

Student Values, Religiosity, and Pro-Social Behaviour:

A Cross-National Perspective¹

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The association between altruistic values, religious values and pro-social behaviour is well documented, though mainly in North America and across disparate demographic groups. However, we currently have no data that focus on the relationships between personal values, religious values and pro-social behaviour across many different countries. Our study provides this data. We surveyed the values and pro-social behaviour (giving donations and volunteering) of university students in 14 different countries, thus achieving a unique cross-national perspective. We also included questions about materialistic values, which have hitherto been largely assumed to cause a reduction in pro-social behaviour. Our findings show that altruistic and religious values are positively significant in explaining variations in pro-social behaviour, but that materialistic values are not negatively correlated with pro-social behaviour. Our study thus suggests that, in the modern world, materialistic, religious and altruistic values can combine in complex ways to determine pro-social behaviour and that this combination varies across countries and cultures. In the discussion section, we draw conclusions that also relate to religious institutions and their diaconia.

Keywords: Pro-Social Behaviour, materialistic values, altruistic values, religious values, behaviour, nationality, age, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, England, Finland, China, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, and USA

Introduction

The literature on the relationships between altruistic values, religious values and pro-social behaviour (limited to giving donations and volunteering) is well established.² Altruistic and religious values are known to be strongly associated with

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2 While there is a considerable overlap between these variables, they are manifested differently and there are many people who manifest any combination of them from all three to none. For example,

many aspects of pro-social behaviour, especially giving to charity and volunteering. However, a few questions remain unexplored. Firstly, how do other types of values, particularly materialistic values, correlate with pro-social behaviour? Secondly, how does the combination of materialistic, altruistic and religious values correlate with pro-social behaviour? Thirdly, how do these values correlate with the behaviour of young people in particular? Finally, are these correlations consistent across countries in different parts of the world?

In this study, we assess the power of three sets of values (materialistic, altruistic and religious) to explain variation in pro-social behaviour (giving donations and volunteering) in one specific age group – university students. By studying the behaviour of students in 14 different countries, we bring a unique cross-national perspective to the on-going discussion of the relationship between values and behaviour.

Background: Values and human behaviour

Values can be generally defined as judgements about what is important in life. As van Deth and Scarbrough concluded after a review of current literature, values can be seen as “conceptions of the desirable which are not directly observable but are evident in moral discourse and relevant to the formulation of attitudes” (1995b, 46). These “conceptions of the desirable” are distinguished from mere preferences by their sense of normativity and moral justification. They are partly unconscious, and they include strong emotional elements alongside cognitive and rational processes (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Values generally remain static over an individual’s lifetime; when they shift, they generally do so gradually. In this respect, we focus on personal values and not on corporate or societal values. However, as we conducted a cross-national study, country differences can indicate different societal values.

The available literature strongly supports an important connection between altruistic values (the importance placed on helping others and making the world a better place) and pro-social behaviour (in this context, giving donations and volunteering time to help others) (Sundeen, 1992).³ Indeed, an extensive literature review on generosity and philanthropy suggests that, although altruistic values are conceptualised differently in different surveys (such as those who report a willingness to prioritise the interests of others over their own, who have pro-social values, who are less materialistic in general, who endorse post-materialistic political goals, who endorse a moral principle of care, who care about social order,

religiosity may be associated with altruistic values but there are also many people who have altruistic values who score low on religiosity and vice-versa.

3 Pro-social behaviour also includes informal care, supporting causes by purchasing (or not) goods (from bake sales to boycotting South African goods in the days of apartheid), voting and joining communal groups. However, almost all studies of pro-social behaviour focus only on donating and formal volunteering because they are the best indicators of people’s willingness to give to others.

consensus and social justice, etc.) they are all positively connected with giving donations because they are motivated to make the world a better place (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007). Clary and Snyder (1991) noted that volunteering “helps individuals remain true to their conception of self and allows the expression of deeply held values ...” This is also the case with respect to donating to the welfare of others. As Furnham and Argyle (1998) noted, those who are likely to donate report a stronger commitment to altruistic values.

Religious values have also been linked to pro-social behaviour. Religious people, especially those who regularly attend places of worship, are more likely to volunteer (Bekkers, 2004, 2006; Bowen, 1999; Cnaan, Kasternakis, & Wineburg, 1993; Cnaan et al., 2002; Lam, 2002; Lincoln, Morrissey & Munday, 2008; Park & Smith, 2000; Ruiter & De Graaf, 2004; Yeung 2004). Furthermore, many scholars found that those who reported their faith to be very important and those who are active members of congregations are likely to be more generous with their money (Brooks, 2006; Smith & Stark, 2009). Smith and Stark (2009) analysed Gallup data from 145 countries and found a statistically significant positive relationship between religious attendance and financial donations in almost 90% of the countries surveyed, and a statistically significant relationship between attendance and volunteering in 87% of them. As Musick and Wilson (2008) noted: “Frequent churchgoers volunteer more than non-religious people, regardless of their religious faith or denomination” (p. 77), a finding strongly supported by Cnaan, Kasternakis and Wineburg (1993) and by Putnam and Campbell (2010). There is evidence that religion is connected to pro-social behaviour in general, such as demonstrating empathy or honesty (Saroglou et al., 2005). However, other studies suggest that the effect of religiosity is mediated by the national religious context, underlining the need for more comparative research (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006).

One of the first studies to assess the relationship between volunteering and values was conducted by Hougland and Christenson (1982). They found that active members of non-profit and voluntary groups scored significantly higher on the values moral integrity, patriotism, political democracy and helping others than non-members did. Subsequent studies showed that volunteers regard working to improve their communities, assisting those less fortunate and doing something for their country as more important than non-volunteers do (Flanagan et al., 1999). Sundeen (1992) also found that volunteers regard personal charity and helping others as more important life goals than non-volunteers do. Wilhelm and Bekkers (2010) argued that the principle of care is related to many types of helping behaviour. As these studies indicate, the connection between the two sets of values and pro-social behaviour is quite clear, although it is mediated by the social context.

Scholarly understanding of pro-social behaviour, though well-developed with regard to altruistic and religious values, traditionally bypasses materialistic, self-serving values. However, materialism is on the rise, especially among young people (Clark, Martin, & Bush, 2001) and should therefore be studied in relation to

donating and volunteering. Materialism is popularly used to refer to the value placed on the acquisition of material goods. Materialism is motivated by a concern for oneself (Musick & Wilson, 2008:86). Indeed, Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2002) noted that “one of the most striking trends over the past 100 years has been the evolution of consumption as a culturally accepted means of seeking success, happiness and the populist notion of the good life” (p. 348). However, the term materialism is expanded in values research to mean people’s emphasis on personal success, self-realisation, happiness and wealth. Scholars have hitherto assumed that those mostly concerned with this success will not exhibit pro-social behaviour. Scholars also tend to regard modernity (and post-modernity) as an egoistic area. However, as Wuthnow (1993) showed, materialistic and altruistic values can co-exist. Wuthnow (1994) suggested that even religious people are “unwilling to abandon their interest in work and money, but wanting to be altruistic as well, they want it all” (p. 253). Individualistic choices may well be pro-social – such as the personal decision to volunteer time to help others. Kottasz (2003) also suggested that the reasons for acting in a pro-social manner may be to reduce one’s tax burden or to support a cause close to one’s heart, but materialism today cannot be divorced from donating and volunteering. Hagenaaers, Halman and Moors’ large-scale European value survey (2003) proved this point: personal autonomy does not necessarily lead to a lack of community spirit and social commitment, instead, people can display simultaneous individualism and social commitment – what Hagenaaers, Halman and Moors (2003) call the “social-liberal attitude.” One British study even found that “overall, people with a materialistic disposition were significantly more generous than others” (Bennett, 2003, p. 26). However, on the basis of another British sample, Sargeant, Ford and West (2002) reported that “Non-givers were also found to exhibit higher degrees of materialism than did givers” (p. 324).

Values that are materialistic, hedonistic and change-oriented have been considered typical markers of late modernity, though many scholars argue that late modernity has also seen a strengthening of a range of post-materialistic values (Puuhiniemi, 1996; Räsänen, 2001; Schwartz, 1992; van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995a). Inglehart emphasised the distinction between modern and post-modern values, arguing that advanced industrial societies tend to de-emphasise instrumental rationality, thereby encouraging a shift from material to post-material values. According to Inglehart (1990), this de-emphasis derives from the security – economic and physical – that such societies have enjoyed during the post-war years. This security has made material concerns seem less important, and citizens have begun to place stronger emphasis on “such non-material goals as a less impersonal, more participatory society, in which ideas, self-expression, and aesthetic concerns weigh more heavily” (Inglehart, 1990, p.160). This shift in values, though driven by a specific socio-economic situation, nevertheless works in turn to transform both economic growth and political development (Inglehart, 1977; 1990; 1997). Thus, neither economic nor cultural determinism is fully justified

(Inglehart & Welzel 2005). Whatever the relationship between culture and economics, however, Inglehart's work has shown that post-industrial societies undergo a process of cultural change in which individual autonomy and self-expression are given increasing emphasis. These post-material values are most evident today in countries such as Switzerland, Germany (areas of the former West Germany), the United States, Canada and the welfare states of Northern Europe (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The fact that modernity is associated with materialism is intriguing. Given that the 14 countries in our study are at different stages of modernity or post-modernity, it would be interesting to establish whether young people in these societies are attracted to volunteering because of materialistic values, and, if so, if there is cross-national variation.

While many scholars have argued that values and their study are relevant to pro-social behaviour, Wilson (2000) suggested that values might not be such a good tool. Wilson (2000) stated, "there are a number of reasons why values fail to predict volunteering (and other pro-social behaviour) reliably" (p. 219). Firstly, volunteering takes many forms and can be inspired by different sets of values (some altruistic, some material or a combination of both). Highly generalised value questions fail to capture this variation. Secondly, different demographics attach different values to the same pro-social behaviour. Finally, Wilson noted that values tend to have a smaller impact outside of communities where norm enforcement is possible. Wilson therefore concluded that the current scholarly understanding of the role of values (altruistic and material alike) is insufficient. In a later paper, Musick and Wilson (2008) doubted whether values are helpful in understanding pro-social behaviour, because people may donate to and volunteer for one cause based on their values but not donate to and volunteer for another cause based on the same values. They did not reject the need to study the connection between values and volunteering, but stressed the need to be specific about which values are associated with specific pro-social behaviour, such as volunteering to help a health clinic versus volunteering to help a sports club.

In line with the research presented and giving consideration to the complexity of the value-volunteering nexus, we argue that values can be studied and are an important social force. The aim of this study is thus to find out whether different combinations of altruistic, materialistic and religious values can explain engagement in pro-social behaviour (performing volunteer work and giving donations).

Values, religion, nations and age

As this discussion makes clear, the connection between religion, values and pro-social behaviour is extremely complex and should be studied further. At present, we particularly need findings based on cross-national samples of a specific group of respondents. Such findings would be of particular interest because some studies suggest substantive differences in values among countries with different religious

and welfare traditions (Halman & Pettersson, 2003; Inglehart, 1990; 1997). Uslaner (2002) showed that the same value (supporting the free market over government as a social services provider) was associated with increased volunteering in the United States and decreased volunteering in Canada. Recent studies particularly stress the persistence of cultural traditions that remain partially at odds with economic development. As the revised theory of modernisation claims, economic development is not deterministic. Citizens in post-industrial societies become wealthier, but the societies themselves do not necessarily converge into one monolithic culture (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Engagement in pro-social behaviour can thus mean very different things in different countries. Cross-national variation in volunteering and donations may go beyond individual-level determinants. Divergences in the political (stability and level of democracy, welfare state regimes), economic (national economic development) and cultural (values, religion) characteristics of nations (Hodgkinson, 2003; Inglehart, 2003; Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001) play an important role. The most widely used model in this context is the social origin model (Kang et al., 2011 Salamon and Sokolowski, 2009), which describes different roles and the importance of volunteering in countries with different political traditions and welfare models (liberal, corporatist, social democratic, statist and traditional), and which is able to explain differences in types of non-profit organisations that are prevalent in each model (e.g. service vs. expressive types of organisations).

In addition to country, age could also make a difference to our understanding of the relationships between values and pro-social behaviour. Though values tend to change slowly over a person's lifetime, the change is nonetheless important. We know that different age groups view the world very differently. In the United States, for example, Caro and Bass (1995) found that an increase in religiosity over a person's lifetime offers a good explanation for why volunteering in a religious context becomes more popular as people get older. Similarly, Choi and Chou (2010) found that a high degree of religious identification among the elderly was associated with donating and volunteering.

Religion, as discussed above, can influence people's level of pro-social behaviour. However, the role of religion may be very different in different countries and it is constantly changing. For example, Japan and Korea are countries where Confucian philosophy and Buddhism are very influential, and they stress familial piety rather than civic engagement. China, a country also influenced by Confucian philosophy, is currently reacting to fifty years of totalitarian Communism. Western Europe is observing a decline in religiosity, while the United States is experiencing a strong upsurge in religious practices that are challenging the secularisation theory (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). In an era in which governments are reducing their commitments to the welfare of citizens, religion is an important substitute, even though the extent of its activities is smaller than the state's. All over Europe and North America, welfare services are increasingly being provided by religious organisations using religiously motivated volunteers (Bäckström,

Davie, Edgardh, & Pettersson, 2010). It is therefore important to know whether the students who will be tomorrow's leaders are pro-socially motivated by religion and if there are cross-national variations in that respect.

With these issues in mind, we conducted an international study in 14 different countries to focus on student values and their association with donating and volunteering. The overwhelming majority of the participants were undergraduate (BA) level students and almost all were local. The focus on students has two aims: firstly, it is limited to tomorrow's leaders (i.e. young people in the 14 countries who are expected to become tomorrow's elite); secondly, they represent uniform subjects across the studied countries. Previous studies suggest that university students are both more socially involved and invest more in their own human capital. They are thus both a materialistic and a community-minded age group at the same time.

Research questions

Based on the above literature review, we proposed the following research questions:

1. Who are the students who hold altruistic, materialistic and religious values and in what ways do they differ?
2. Do students who report higher levels of donating and volunteering report higher or lower levels of altruism, materialism or religious values when compared with students who are less pro-social?
3. What kind of volunteer work do students who report higher levels of altruism, materialism or religious values choose to do?
4. Do the answers to these questions vary based on the country of residence?
5. With respect to background variables, values and countries combined, what best explains pro-social behaviour (donating and volunteering)?

Methods

Procedures

Because we aimed to study pro-social behaviour (donating and volunteering) and values among students across cultures, data were collected from 14 different countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Finland, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States. These countries were selected to represent developed and developing countries in both the Western and Eastern world. Although of less relevance to this study, we aimed to include countries that represent all types of non-profit regimes as discussed by Salamon & Sokolowski (2009). We cover more countries than any similar study. We note, how-

ever, that we failed to include Africa and South America and have strong representation from English-speaking countries.

In each country, one of the research team members distributed questionnaires to university students. In order to obtain a stratified sample, we tried to include equal numbers of students from the following academic disciplines: social sciences (sociology, social work and psychology), natural sciences (biology, physics and chemistry), business and economics, humanities (literature, history and philosophy), engineering (chemical, structural and building), and others (too few to contribute to the data, so not included in the study). In some countries' samples, certain academic disciplines were underrepresented (Handy et al., 2010). Data were collected in the academic year 2006–2007. In each country, more than 600 university students completed the cross-culturally validated questionnaire. In total, 10,698 university students in the 14 countries completed our questionnaire.

Instrument and measures

We designed a 21-item survey to serve as the study instrument. It combined pre-existing questionnaires such as the “motivation to volunteer” questionnaire (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) and the “benefits and rewards of volunteering” questionnaire (Gidron, 1978). Five items were related to volunteering habits (e.g. in which kinds of organisations, frequency of volunteering and average hours of volunteering) and another five items covered volunteering through school or university. We also asked about donating practices. Socio-demographic factors (age, gender, years of education, family income and university programme) were also documented. All questions were either factual or had been used in many previous studies on donating and volunteering. In order to obtain data on values, we asked the students to assess the importance of seven life goals. We divided these goals into materialistic (making a lot of money; being successful at my studies or work;⁴ living a happy, comfortable life; and being able to do what I want) and altruistic values (helping people in need and making the world a better place). Exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation supported this conceptual division. The results show two distinct factors, each loaded at .5 or higher on a different factor, and each with an eigenvalue higher than one. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha reliability for the materialism scale was .75, and for the altruism scale .73. The mean level of altruism for the full sample was 3.66 and for materialism 3.85.

Religious values are broadly viewed as the importance one places on belief in the divine and the role of religion in human life (Heaven 1990). For individuals with strong religious values, religion forms a basis for their existence and guides their everyday activities. We asked respondents to rank the importance of reli-

4 While some argue that focusing on success in school or work is not materialistic, removing it from the scale did not change the reliability.

gious faith on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (absolutely essential). The mean level of religious values for the full sample was 2.63.

We tested the correlations between the three measures. As expected, materialistic values and religious values were weakly correlated ($r = .084$). However, altruistic values were moderately correlated with both religious values (.312) and materialistic values (.339). Due to the large sample size, the significance in all cases was below .0001. Indeed, comparative research on young people in Europe shows that humanity, a term akin to altruistic commitment, is positively associated with religion: the more humane a person is, the more he/she is open to religious attitudes (Črpić, Riegel, & Zrinščak, 2009:141) and to religion as a general phenomenon.

Because it was an international study, the questionnaire had to be translated and adapted to the local language and culture. The English version of the questionnaire was used in Australia, Canada, England, India, New Zealand, and the United States. In all other countries, the questionnaire was translated, piloted, and reviewed by a panel of experts (the local researcher along with two to five colleagues) prior to use. It was modified based on this process to reflect the original questionnaire.

Participants

A country-by-country distribution of key demographic variables is presented in Table 1. Of the 10,698 students who completed the questionnaire, 44.2% were male, and 55.8% were female. Gender balance varied significantly across the 14 studied countries ($X^2 = 3618$, $df = 13$, $p < .0001$): in India, 64.9% were males, while in England, Finland, and Canada, women were in a clear majority (71.4%, 71.3% and 68.3%, respectively).

With respect to family income/status, 15.7% indicated that their family belonged to a low-income class, 67.7% to a middle-income class, and 16.6% to a high-income class. These results varied significantly among countries ($X^2 = 792.4$, $df = 22$, $p < .001$). The highest levels of students reporting their family as high-income were found in the Netherlands (41.3%), Israel (35.8%), and Belgium (24.1%). The highest levels of low-income were reported in China (25.9%), New Zealand (22.0%), Japan (21.2%), Finland (20.1%), and Israel (20.0%).

The mean age of the students was 22 years (median=21 years), but 90% were 25 years old or younger. In Israel, the mean age was higher (26) due to compulsory military service. The youngest mean age (20) was in Belgium, China, and Japan. The average number of years of education (beginning with grade 1) for all the countries was 14.88 (range: 10–27, median=15 years). The Netherlands' average was highest (17.4). Ninety per cent of the students had graduated from high school in the same country they were living in at the time of the survey.

Table 1. Socio-demographic factors by country (n=10,698)

Country	Family income			Mean age	Gender		Mean years of education	Number of participants
	High	Middle	Low		Male	Female		
USA	17.5%	66.6%	15.9%	24.0	46.8%	53.2%	15.5	1,294
Canada	13.1%	73.6%	13.4%	22.6	31.7%	68.3%	15.2	973
Finland	16.6%	63.3%	20.1%	24.6	28.7%	71.3%	15.5	665
Israel	35.6%	44.4%	20.0%	26.1	47.0%	53.0%	13.8	590
India	12.4%	79.9%	7.7%	21.9	62.5%	37.5%	13.4	600
England	17.1%	68.6%	14.3%	21.4	28.6%	71.4%	15.4	600
Croatia	6.4%	77.4%	16.2%	21.6	36.6%	63.4%	14.9	600
Korea	5.8%	79.3%	14.9%	23.6	55.0%	45.0%	14.9	696
Belgium	24.1%	71.9%	4.0%	20.3	48.3%	51.7%	14.3	891
Netherlands	41.3%	50.9%	6.5%	21.7	47.3%	52.7%	17.4	602
Japan	13.6%	64.2%	22.1%	20.3	50.0%	50.0%	14.0	1052
China	3.8%	70.2%	25.9%	20.8	51.4%	48.6%	14.5	919
New Zealand	14.4%	63.6%	22.0%	21.7	38.5%	61.5%	15.3	605
Australia	19.7%	67.7%	12.5%	21.4	41.5%	58.5%	13.9	611
Total	16.6%	67.7%	15.7%	22.3	44.2%	55.8%	14.9	10,698

Limitations:

The study was conducted in only 14 countries, with an over-representation of English-speaking countries. Certain regions of the world such as Africa and South America are not included in the study. In each country, the sample was a sample of convenience and it was often limited to one or a few universities. For example, only one university was included in the Netherlands, three universities in China, and six universities in the United States. Data were collected in classes and at social gatherings, and bias is therefore possible. As Burns, Toncar, Reid, Anderson, and Wells (2005) showed, different universities (at least in the United States) produce different levels and types of volunteering. Therefore, although this study offers some valuable results, it is more explanatory in nature. Furthermore, despite careful transliteration, it is still possible that some items were understood differently in some countries, and variations between countries could reflect response bias rather than substantive differences. We did not ask respondents which religious tradition, if any, they subscribed to, which means that we were unable to analyse the impact of local religions on pro-social behaviour. Nor did we study the institutional arrangements on campus in relation to encouraging and facilitating volunteering. It is therefore possible that volunteering is higher in some countries because students are approached by the institution to volunteer.

Findings:

Our first research question focused on the identity of the students who hold altruistic, materialistic, and religious values. Interestingly, family socio-economic background was not significant in explaining variations in altruistic values. However, those from upper-class families reported religion as significantly less important and materialistic values as more important.

Female students reported significantly ($t = -10.4$, $p < .0001$) higher levels of altruism (3.75 vs. 3.60 on a scale of 1 to 5). Females also reported significantly higher levels of religious values ($t = -7.06$, $p < .0001$; 2.76 and 2.57 respectively). Gender was not significantly associated with materialistic values, however. Both genders reported the same level (3.8).

Nor was age significantly correlated with materialistic values, but it was weakly correlated both with altruistic values ($r = .11$, $p < .0001$) and with religious values ($r = .07$, $p < .0001$).

With respect to field of education, engineering students reported the lowest altruism level (3.51), while all of the other fields reported higher levels (3.60 to 3.73). Business and engineering students reported the highest levels of materialism (3.89 and 3.87, respectively), with social science students following immediately behind (3.86). Students of natural sciences reported the lowest materialism level (3.78). Humanities students were only slightly higher (3.80). With regard to religiosity, business students reported the highest levels (2.75), followed by humanities and natural sciences (2.67 and 2.65, respectively). Engineering and social science students reported the lowest levels of religious values (2.54 and 2.53, respectively).

With regard to country of origin, students from Canada, the United States, India, and Israel reported the highest levels of altruism, while those from Japan, Belgium, and China reported the lowest. Interestingly, however, students from Korea, Israel, and Canada reported the highest levels of materialism, while students from Japan, Belgium, and China reported the lowest. The study therefore identified the most altruistic demographics as female students, non-engineers, and those from Canada, the United States, India, or Israel, countries with strong volunteering traditions and cultures (particularly Canada and the United States). Students in Israel, India, and the United States reported the highest levels of religious values, (3.55, 3.30, and 3.22, respectively), while students in Japan (1.81), Belgium (1.97), and China (2.14) reported the lowest.

Table 2. Materialistic values, altruistic values and religious importance by areas of volunteering.

Area of volunteering	Mean altruistic values: Volunteers	Mean altruistic values: Non-volunteers	Mean materialistic values: Volunteers	Mean materialistic values: Non-volunteers	Mean religiosity: Volunteers	Mean religiosity: Non-volunteers
Religious and congregational organisations	3.94	3.63 ***	3.83	3.87 *	3.81	2.45 ***
Human service and health organisations	3.94	3.60 ***	3.92	3.85 ***	3.01	2.59 ***
Cultural and sports organisations	3.67	3.70 N.S.	3.83	3.88 N.S.	2.69	2.67 N.S.
Arts, environmental organisations, and community organisations.	3.94	3.62 ***	3.85	3.87 N.S.	2.85	2.64 ***
On-line volunteering	3.73	3.67 *	3.77	3.87 ***	2.83	2.66 ***
Student club or a university organisation	3.70	3.66 *	3.82	3.88 ***	2.68	2.68 N.S.
Neighbourhood group or local activist organisation	3.90	3.64 ***	3.85	3.87 N.S.	2.96	2.63 ***
Mentoring, tutoring, coaching, or counselling for youth	3.83	3.62 ***	3.85	3.87 N.S.	2.90	2.60 ***

N.S. denotes no statistically significant differences
 * denotes statistical differences at the .05 level
 ** denotes statistical differences at the .01 level
 *** denotes statistical differences at the .001 level

Our second research question was: do students who report higher levels of donating and volunteering report higher or lower levels of altruism, materialism or religious values when compared with students who are less pro-social? When comparing volunteers with non-volunteers, we found that student volunteers reported significantly ($t = 11.85, p < .0001$) higher levels of altruism (3.43 vs. 3.16) and ($t = 5.38, p < .0001$) slightly lower levels of materialism (3.84 vs. 3.92). They also reported higher levels of religious values ($t = 13.37$) (2.80 vs. 2.41). Similarly, those who donated money last year reported significantly (t

= 13.78, $p < .0001$) higher levels of altruism when compared with non-donors (3.76 vs. 3.52) and only slightly significantly ($t = 1.97$, $p < .05$) lower levels of materialism (3.86 vs. 3.88). Student donors also reported higher levels of religious values ($t = 14.39$) compared with non-donors (2.81 vs. 2.41). Given the differences in the “ t ” values, it seems safe to suggest that altruistic values and religious values are strongly associated with volunteering and donating. Materialistic values, it seems, were only slightly associated with pro-social behaviour.

The third research question focused on the relationship between the three sets of values and the decision to take part in a particular type of volunteering. Table 2 lists all the mean values (altruistic, materialistic and religious) for those who volunteered in a certain field and those who did not. It is clear from this table that altruistic values and religious values to a greater extent explain the variation in volunteering in each of the studied fields. Altruistic values were more important to volunteers in all fields, with the exception of cultural and sports organisations. They were less significant but still important to those who volunteered online or with student organisations. Similarly, those with strong religious values were significantly more likely to volunteer in all the studied fields, with three exceptions: cultural organisations, sports organisations, and student organisations.

Materialistic values did not explain the variation in volunteer involvement in four of the eight fields, and in one of them (religion-affiliated volunteering) the difference is marginally significant. However, materialistic values explained variation in participation in a student organisation to a greater extent than the other values. Materialistic students also tended to volunteer less online. Surprisingly, however, students who volunteered in the fields of human services and health tended to report higher levels of materialism.

Our final research question focused on how the relationship between values and pro-social behaviour varies according to country of residence. With respect to volunteering, the overall trend, as indicated in the bottom row of Table 3, suggests that volunteers report higher levels of altruism and religious values, while non-volunteers report higher levels of materialism. This is in line with our expectations. However, only a few countries followed this exact trend (Korea and New Zealand). In India, Belgium and the Netherlands, volunteering was not significantly associated with any of the studied values. In the United States, Canada and Australia, altruistic values and religious values were associated with volunteering, but materialistic values were not. In Finland and China, altruistic and materialistic values did not explain the variation in volunteering, but religious values did. Volunteers only reported higher levels of both materialism and altruism than non-volunteers in Israel.

Table 3. Altruistic, materialistic and religious values by volunteer and by country.

Country	Mean altruistic values: Volunteers	Mean altruistic values: Non-volunteers	Mean materialistic values: Volunteers	Mean materialistic values: Non-volunteers	Mean religious values: Volunteers	Mean religious values: Non-volunteers
USA	3.93	3.71 ***	3.91	3.95 N.S.	3.27	3.03 *
Canada	3.96	3.62 ***	4.02	4.03 N.S.	3.02	2.77 **
Finland	3.33	3.24 N.S.	3.27	3.36 N.S.	3.11	2.74 **
Israel	4.26	3.82 ***	4.30	4.10 **	3.66	3.32 **
India	3.87	3.79 N.S.	3.75	3.89 N.S.	3.30	3.31 N.S.
England	3.63	3.45 **	3.82	3.94 *	2.60	2.38 N.S.
Croatia	3.80	3.73 N.S.	3.80	3.92 *	3.20	2.99 *
Korea	3.84	3.70 ***	4.23	4.36 **	2.98	2.34 ***
Belgium	2.46	2.42 N.S.	3.72	3.78 N.S.	1.99	1.99 N.S.
Netherlands	3.54	3.56 N.S.	3.82	3.91 N.S.	2.32	2.21 N.S.
Japan	3.64	2.39 ***	3.88	3.90 N.S.	1.86	1.78 N.S.
China	3.48	3.36 N.S.	3.63	3.57 N.S.	2.18	1.92 **
New Zealand	3.91	3.51 ***	3.82	4.05 ***	2.71	1.96 ***
Australia	3.68	3.63 *	3.92	4.04 N.S.	3.06	2.53 ***
Total	3.74	3.54 ***	3.84	3.92 ***	2.80	2.41 ***

N.S. denotes no statistically significant differences

* denotes statistical differences at the .05 level

** denotes statistical differences at the .01 level

*** denotes statistical differences at the .001 level

In other words, in eight of the 14 studied countries, altruistic values were associated with higher levels of volunteering in the expected fields. Similarly, in nine of the 14 countries studied, religious values were associated with increased volunteering. Materialistic values were not significantly associated with volunteering in nine of the 14 countries studied. In four countries, non-volunteers reported higher levels of materialistic values and only in Israel were materialistic values associated with increased volunteering.

With respect to donations, students reporting higher levels of altruism and higher religious values were more like to donate money. Materialistic students were less likely to donate, but these associations were not significant in most countries (they were only significant in New Zealand and Belgium). As shown in Table 4, those with higher levels of altruism were more likely to donate money in all the countries except India. In ten out of 14 countries, those who scored high on religious values were more likely to donate (with the exception of India, England, Croatia and Japan). All three sets of value variables were only significant in Belgium and New Zealand.

Table 4. Altruistic, materialistic and religious values by donating money and by country.

Country	Mean altruistic values: Donating	Mean altruistic values: Non-donating	Mean materialistic values: Donating	Mean materialistic values: Non-donating	Mean religious values: Donating	Mean religious values: Non-donating
USA	3.93	3.73 ***	3.92	4.00 N.S.	3.33	2.91 ***
Canada	3.94	3.76 **	4.02	4.00 N.S.	3.03	2.81 *
Finland	3.35	3.09 ***	3.30	3.28 N.S.	3.07	2.72 *
Israel	4.22	3.85 ***	4.18	4.15 N.S.	3.70	3.14 ***
India	3.90	3.81 N.S.	3.75	3.80 N.S.	3.30	3.31 N.S.
England	3.61	3.42 *	3.87	3.84 N.S.	2.55	2.41 N.S.
Croatia	3.84	3.70 *	3.82	3.89 N.S.	3.10	3.09 N.S.
Korea	3.89	3.62 ***	4.26	4.27 N.S.	3.09	2.20 ***
Belgium	3.54	3.26 ***	3.69	3.83 ***	2.03	1.82 ***
Netherlands	3.63	3.35 ***	3.84	3.89 N.S.	2.39	1.99 ***
Japan	3.58	3.42 **	3.88	3.91 N.S.	1.83	1.80 N.S.
China	3.55	3.37 ***	3.65	3.60 N.S.	2.22	2.04 **
New Zealand	3.90	3.47 ***	3.83	4.08 ***	2.60	2.19 **
Australia	3.69	3.46 **	3.99	3.89 N.S.	2.97	2.59 **
Total sample	3.76	3.52 ***	3.85	3.89 *	2.81	2.41 ***

N.S. denotes no statistically significant differences

* denotes statistical differences at the .05 level

** denotes statistical differences at the .01 level

*** denotes statistical differences at the .001 level

Finally, to understand the combined effect of the variables studied, we first assessed intraclass correlations. Given the estimated intraclass correlation of 0.075, we determined that a multilevel model was not necessary in order to estimate the effect of country level variation on the volunteer outcome. This intraclass correlation indicated that only 7.5% of the variation in volunteering was attributable to between-country variation. Similarly, with respect to donations, the intraclass correlation was only 0.062, meaning that 6.2% of the variance in donations is attributable to between-country variation. This analysis showed that binary logistic regression still provided the best linear unbiased estimates.

As shown in Table 5, we used three models to understand the variation in volunteering and three models to understand the variation in donations. In all cases, we assigned a value of 0 to non-volunteer/donor and 1 to volunteer/donor. In the first model for each, we included the background variables, in the second model we added the values, and in the third model we added the countries. In each case, the R^2 was significantly improved. In the case of donating, the R^2 improved three-

fold (from .033 to .101) from the first to the third model. In the case of volunteering, the increase was even more dramatic (from .012 to .096).

Table 5: Binary Logistic Regression, Odds Ratios (Exp. (B))

Variable	Model 1 Volunteer- ing	Model 2 Volunteer- ing	Model 3 Volunteer- ing	Model 1 Donation	Model 2 Donation	Model 3 Donation
Gender (Ref = Male)	1.161 ***	1.082	1.070	1.604 ***	1.488 ***	1.387 ***
Family income (Ref=Lower-class) Middle Class	1.124 *	1.094	1.068	1.084	1.072	1.044
Family income (Ref=Lower-class) Higher Class	1.212 **	1.215 **	1.318 ***	1.702 ***	1.733 ***	1.551 ***
Years of Education	1.010	1.020 *	1.021	1.005	1.017	.992
Age	1.001	.990 *	.984 **	1.054 ***	1.040 ***	1.035 ***
Programme (Ref=Engineering) Business	.661 ***	.996 ***	.714 ***	1.177 *	1.217 **	1.081
Programme (Ref=Engineering) Social Sciences	.554 ***	.572 ***	.996	.934	.972	1.331 ***
Programme (Ref=Engineering) Natural Sciences	.835 *	.859	.948	1.305 ***	1.353 ***	1.219 *
Programme (Ref=Engineering) Humanities	.907	.927	1.069	1.431 ***	1.483 ***	1.287 **
Values (Ref=Materialism) Altruistic		1.247 ***	1.244 ***		1.270 ***	1.328 ***
Values (Ref=Materialism) Religious		1.198 ***	1.180 ***		1.194 ***	1.172 ***
Country (Ref=USA) Canada			1.120			1.039
Country (Ref=USA) Finland			.699 **			1.873 ***
Country (Ref=USA) Israel			.517 ***			.785
Country (Ref=USA) India			2.051 ***			.643 ***
Country (Ref=USA) England			.593 ***			1.499 ***

Country (Ref=USA) Croatia			.269 ***			.359 ***
Country (Ref=USA) Korea			.794 *			.986
Country (Ref=USA) Belgium			.827			1.194
Country (Ref=USA) Netherlands			.468 ***			1.053
Country (Ref=USA) Japan			.224 ***			.339 ***
Country (Ref=USA) China			2.011 ***			.667 ***
Country (Ref=USA) New Zealand			.846			1.718 ***
Country (Ref=USA) Australia			.690 **			1.713 ***
Constant	2.133 ***	.682 *	.984	.353 ***	.102 ***	.183 ***
R-Square	.012	.035	.096	.033	.058	.101

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Of the background variables, females reported significantly higher levels of donating but not of volunteering. People with higher incomes reported higher levels of volunteering and donating. Older students reported lower levels of volunteering and higher levels of donating. Engineering students reported the lowest level of volunteering. The natural science, humanities, and engineering students reported higher levels of donating.

When we looked at values, we found that, regardless of background variables and country, they are significantly relevant. Strong altruistic and religious values were associated with higher levels of both volunteering and donating. We found great variation with respect to countries. Some countries – such as Israel, Korea and Japan – displayed significantly lower levels of volunteering and donating. On the other hand, some countries – such as India and China – displayed higher levels of volunteering and lower levels of donating. In addition, some countries – such as Finland, England, Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia – displayed higher levels of donating and lower levels of volunteering. These findings suggest that when all the variables are entered in the final model, values and countries still explain a significant proportion of the variation.

Conclusions and discussion

We set out to study how three sets of values (materialistic, altruistic and religious) explain variation in pro-social behaviour (volunteering and donating) among university students in 14 countries. Our first noteworthy finding was that materialistic values were most common (mean of 3.85 on a scale of 1 to 5) among these young people, followed closely by altruistic values (3.68). Religious values lagged well behind (2.68). We found students from wealthier socio-economic backgrounds to be more materialistic and less religious. Female students reported higher levels of altruism and religious values. We also found that study field and country of origin play an important role in explaining the variation of different value sets.⁵

The most important finding in our study is that values do in fact have a significant explanatory power with respect to variation in pro-social behaviour. Although such a nexus has been demonstrated in the majority of studies (but not in all of them), we proved it in different countries around the globe. However, not all values have the same power. Those with higher levels of altruism and religious values were consistently found to be more involved in pro-social behaviour – both donating and volunteering.

Materialistic values, however, were not a strong source of discouragement of pro-social behaviour in our findings. While those holding these values volunteer less and donate smaller amounts of money, the differences were quite marginal. This can also reflect the fact that the values we defined as materialistic may actually also reflect – or even partially represent – individualism and achievement values, such as “living a happy, comfortable life,” and “being successful at my studies or work.” Those who value their comfort and success may want to exhibit their individualism and success through generosity to others (Wuthnow, 1993).

With regard to volunteering, we conducted tests to determine whether different types of volunteer work were associated with different value sets. As expected, those with stronger altruism and religious values reported higher participation in most fields of volunteering (the exceptions were “cultural and sports organisations” and “student club or a university organisation”). Surprisingly, however, volunteers in health and human services reported higher materialistic values than those who did not volunteer. It may be that students who focus on materialistic life goals are more likely to consider this type of volunteering as a good investment in their CV (Handy et al., 2010). This should be further researched, however.

In most countries, both altruistic values and religious values explained variation in volunteering. However, in six of the 14 countries studied, altruistic values were not significant in explaining the variation in volunteering (Finland, India, Croatia, Belgium, the Netherlands and China). As our studies indicated, however,

⁵ A more extensive discussion on differences in volunteering across countries and fields of study can be found in Handy et al., 2010 and Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008.

young people in these countries may be active volunteers. Other motivating factors must play a role then; in Finland, for instance, social motives and the will to learn, in addition to the will to help, play a central role in youth volunteering (Yeung 2002; Pessi & Oravasaari 2010). The wider “value atmosphere” of a particular society may also play a role here; the value of altruism, for instance, has long been the single most central value in Finland (e.g. Puohiniemi 1996), a country that also has a strong (and highly-valued in the eyes of its citizens) welfare state and public social security system. We can thus ask: in such a general atmosphere, is it more likely that individuals will give different emphasis to their personal motives for volunteering? Is there less “need” for individual altruism?

It remains unclear, however, whether these six countries have something specific in common. In three of them (Belgium, the Netherlands and India), none of the value variables explain the variation in volunteering. Similarly, in nine of the 14 countries, those with high religious values were more likely to volunteer. Again, it remains unclear why India, Belgium, the Netherlands, Japan and England diverge from the majority. There is a clear need for more research on values and the motives for youth volunteering.

All of this strongly supports the understanding that altruistic values and religious values are strongly correlated with levels of giving and volunteering. These sets of values are embedded in the practice and teaching of helping one’s neighbour. In most countries and in the sample as a whole, those with high altruism and religious values were those who regularly give time and money to help others. However, as pointed out in different studies (e.g. Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006), geography and culture make a difference, and these findings do not hold true in all the studied countries. More research on this topic is therefore required.

Materialistic values were of little help in explaining pro-social behaviour. While the results of most statistical tests were insignificant, in almost all comparisons, the mean materialism for non-volunteers or non-donors was higher than that of the volunteers or donors. This suggests that students who value financial and professional success in life and who want to own private property are only slightly less generous than others. As noted above, materialistic values have developed in complex ways during the past century. Materialism does not mean disregarding family, friends, religion and community. Some people who see personal success as important do not necessarily separate themselves from their communities; instead, they assess how helping the community can further their own personal happiness. This suggests that materialistic values can be harnessed for the benefit of collective efforts, provided that involvement can be clearly identified as worth the investment of time and energy. Altruistic and religious individuals often regard giving donations as an end in itself; those with materialistic values, by contrast, need to be persuaded that pro-social behaviour furthers their own personal goals. Our research suggests, however, that those with materialistic values are indeed often persuaded that this is the case. Furthermore, the fact that the various value sets are correlated with each other suggests that different value sets

can co-exist in the same individual. It is possible, for example, to be both materialistic and religious. Different value sets dominate at different times.

The findings of this study have significant implications for existing knowledge. Firstly, our research supports previous findings that late-modern, or post-modern social conditions do not undermine pro-social, participatory values, even in very different societies. Although not all of the societies included in our research are necessarily late-modern, the young, educated demographic of a society tends to be more post-modern than the rest of the population, and they report a strong commitment to service and to helping the world. Secondly, our study supports the claim that individuals hold a combination of values (also) in the volunteering context, and that it is not always possible to speak about “pure” value orientation; the interplay between values is both complex and contextual. Overall, young people exemplify such a combination particularly strongly; the two most popular sets of values in all of our data were, on the one hand, materialistic values, and on the other hand, altruistic values.

Thirdly, the relationship between values and social behaviour differs between different countries. Our study does not offer an explanation of these differences, though current literature suggests that variations in history and cultural orientation could account for some of them (Kang et al., 2011). We hope that further studies will combine quantitative comparative research with additional qualitative research to explore this area more fully.

Fourthly, the fact that values are strongly correlated with pro-social behaviour is important to our understanding of how we educate our young people. If we want our children to grow up devoting their time and energy to helping others, it may be our responsibility to instil these values in them. The same applies to also civic organisations, NGOs and religious institutions; what are the values they wish to promote through their words and deeds, not only to their employees and volunteers but to wider circles of citizens as well? If, for instance, religious education in schools and religious institutions gave greater emphasis to pro-social values and altruism, it might be easier to recruit new volunteers through diaconia activities. Our study also suggested, for example, that new volunteers should be recruited from other areas and non-traditional contexts; in our data, it was the business students who reported the highest levels of religious values.

Diaconia is a core institution in relation to precisely the values that we have explored – altruism and pro-sociality. Its centrality in religious institutions benefits not only religious institutions and communities, but also wider society. For instance, as our study illustrated, religious values seem to have a positive ripple effect: those with strong religious values are significantly more likely to volunteer in various fields. Religion and altruism also seem to support each other, or at least to exist hand-in-hand; both donors and volunteers in our data report not only higher levels of altruism but religious values too. Diaconia thus has a great responsibility to wider society – but great potential as well.

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