

Does Self-Consciousness Strengthen the Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Prosocial Behavior? Evidence from Generation Z University Students

Öz Farkındalık, Psikolojik Sermaye ile Prososyal Davranış Arasındaki İlişkiyi Güçlendirir mi? Z Kuşağı Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Araştırma

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors and investigated the moderating role of self-consciousness in this relationship. It was proposed that higher levels of self-consciousness would strengthen the positive effect of psychological capital on prosocial behaviors. In other words, individuals with high levels of private self-consciousness were expected to display more helping behaviors, as they tend to focus inwardly on their altruistic values and feelings when shaping their behaviors. To test the proposed hypotheses, a cross-sectional study was conducted with third- and fourth-year students enrolled at a public university. The sample consisted of 250 participants, all of whom belonged to Generation Z. The findings revealed a positive relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behavior. In addition, self-consciousness was found to play a moderating role in this relationship. As the level of self-consciousness increased, the positive effect of psychological capital on prosocial behaviors became stronger. These findings provide important insights into Generation Z and university students. The results offer significant theoretical and practical implications for understanding the behavioral characteristics of the new generation workforce and for the related literature. The findings are discussed within the framework of the relevant theoretical background and practical implications. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and directions for future research are also presented.

Keywords: Psychological capital, Prosocial behaviors, Self-consciousness, Positive Organizational Behavior, Generation Z

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, psikolojik sermaye ile prososyal davranışlar arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemiş ve bu ilişkide öz farkındalığın düzenleyici rolünü araştırmıştır. Daha yüksek düzeyde öz farkındalığın, psikolojik sermayenin prososyal davranışlar üzerindeki olumlu etkisini güçlendireceği öne sürülmüştür. Başka bir ifadeyle, özel öz farkındalık düzeyi yüksek olan bireylerin, davranışlarını şekillendirirken özgeci değerlerine ve duygularına içsel olarak odaklanma eğiliminde oldukları için daha fazla yardım etme davranışı sergilemeleri beklenmiştir. Önerilen hipotezleri test etmek amacıyla, bir devlet üniversitesinde öğrenim gören üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıf öğrencileriyle kesitsel bir araştırma yürütülmüştür. Örneklem, tamamı Z Kuşağına mensup 250 katılımcıdan oluşmuştur. Bulgular, psikolojik sermaye ile prososyal davranış arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, öz farkındalığın bu ilişkide düzenleyici bir rol oynadığı bulunmuştur. Öz farkındalık düzeyi arttıkça, psikolojik sermayenin prososyal davranışlar üzerindeki olumlu etkisinin güçlendiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, Z Kuşağı ve üniversite öğrencilerine ilişkin önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır. Sonuçlar, yeni nesil iş gücünün davranışsal özelliklerinin anlaşılmasına ve ilgili literatüre önemli kuramsal ve uygulamaya yönelik katkılar sağlamaktadır. Bulgular, ilgili kuramsal çerçeve ve uygulamaya yönelik çıkarımlar kapsamında tartışılmıştır. Ayrıca, çalışmanın sınırlılıkları ve gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için öneriler de sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Psikolojik sermaye, Prososyal davranış, Öz farkındalık, Pozitif psikoloji, Pozitif örgütsel davranış, Z Jenerasyonu

INTRODUCTION

Prosocial behavior, defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, has attracted considerable attention in psychology, organizational behavior, and social sciences due to its positive effects on individual and societal well-being. Such behaviors include helping, sharing, cooperating, comforting, and supporting others without expecting external rewards (Eisenberg et al., 2015). Prosocial behaviors contribute to social cohesion, interpersonal trust, and collective welfare, making them particularly important in contemporary societies characterized by increasing

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individualism and social fragmentation. Understanding the psychological factors that promote prosocial behavior has therefore become an important area of research.

Among the individual factors associated with positive behaviors, psychological capital has emerged as a significant construct. Psychological capital refers to an individual's positive psychological state of development and comprises four dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007). Individuals with high levels of psychological capital tend to exhibit greater perseverance, confidence, adaptability, and positive expectations regarding future outcomes. Previous studies have demonstrated that psychological capital is associated with numerous desirable outcomes, including job performance, well-being, organizational citizenship behaviors, and social engagement (Avey et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2014). Given that psychologically resourceful individuals are more likely to approach others positively and provide support when needed, psychological capital may also serve as an important antecedent of prosocial behavior.

Another factor that may influence the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behavior is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness refers to the tendency of individuals to direct attention toward themselves and evaluate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Fenigstein et al., 1975). The construct encompasses public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Individuals with higher levels of self-consciousness are generally more aware of their internal states and the social consequences of their actions. Such awareness may strengthen the translation of positive psychological resources into socially beneficial behaviors. In other words, self-conscious individuals may be more likely to express their psychological strengths through actions that benefit others.

The importance of examining these relationships is further highlighted in the context of Generation Z. As the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital era, Generation Z possesses distinctive social, psychological, and behavioral characteristics. Although members of this generation are often described as technologically competent, socially connected, and highly aware of social issues, they also face challenges related to uncertainty, social comparison, and psychological well-being. Understanding the factors that encourage prosocial behavior among Generation Z is therefore important not only for educational institutions but also for future workplaces, where these individuals will increasingly constitute the dominant workforce.

Despite growing interest in psychological capital and prosocial behavior, limited research has examined the mechanisms and boundary conditions underlying their relationship, particularly among Generation Z university students. Furthermore, the potential moderating role of self-consciousness in this relationship remains largely unexplored. Addressing this gap may contribute to a better understanding of how positive psychological resources translate into socially beneficial behaviors and under what conditions this relationship becomes stronger.

Accordingly, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behavior and to examine the moderating role of self-consciousness in this relationship within the context of Generation Z university students in Türkiye. By focusing on a population that represents the future workforce and social landscape, the study seeks to contribute to the literature on positive psychology and prosocial behavior while offering practical implications for educators, policymakers, and organizations interested in fostering socially responsible and psychologically resilient young adults.

LITERATURE REVIEW and HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit others and contribute to individual and collective well-being. Such behaviors include helping, sharing, cooperating, and providing support to others without expecting direct personal gain. Given its positive consequences for interpersonal relationships, social cohesion, and organizational functioning, prosocial behavior has attracted considerable attention in the fields of psychology, education, and organizational behavior. Previous research has identified a variety of individual and contextual factors that foster prosocial behavior, including personality traits, empathy, moral values, and positive psychological resources. Among these factors, psychological capital has emerged as a particularly important construct due to its potential to encourage positive attitudes and behaviors.

Psychological capital, which encompasses self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, represents an individual's positive psychological state of development (Luthans et al., 2007). Individuals with higher levels of psychological capital are more likely to cope effectively with challenges, maintain positive expectations about the future, and persist in pursuing their goals.

These psychological resources may also facilitate socially beneficial behaviors by enhancing individuals' willingness and capacity to support others. Furthermore, self-consciousness may play an important role in determining how psychological resources are translated into behavior. Individuals who are more aware of their

thoughts, feelings, and social presence may be more likely to express their positive psychological capacities through prosocial actions. Therefore, examining the relationships among psychological capital, self-consciousness, and prosocial behavior may provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying prosocial tendencies among Generation Z university students.

Psychological Capital with the Lenses of Positive Organizational Behavior

Psychological capital (PsyCap) has emerged as a key construct within positive organizational behavior (POB), which focuses on positively oriented psychological strengths that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in the workplace (Luthans, 2002; Luthans et al., 2007a). Drawing from positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002), PsyCap represents an individual's positive psychological state of development and has been conceptualized as a higher-order construct consisting of four state-like resources: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007b; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their ability to successfully execute tasks and achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Hope reflects goal-directed energy and the perceived ability to generate pathways toward goal attainment (Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder, 2002; Adams et al., 2010). Optimism is defined as a generalized expectation that positive outcomes will occur in the future (Seligman, 1998; Carver & Scheier, 2002). Finally, resilience represents the capacity to bounce back from adversity, conflict, or failure and to adapt positively to challenging circumstances (Luthans, 2002; Masten, 2001).

Together, these four components form a higher-order psychological resource that is open to development and has been consistently linked to positive individual and organizational outcomes, including performance, well-being, and adaptive behaviors (Avey et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2014). Empirical research has demonstrated that PsyCap is not only theoretically grounded but also practically relevant, as it enhances individuals' ability to cope with challenges and maintain positive functioning in various contexts (Luthans et al., 2007b; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Especially for Generation Z individuals, studies showed that psychological capital is related to increased entrepreneurial readiness (Hasan et al., 2026), job satisfaction (Aulia et al., 2026), and enhanced job performance, specifically driven by the dimensions of hope and self-efficacy (Sipon et al., 2025).

Prosocial Behaviors

Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit other individuals or groups without the expectation of external rewards. Such behaviors include helping, sharing, comforting, cooperating, donating, and providing support to others in need (Eisenberg et al., 2015). As a multidimensional construct, prosocial behavior encompasses a variety of actions that promote social harmony, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and contribute to collective well-being. Researchers have emphasized that prosocial behavior plays a crucial role in maintaining positive social interactions and fostering a sense of connectedness among individuals (Batson, 2011). Because of its beneficial consequences for both the actor and the recipient, prosocial behavior has become an important topic in developmental, social, and organizational psychology.

Previous studies have demonstrated that prosocial behavior is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced psychological well-being, greater life satisfaction, stronger social relationships, increased social integration, and later self-efficacy in adolescents (Aknin et al., 2013; Cruz et al., 2025; Eisenberg et al., 2015). In educational and organizational settings, prosocial individuals are more likely to engage in cooperation, teamwork, and supportive interactions that contribute to positive group functioning (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Furthermore, prosocial behavior has been linked to personal characteristics such as empathy, moral reasoning, emotional competence, and positive psychological resources. Given its significance for both individual and societal functioning, identifying the psychological factors that encourage prosocial behavior remains an important area of research.

Self Consciousness

One of the seminal contributions to the self-consciousness literature was provided by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975), who conceptualized self-consciousness as a dispositional tendency to direct attention toward the self. The construct is typically divided into two dimensions: private and public self-consciousness (Buss, 1980). Private self-consciousness refers to attention focused on one's internal thoughts and feelings, whereas public self-consciousness reflects awareness of the self as a social object that may be evaluated by others (Fenigstein et al., 1975). A related dimension, social anxiety, refers to discomfort in social situations and concern about negative evaluation by others.

Empirical research suggests that individuals high in private self-consciousness tend to be more introspective and

provide richer self-descriptions compared to those low in this trait (Turner, 1978). In contrast, individuals high in public self-consciousness are more sensitive to social evaluation and rejection (Fenigstein, 1979). Consistent with this distinction, studies have shown that private self-consciousness is positively associated with self-disclosure, whereas public self-consciousness and social anxiety are negatively associated with self-disclosure (Fenigstein, 1979; Leary & Kowalski, 1995; Reno & Kenny, 1992). These findings suggest that individuals high in private self-consciousness tend to have greater awareness of internal states, leading to more accurate self-perception and greater willingness to express themselves.

From a self-regulation perspective, self-consciousness plays an important role in behavioral control processes. Self-awareness theories propose that when individuals' attention is directed inward, they evaluate and regulate their behavior according to internal standards (Wicklund, 1975; Buss, 1980; Carver & Scheier, 1982). However, situational factors such as anonymity and reduced identifiability may decrease self-awareness and lead to deindividuation (Diener, 1980). In such contexts, individuals high in public self-consciousness are more likely to conform to social norms due to heightened concern with social evaluation (Carver & Humphries, 1981; Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, 1982). Overall, research indicates that private self-consciousness is associated with greater sensitivity to internal states, whereas public self-consciousness is more strongly linked to social comparison and normative influence (Fenigstein, 1979; Falewicz & Bak, 2016).

The Relationship between Psychological Capital and Prosocial Behaviors

Psychological capital (PsyCap) refers to an individual's positive psychological state of development and consists of four core dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007). Individuals with high levels of psychological capital tend to possess greater confidence in their abilities, maintain positive expectations about the future, persevere toward goals, and recover effectively from adversity. These psychological resources not only contribute to personal well-being and performance but also influence how individuals interact with others. According to Positive Organizational Behavior theory, positive psychological resources encourage constructive attitudes and behaviors that extend beyond self-interest and contribute to the well-being of others (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Consequently, individuals with higher psychological capital may be more willing to engage in helping, sharing, and supportive behaviors, which are fundamental aspects of prosocial behavior.

Empirical evidence has increasingly supported the positive association between psychological capital and prosocial outcomes. Previous studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of psychological capital are more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors, helping behaviors, social responsibility, and cooperative tendencies (Avey et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2014). Psychological capital has also been found to promote empathy, interpersonal trust, and positive social interactions, all of which facilitate prosocial actions toward others (Luthans et al., 2007). Furthermore, psychologically resilient and optimistic individuals tend to perceive social interactions more positively and are more likely to invest their emotional and cognitive resources in supporting others. Based on both theoretical arguments and empirical findings, it is reasonable to expect that individuals with higher levels of psychological capital will exhibit stronger prosocial behavioral tendencies.

H1: Psychological capital is positively related to prosocial behaviors.

The Role of Self-Consciousness

Self-consciousness may serve as an important psychological mechanism that influences how positive psychological resources are translated into behavioral outcomes. Individuals with higher levels of self-consciousness tend to be more aware of their thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviors, as well as the social consequences of their actions (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Such heightened awareness may increase the likelihood that positive psychological resources, such as psychological capital, are expressed through prosocial behaviors. In this regard, self-conscious individuals may be more attentive to opportunities to help others and more motivated to behave in ways that are consistent with their personal values and social expectations.

Previous research supports this argument. For example, it was suggested that self-conscious individuals tend to demonstrate higher levels of self-evaluation and self-esteem, which may further encourage socially desirable and prosocial actions (e.g., Brockner, 1979a, 1979b; Carver & Scheier, 1982). It was seen that individuals high in private self-consciousness are more likely to focus on their internal feelings, moral standards, and altruistic values when making behavioral decisions. As a result, they may be more inclined to engage in helping behaviors and other forms of prosocial conduct. Similarly, Smith and Shaffer (1986) found that individuals with higher levels of private self-consciousness exhibited greater altruistic behavior than those with lower levels. The authors suggested that heightened awareness of one's internal feelings and values may facilitate prosocial actions toward others.

Moreover, De Hooge, Zeelenberg, and Breugelmans (2010) argued that self-conscious emotions such as guilt,

shame, and pride play an important role in social functioning by promoting norm-consistent and socially desirable behaviors. These emotions contribute to maintaining interpersonal relationships and encouraging behaviors that benefit others. Recently, Luan and Chen (2021) demonstrated that self-consciousness, particularly its private dimension, contributes to empathy and socially responsible behaviors. Their findings suggest that greater self-awareness may enhance individuals' sensitivity to others' needs and encourage prosocial actions.

Thus, it can be argued that self-consciousness enhances the behavioral expression of positive psychological resources. Specifically, individuals with higher levels of self-consciousness may be more likely to translate their psychological capital into prosocial behaviors than those with lower levels.

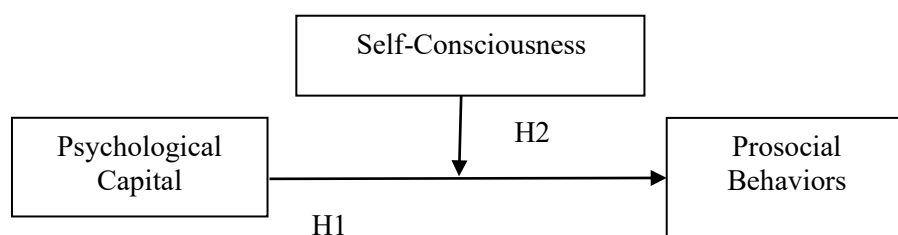
From a theoretical perspective, self-consciousness may function as a catalyst that facilitates the behavioral expression of psychological capital. Individuals with higher levels of self-consciousness are likely to be more aware of both their internal psychological resources and the interpersonal consequences of their actions. Therefore, they may be more likely to translate the positive psychological capacities associated with psychological capital into behaviors that benefit others. Consequently, the positive relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors is expected to be stronger among individuals with higher levels of self-consciousness.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Self-consciousness moderates the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors such that the positive relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors is stronger when self-consciousness is high.

To summarize the proposed hypotheses and research model, Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study



METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The study was conducted among Generation Z undergraduate students enrolled at Marmara University, one of the largest public universities in İstanbul, Türkiye. The final sample consisted of 250 students. Data were collected using a convenience sampling method through an online questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and completing the questionnaire took approximately 5–10 minutes.

Of the participants, 58.1% were female and 41.9% were male. The mean age of the students was 21 years ($SD = 0.75$), with ages ranging from 18 to 26 years. Regarding academic standing, 10% of the participants were first-year students, 30% were second-year students, 29% were third-year students, and 31% were fourth-year students. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Survey Instruments

To measure the study variables, three different scales were employed. All participants completed the scales, and each item was rated on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 6 ("strongly agree").

Measurement of Self-Consciousness: Self-consciousness was measured using the Self-Consciousness Scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975). The original scale consists of 23 items and assesses individuals' chronic tendency to focus attention on themselves. The scale includes three dimensions: Public Self-Consciousness, which reflects awareness of oneself as a social object and concern about how one is perceived by others; Private Self-Consciousness, which refers to the tendency to focus on internal thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences; and Social Anxiety, which represents discomfort and anxiety experienced in social situations.

In the present study, the Turkish adaptation of the scale was used, which was adapted by Rugancı (1995) for

Turkish university students. The adaptation study supported the reliability and validity of the Turkish version within the local context. The scale has been widely used in studies examining self-awareness, personality traits, social behavior, psychological adjustment, and well-being in both international and Turkish samples. Participants responded to the items using a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-consciousness across the relevant dimensions (Fenigstein et al., 1975; Rugancı, 1995). Being compatible with the previous results, in the present study, the Cronbach alpha value was found as .85.

Measurement of Psychological Capital: To measure psychological capital, the 24-item scale developed by Luthans et al. (2006), consisting of four components, was utilized. The reliability and validity of the scale were confirmed by Luthans et al. (2007) as well as by a wide range of studies conducted in different cultural contexts (e.g., Taştan, 2016). Previous research has reported that the scale demonstrates acceptable internal consistency reliability. The Turkish translation of the scale items was performed by Taştan (2016), and the scale was accessed through an open-access source. Example items from the scale include: “I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution,” “I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area,” and “I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before.” The validation study conducted by Taştan (2016) in the Turkish context indicated acceptable model fit indices based on confirmatory factor analysis. Furthermore, consistent with previous findings, Taştan, Aydın Küçük, and İşıaık (2020) reported a Cronbach’s alpha value of .98. In the present study, the reliability coefficient of the scale was .89.

Measurement of Prosocial Behavior: The Prosocial Behaviors Measure was originally developed by Carlo and Randall (2002) to assess prosocial behaviors among university students and initially consisted of 23 items. Subsequently, two additional items were incorporated to facilitate its use with adolescents, increasing the total number of items to 25 (Carlo, et. al., 2003). Designed to measure prosocial behaviors among early and middle adolescents, the scale employs a five-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 5 (describes me very well). Higher scores on each subscale indicate higher levels of the corresponding type of prosocial behavior. In the original validation study conducted with early and middle adolescents, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .86 for the Public Prosocial Behavior subscale, .82 to .86 for the Emotional Prosocial Behavior subscale, .59 to .80 for the Altruistic Prosocial Behavior subscale, .75 to .80 for the Compliant Prosocial Behavior subscale, .76 to .84 for the Anonymous Prosocial Behavior subscale, and .71 to .75 for the Dire Prosocial Behavior subscale. Furthermore, the two-week test–retest reliability coefficients for the subscales ranged between .54 and .82 (Carlo et al., 2003). The Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Kumru and colleagues (2004). In the adaptation study with middle adolescents, the internal consistency coefficients were reported as .52 for the Public Prosocial Behavior subscale (four items), .60 for the Emotional Prosocial Behavior subscale (four items), .55 for the Altruistic Prosocial Behavior subscale (five reverse-coded items), .54 for the Compliant Prosocial Behavior subscale (two items), and .68 for the Anonymous Prosocial Behavior subscale (five items). The internal consistency coefficient for the Dire Prosocial Behavior subscale (three items) was reported as .42 (Kumru et. al., 2004). The Turkish version of the scale was also employed in the master’s thesis entitled “The Role of Protective Factors and Certain Personal Variables in Predicting Prosocial Behaviors among Adolescents” conducted by Zeynep Aydın Sünbül (2012) at the Department of Educational Sciences, Institute of Social Sciences, Çukurova University.

Subsequently, the scale consists of six dimensions: Public Prosocial Behavior, Emotional Prosocial Behavior, Altruistic Prosocial Behavior, Compliant Prosocial Behavior, Anonymous Prosocial Behavior, and Dire (Emergency) Prosocial Behavior. This study reported a Cronbach’s alpha value of .82 for the overall scale.

The Study Findings

Factor and Reliability Analyses

Before testing the hypotheses, exploratory factor analyses were conducted to assess the validity of the measurement scales, and the reliability of the scales was evaluated. The results indicated that the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients demonstrated high internal consistency reliability, ranging between .82 and .89. In addition, the KMO values of the scales indicated an acceptable level of sampling adequacy. The factor analysis results are presented in Tables 1–3.

Table 1. Factor analysis findings for self-consciousness

Factors	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Private	54,367	54,367
Public	35,112	89,479
KMO=0,909 Chi-Square Bartlett's Test= 1695,429 P=0,000		

Table 2. Factor analysis findings for psychological capital scale

Factors	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Hope & Optimism	42,225	42,225
Self-Efficacy	25,970	68,195
Resilience	19,412	87,607
KMO=0,943 Chi-Square Bartlett's Test= 7942,327 P=0,000		

Table 3. Factor analysis findings for prosocial behaviors scale

Factors	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Emotional&Altruistic	31,177	32,177
Public & Compliant	20,604	54,781
Anonymous	17,774	74,555
Dire	10,258	79,813
KMO=0,894 Chi-Square Bartlett's Test= 7005,324 P=0,000		

Following the factor analysis results, the means and standard deviations of the study variables were computed and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and reliability values for research variables

	Mean (M)	Stand.Dev. (SD)	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Self-Consciousness	3,88	1,3576	,85
Private	4,48	1,6203	,84
Public	3,28	1,3350	,86
Psychological Capital	3,87	1,2479	,89
Hope&Optimism	3,94	1,3325	,90
Efficacy	5,02	1,1294	,88
Resilience	3,72	1,233	,88
Prosocial Behaviors	3,24	1,2512	,82
Emotional&Altruistic	3,66	1,3026	,85
Public & Compliant	2,92	1,2217	,81
Anonymous	3,30	1,3062	,79
Dire	3,09	1,0565	,80

The results showed that the mean of emotional and altruistic components of prosocial behaviors had the highest mean value ($M=3,66$, $SD=1,30$) whereas the public and compliant component has the lowest ($M=2,92$, $SD=1,22$). Similarly, among the psychological capital dimensions, mean value of the efficacy dimension ($M=5,02$, $SD=1,13$) was higher than the mean value of the hope and optimism ($M=3,94$, $SD=1,33$), and resilience dimensions ($M=3,72$, $SD=1,23$). Self-consciousness scale has the highest mean value compared to the other research variables ($M=3,88$, $SD=1,36$). Thus, it is inferred that the self-consciousness perceptions of the participants of this study was relatively moderate. In addition, the private self-consciousness dimension showed higher mean value ($M=4,48$, $SD=1,62$) when compared to public self-consciousness dimension ($M=3,28$, $SD=1,34$).

Correlations of the Study Variables

The correlational analysis indicated that the main study variables were significantly correlated with each other. As shown in Table 5, Pearson correlation coefficients among the study variables ranged from .395 to .584, indicating moderate relationships.

The results revealed that psychological capital had a moderate and positive significant relationship with prosocial behaviors ($r = .584$, $p < .01$), while self-consciousness was also positively and significantly related to prosocial behaviors ($r = .477$, $p < .01$). Similarly, psychological capital showed a moderate positive correlation with self-consciousness ($r = .395$, $p < .01$).

These findings suggest that higher levels of psychological capital are associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior among students. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) of the study is supported.

Table 5. Correlations among research variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Psychological Capital	1		
2. Prosocial Behavior	.584**	1	
3. Self-Consciousness	.395**	.477**	1

Regression Analysis of the Study

As stated in the study, the second hypothesis proposes that self-consciousness moderates the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors. To test this hypothesis, a moderated regression analysis was conducted.

Table 6. The impact of psychological capital on prosocial behaviors

Variable	b	Std. Error	t	P
(Constant)	1,024	,128	7,458	,000***
Psychological Capital	,582	,046	16,325	,000***
R²= ,585; F= 227,460; P<,001				
a.	*p<0,05; **p<0,01 *** p<,001			
b.	Dependent Variable: Prosocial Behaviors			
c.	Independent Variable: Psychological Capital			

As shown in Table 6, psychological capital significantly predicts prosocial behaviors and demonstrates a moderate effect on prosocial behaviors ($\beta = .582$, $R^2 = .585$, $p < .001$, $F = 227.460$). This result indicates that higher levels of psychological capital are associated with increased prosocial behavioral tendencies among students.

Moderator Analysis for the Role of Self-consciousness

Since the research model involves moderating effect of self-consciousness on the relation of psychological capital with prosocial behaviors, to test the hypothesis, a more common method of multiple regression analyses were performed. Additionally, variance inflation factor (VIF) did not indicate multicollinearity problem and other assumptions were met. For testing the third hypothesis of the study, multiple regression analyses were conducted. Yet, before conducting the analyses, independent variable (psychological capital) and the moderating variable (self-consciousness) were all standardized. To test the moderation effect, standardized independent variables were multiplied with standardized moderating variable to prepare the interaction variables.

Table 7 presents the results of the regression analyses conducted to test the main effects of psychological capital and self-consciousness, as well as the moderating effect of self-consciousness on prosocial behaviors. As shown in Step 1 of the analysis, psychological capital significantly and positively predicted prosocial behaviors ($\beta = .582$, $t = 16.257$, $p < .05$). In addition, self-consciousness was found to be significantly related to prosocial behaviors ($\beta = -.442$, $t = -9.490$, $p < .05$). In Step 2, the interaction term between psychological capital and self-consciousness was statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that self-consciousness moderates the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors.

Table 7: The moderating role of self-consciousness

Variables	β	t	p
Step 1			
Psychological Capital	.582	16.257	< .05
Self-Consciousness	-.442	-9.490	< .05
Step 2			
Psychological Capital $\times$ Self-Consciousness	significant	—	< .05

Model Fit: $R^2 = .585$

Dependent Variable: Prosocial Behaviors

The result (Table 7) further suggests that the strength of the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors varies depending on the level of self-consciousness. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors and examined the moderating role of self-consciousness in this relationship among Generation Z university students. The findings revealed that psychological capital is a significant and positive predictor of prosocial behaviors. This result suggests that individuals with higher levels of psychological capital -characterized by hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy- are more likely to engage in behaviors that benefit others. This finding is consistent with Positive Organizational Behavior theory, which emphasizes the role of positive psychological resources in promoting constructive and socially beneficial outcomes. This finding is consistent with Positive Organizational Behavior theory, which emphasizes the role of positive psychological resources in promoting constructive and socially beneficial outcomes (Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). It also supports previous empirical studies demonstrating that individuals with higher levels of psychological capital are more likely to engage in

positive interpersonal and organizational behaviors (Avey et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2014).

In addition, self-consciousness was found to be significantly related to prosocial behaviors. Interestingly, the results indicated a negative relationship between self-consciousness and prosocial behaviors. This may suggest that heightened self-awareness, particularly when associated with social evaluation concerns, could sometimes reduce spontaneous helping behaviors by increasing self-focus or social sensitivity. Although previous studies have generally suggested a positive association between self-consciousness and prosocial tendencies, particularly through empathy, altruistic values, and socially responsible behaviors (Smith & Shaffer, 1986; Luan & Chen, 2021), the present findings revealed a negative direct relationship. One possible explanation is that heightened self-awareness, especially when accompanied by concerns regarding social evaluation and social anxiety, may inhibit spontaneous helping behaviors. This interpretation is partially consistent with the literature emphasizing the complex role of self-conscious emotions and social functioning (de Hooze et al., 2010).

More importantly, the results confirmed that self-consciousness moderates the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial behaviors. Specifically, the positive effect of psychological capital on prosocial behaviors becomes stronger when self-consciousness is high. This finding indicates that self-consciousness functions as an amplifying psychological mechanism, enhancing the behavioral expression of positive psychological resources. In other words, individuals who are more aware of their internal states and social surroundings are more likely to translate their psychological capital into prosocial actions. This finding is consistent with self-regulation and self-awareness theories suggesting that individuals who are more attentive to their internal states and behavioral standards are more likely to regulate their actions in accordance with personal values and social expectations (Buss, 1980; Carver & Scheier, 1981; Fenigstein et al., 1975). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that higher levels of self-consciousness are associated with altruistic tendencies, empathy, and socially responsible behaviors (Smith & Shaffer, 1986; Luan & Chen, 2021).

To conclude, this study contributes to the literature by integrating psychological capital and self-consciousness within a unified framework to explain prosocial behaviors among Generation Z university students. The findings highlight that psychological capital is an important predictor of prosocial behaviors and that this relationship is strengthened by self-consciousness. By demonstrating the moderating role of self-consciousness, the study extends previous research on psychological capital and contributes to the growing literature on the psychological mechanisms underlying prosocial behavior among Generation Z individuals.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that universities and educational institutions should focus on developing students' psychological capital in order to promote prosocial and socially responsible behaviors. Training programs aimed at enhancing hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy may contribute to more supportive and cooperative student environments.

However, the study has several limitations. First, the data were collected from a single public university in Türkiye, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal inferences. Therefore, future research may employ longitudinal designs to better examine causal relationships. In addition, future studies may replicate the proposed model using more diverse samples from different universities, regions, and cultural contexts.

Overall, the study provides valuable insights into how psychological resources and self-awareness jointly shape prosocial behavior among young adults, particularly within the context of Generation Z.

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