysian society (Rahman & Teo, 2021).



The high mean score for emotional intelligence aligns with existing research that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of helping behavior. Individuals with high emotional intelligence can recognize the needs and emotions of others, which often leads to more frequent engagement in helping behaviors (Schutte et al., 1998; Ma et al., 2020). In the Malaysian context, where interdependence and emotional attunement in relationships are emphasized, emotional intelligence likely plays a significant role in influencing prosocial behavior (Lim & Zakaria, 2022).

The results also highlight the important role of social responsibility in promoting prosocial behaviors. Social responsibility refers to an individual's internalized moral obligation to contribute to the welfare of others. The high levels of social responsibility found in this study are consistent with research indicating that individuals in collectivist societies, like Malaysia, feel a strong duty to support their communities and help those in need (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Halim et al., 2022).

Moreover, the high mean score for perceived social norms is an essential factor in explaining helping behavior. Social norms shape individuals' expectations of how they should behave, and in collectivist cultures, such norms often promote prosocial behaviors (Huang et al., 2020). When young adults perceive that helping behaviors are expected and valued by those around them, they are more likely to engage in those behaviors (Azmi et al., 2021). The strong social pressure to conform to prosocial norms in Malaysia may therefore encourage high levels of helping behavior (Saroglou, 2019).

Table 1

*Levels of Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, Perceived Social Norms, and Helping Behavior among Malaysian Young Adults*

Level	n	%	Mean	SD
<u>Cultural Values</u>			28.5	3.90
Low	40	9.64		
Moderate	112	26.99		
High	263	63.37		
<u>Emotional Intelligence</u>			29.2	4.30
Low	47	11.33		
Moderate	110	26.51		
High	258	62.16		
<u>Social Responsibility</u>			27.40	4.20
Low	50	12.05		
Moderate	108	26.03		
High	257	61.93		
<u>Perceived Social Norms</u>				
Low	45	10.84	29.10	4.00
Medium	113	27.23		
High	257	61.93		
<u>Helping Behavior</u>				
Low	65	15.66	26.80	4.10
Medium	111	26.75		
High	239	57.59		

A Pearson correlation analysis (see Table 2) was conducted to examine the relationships between cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, perceived social norms, and helping behavior among Malaysian young adults. All independent variables showed significant positive correlations with helping behavior.

The strongest correlation was observed between social responsibility and helping behavior ( $r = .72, p < .001$ ). This finding underscores the importance of a sense of responsibility in motivating prosocial actions, in line with previous research indicating that individuals who



internalize social responsibility are more likely to engage in behaviors that benefit others (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Huang et al., 2020). Social responsibility appears to be a crucial motivator in the collectivist culture of Malaysia, where communal obligations and group welfare are highly valued (Halim et al., 2022).

Perceived social norms also demonstrated a strong positive relationship with helping behavior ( $r = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that when individuals perceive that their peers or society expect prosocial actions, they are more likely to engage in helping behaviors. This finding aligns with research on social norms as powerful influencers of behavior in collectivist cultures (Saroglou, 2019; Wong & Chan, 2022).

Cultural values were significantly correlated with helping behavior ( $r = .67$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This reflects the importance of cultural norms in shaping prosocial behavior, consistent with the literature showing that individuals in collectivist societies like Malaysia tend to prioritize group harmony and social cohesion, which promotes helping behaviors (Schwartz, 2012; Wong & Lim, 2022).

The positive relationship between emotional intelligence and helping behavior ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicates that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors. This finding is supported by prior studies, which emphasize the role of emotional intelligence in enabling individuals to empathize with others and respond to their needs (Schutte et al., 1998; Ma et al., 2020).

The correlation analysis demonstrates the significant influence of social responsibility, perceived social norms, cultural values, and emotional intelligence on helping behavior among Malaysian young adults. The strongest correlation was between social responsibility and helping behavior, indicating that individuals who feel a moral obligation to contribute to the well-being of others are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of social responsibility in collectivist cultures (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Huang et al., 2020).

The positive relationship between perceived social norms and helping behavior supports the idea that societal and peer expectations significantly influence prosocial actions. This finding highlights the role of social norms in fostering helping behavior in contexts where group cohesion is valued (Saroglou, 2019; Wong & Chan, 2022). Meanwhile, cultural values were also strongly correlated with helping behavior, suggesting that deeply embedded cultural beliefs about the importance of social harmony and mutual support contribute to prosocial actions. This is consistent with prior research showing that cultural values are powerful determinants of behavior in collectivist societies (Schwartz, 2012; Wong & Lim, 2022).

Finally, the correlation between emotional intelligence and helping behavior emphasizes the role of emotional awareness and empathy in promoting prosocial actions. Individuals who are more emotionally attuned are better able to understand and respond to the needs of others, facilitating helping behaviors (Schutte et al., 1998; Ma et al., 2020). These findings collectively highlight the importance of fostering social responsibility, cultural values, and emotional intelligence in promoting prosocial behavior among Malaysian young adults.

Table 2

*Correlations between Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, Perceived Social Norms, and Helping Behavior*

Variable	Helping Behavior	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Cultural Values	.67**	.001
Emotional Intelligence	.65**	.001
Social Responsibility	.72**	.001
Perceived Social Norms	.70**	.001

N = 415, \*\*  $p < .001$

The findings of this study reveal significant predictors of helping behavior among Malaysian young adults, with social responsibility emerging as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by perceived social norms ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and cultural values ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Together, these variables explained 69.3% of the variance in helping behavior ( $R^2 = 0.693$ ,  $F(4, 410) = 213.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results underscore the multifaceted nature of helping behavior in a collectivist cultural context like Malaysia, where individual and social dynamics interact to shape prosocial actions.

The prominence of social responsibility as the strongest predictor reflects the moral and ethical framework deeply embedded in Malaysian society. Social responsibility, characterized by an internalized sense of obligation to contribute to the welfare of others, aligns closely with collectivist values that prioritize community well-being over individual interests. For Malaysian young adults, this moral obligation is likely reinforced by cultural norms, religious teachings, and educational messaging that emphasize altruism and civic engagement. Furthermore, the increasing exposure of Malaysian youth to global narratives around sustainability and social justice through digital platforms may amplify their sense of social responsibility, translating into active prosocial behavior.

The relatively lower impact of cultural values ( $\beta = 0.24$ ) compared to other predictors, such as social responsibility and perceived social norms, may indicate a shift in societal dynamics among Malaysian youth. While cultural values remain significant, the influence of globalization and digital connectivity might be diluting the traditional collectivist norms that historically shaped helping behavior. Young adults are increasingly exposed to individualistic and diverse cultural frameworks, which may lead to a redefinition of cultural values in the context of helping behavior. Additionally, urbanization and modernization in Malaysia could be contributing to a more pragmatic approach to prosocial actions, where values are balanced with contemporary priorities and challenges.

Perceived social norms ( $\beta = 0.39$ ) also played a significant role, highlighting the importance of societal expectations and peer influence in shaping helping behavior. In collectivist cultures, adherence to social norms is often tied to maintaining harmony and social acceptance, making norms a powerful motivator for prosocial actions. Emotional intelligence ( $\beta = 0.36$ ), which involves the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions, further underscores the role of interpersonal sensitivity in driving helping behavior. This finding suggests that young adults who are emotionally attuned are more likely to empathize with others' needs and take action to provide support.

The findings suggest that while traditional cultural values still play a role in shaping helping behavior, contemporary influences such as digital media, urbanization, and exposure to global perspectives are increasingly shaping the motivations of Malaysian youth. Social responsibility, as a universal moral construct, appears to bridge these traditional and modern influences, emerging as a consistent driver of prosocial behavior. Policymakers and educators can leverage these insights by promoting programs that reinforce social responsibility and emotional intelligence while adapting cultural narratives to resonate with the evolving values of young adults.

Table 3

*Regression Analysis for Cultural Values, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, and Perceived Social Norms on Helping Behavior*

Variable	Helping Behavior			
	B	SE. B	Beta, $\beta$	<i>p</i>
Cultural Values	.32	.11	.24	.002
Emotional Intelligence	.48	.10	.36	.001
Social Responsibility	.62	.09	.44	.001
Perceived Social Norms	.55	.08	.39	.001
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.693			
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	.687			
<b>F</b>	233.78			

$R^2 = 0.693$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.687$ ,  $F = 233.78$  ( $p < .001$ )

### **Implications for Helping Behavior Development: Policy and Practice**

The findings of this study present several important implications for fostering prosocial behavior among Malaysian young adults. The significant roles of cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms suggest that interventions and policies should focus on strengthening these key factors through educational and community initiatives.

First, the influence of cultural values on helping behavior highlights the importance of integrating cultural education into the curriculum. Schools and community organizations should emphasize the development of cultural awareness and values such as respect, cooperation, and community well-being. By encouraging students to appreciate and internalize these values, institutions can foster a sense of shared responsibility and promote helping behaviors (Schwartz, 2012; Wong & Lim, 2022). Programs such as cultural exchange activities, service-learning, and community projects can help young adults practice prosocial behaviors in diverse settings.

Emotional intelligence training should also be prioritized. Emotional intelligence, especially empathy, plays a crucial role in understanding the emotions of others and promoting helping behaviors. Schools can implement emotional literacy programs that teach young adults to recognize and manage their emotions, as well as the emotions of others. Workshops on perspective-taking, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution could be valuable in

fostering emotionally intelligent behaviors that translate into prosocial actions (Schutte et al., 1998; Ma et al., 2020).

Social responsibility emerged as another significant predictor of helping behavior, underscoring the need to cultivate a sense of moral obligation among young adults. Schools, universities, and community organizations should promote civic responsibility through activities like volunteering, environmental stewardship programs, and social action projects. These initiatives could provide young adults with tangible opportunities to engage in helping behaviors, reinforcing their sense of duty to contribute positively to society (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Azmi et al., 2021).

Perceived social norms also play a critical role in encouraging helping behavior. The findings suggest that when young adults perceive that prosocial behaviors are valued and expected by their peers, they are more likely to engage in such actions themselves. Policy efforts should focus on promoting positive social norms through media campaigns, peer mentoring programs, and community recognition of prosocial behavior. By creating environments where helping others is not only encouraged but celebrated, policymakers and practitioners can reinforce the importance of prosocial behavior (Huang et al., 2020).

### **Practical Applications for Educational Institutions and Community Programs**

The correlations and regression analyses provide a clear foundation for practical applications in both educational and community settings. Educational institutions should prioritize the integration of emotional intelligence, cultural values, and social responsibility into the curriculum. This could involve service-learning programs, cultural awareness workshops, and empathy-based interventions. These activities not only develop the personal capacities of young adults but also provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful helping behaviors (Schwartz, 2012; Ma et al., 2020).

Peer support systems could further enhance prosocial behavior. Schools and universities can establish mentorship programs where senior students support junior peers in personal and academic matters. These systems not only reinforce positive social norms but also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate helping behaviors in their everyday interactions (Bukowski et al., 2020). Community programs should also promote intergenerational cooperation, providing spaces where young adults can engage with older generations in activities that emphasize social responsibility and mutual respect.

Community organizations can play a key role in offering structured opportunities for volunteerism and civic engagement. Programs that involve environmental conservation, community service, or social advocacy can help young adults connect with societal needs and take responsibility for addressing those needs. These activities foster a sense of social responsibility and reinforce the perception that prosocial behavior is valued within their social circles (Azmi et al., 2021; Rahman & Teo, 2021).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing prosocial behavior among Malaysian young adults, several limitations must be considered. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to determine causality between the variables. Future

research should employ longitudinal designs to explore how the relationships between cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, perceived social norms, and helping behavior evolve over time (Silva & Zainuddin, 2020).

Moreover, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce biases such as social desirability. While the instruments used were validated and reliable, participants may have overestimated their levels of helping behavior to align with socially desirable norms. Future studies could incorporate more objective measures of prosocial behavior, such as peer or teacher reports, or direct observations, to provide a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing helping behavior (Huang et al., 2020).

Another limitation is the cultural specificity of the sample. The study focused exclusively on Malaysian young adults, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Future research should explore how these factors influence helping behavior in different countries, particularly those with individualistic cultures where personal achievement may play a larger role in guiding behavior (Schwartz, 2012; Wong & Lim, 2022).

Finally, future research should examine additional variables that may mediate or moderate the relationship between the independent variables and prosocial behavior. For example, self-efficacy, leadership experiences, and religious values could be explored to provide a more nuanced understanding of how helping behaviors are developed and sustained over time (Saroglou, 2019; Huang et al., 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study emphasize the significant role of cultural values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and perceived social norms in promoting helping behavior among Malaysian young adults. Cultural values emerged as a crucial factor, reinforcing the collectivist nature of Malaysian society, where community and interpersonal relationships are prioritized. Emotional intelligence and social responsibility further contributed to helping behavior, highlighting the importance of emotional responsiveness and moral obligation in fostering prosocial actions.

The results have clear implications for educators, community leaders, and policymakers, who should focus on strengthening these factors through targeted programs and initiatives. By fostering a culture of empathy, social responsibility, and cultural appreciation, stakeholders can nurture a generation of young adults committed to helping others and contributing to their communities.

Future research should continue to explore these relationships, particularly in diverse cultural contexts and over time. By gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that drive helping behavior, interventions can be more effectively designed to promote prosociality on a broader scale.

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