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### ADOLESCENCE ATTITUDES ON THE ROLES OF LOCAL CULTURE IN PROMOTING PROSOCIAL MORAL REASONING IN AN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

*Sulaiman Samad<sup>1</sup>, Husain Syam<sup>2</sup>, Syukur Saud<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Email: [sulaimansamad@unm.ac.id](mailto:sulaimansamad@unm.ac.id), [husainsyam@unm.ac.id](mailto:husainsyam@unm.ac.id), [syukursaud@unm.ac.id](mailto:syukursaud@unm.ac.id)

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#### ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore students' attitudes on the roles of local cultures in promoting prosocial moral reasoning in Indonesian contexts. This study involved 200 students from Makassar who are Buginese ethnic and still upholds their cultural integrity. The recruitment of the samples used multistage cluster sampling. The two-stage cluster sampling was used to determine the sample. The data were gathered using two types of questionnaires. Parametric SPSS assisted analysis is used to analyze the data. The results showed that the adolescent participants had developed a positive attitude towards local cultural values and their prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence was categorized high (reciprocal and altruistic). Further, the sets of moral value in early adolescents are still strong and become the guidance for participants living in the modern-day. Besides, the adolescents' attitudes on local cultural values have contributed to their prosocial moral reasoning positively, suggesting that these attitudes were able to mediate prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. This research recommends that the findings of this research can be the basis for further investigation of the roles of parents, school staff, teachers, school counselors in promoting prosocial moral attitudes.

#### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents learn to behave from their interactions with the parents (Brooks, 2011; Luke & Banerjee, 2013). In line with this, Malonda et al., (2019) points out that parenting style is a key predictor of the kind of human that is going to be raised. This confirms the fact that parenting and their environment contribute significantly to a child's behavior. Within a prosocial behavioral development context, Ngai et al., (2018) discovered that parenting had a positive effect on a child's prosocial behavior. Also, cultural transmission plays a vital role in influencing social behaviors, particularly in Indonesia with its many diverse

ethnic communities. Cultural transmission is the process by which information is passed from individual to individual via social learning mechanisms such as imitation, teaching, or language (Mesoudi & Whiten, 2008). Therefore, it can be formulated that child prosocial behaviors may depend on the effort of each individual to ingrain prosocial values.

On another hand, today globalization also plays a role in shaping adolescents' prosocial values. Although globalization is often mistaken as an exclusively economic phenomenon, it is evident that "humans on all frontiers are being forced either to shift their ideational systems radically and quickly or to live in a thought-world that no longer fits the way their world is" (Keesing & Keesing 1971, p. 343). Modern technology nowadays provides the means to travel easily. With the influence of people around the globe, new concepts, cultures, views, and ideologies would influence many nations and communities. Through the internet and school, the adolescents would experience diverse views of the people around the globe. In many ways, travelers can be considered to be part of a universal intensification of human interaction and cooperation (Vesajoki, 2002). Therefore, there is a certain chance of adolescents' cultural values experience *cultural erosion* where a culture loses many of its core elements. Also, the globalization of the world economy and the development of transnational markets have caused a worldwide generation of modern products leading to the threat to local cultures and the extinction of cultural and ethnic diversity which seems inevitable (Beck, 2000).

Each family holds onto different cultural values and behaviors of races, ethnicities, and social and religious groups (Brooks, 2011). Cultural transmission and the practice of childcare vary significantly with every family especially in South Sulawesi with its diverse culture. As a result, they have unique characteristics in expressing attitudes, values, and hopes in fulfilling the needs of the child. In general, some families are loaded with rich prosocial values, while others have been facing a lack of values to benefit society as a whole. The society members in South Sulawesi, especially the Buginese people, have developed a set of values as the foundation to raise a child, which is popularly known as *Siri'*. The values contained in *Siri'*, as is explained by Moeng (1989) are *pajjama* (hard work and effort); *lempu'* (honesty and responsibility); *getteng* (integrity); and *sipakatau* (care and respect).

Prosocial behaviors are still found on many different occasions. Individuals will assist others if there are accidents, natural disasters, etc. Even then, there is only a small percentage of people who are willing to help. This suggests that not all individuals are capable of performing prosocial behavior even though faced with the same situation. This also indicates that the behavior of helping others is not only affected by situational factors but also influenced by internal factors that come from within the helper. Thus, every individual has their considerations or reasoning dealing with the act of helping, giving, or sharing with others in different circumstances.

Another researcher extends the description of prosocial moral reasoning. Prosocial moral reasoning discussed in this study refers to the decision made by an individual in assisting or care towards others, either in the form of altruistic

tendencies (self-reward as self-reinforcement structure, such as the feelings of satisfaction, pride, or pleasure as a consequence of doing certain behaviors) or retribute tendencies (to repay someone's favor) that are based on morals (Bar-Tal, 1976).

Recent studies indicate that the roles of the surrounding community and educational institutions have contributed to the development of prosocial behaviors among adolescence (Gulseven & Carlo, 2021). In addition, Martí-Vilar, Escrig-Espuig, & Merino-Soto (2021) conducted a systematic review of moral reasoning measures. These measures can be used to evaluate prosocial moral reasoning in several different contexts and have valuable implications for the use of prosocial moral reasoning in educational contexts.

Local cultural values are very much following prosocial behaviors. According to Abdullah (1985), local cultural values not only emphasize human responsibility to associate with others but also provide guidance for people to comply with moral standards. It contains honesty, loyalty, modesty among human beings, knowledge, trust, and feelings. The possession of local cultural values can enhance the prosocial moral attitudes of adolescents. The acquisition of local values can potentially lead to positive behaviors in their everyday lives. While many have studied prosocial moral reasoning and cultural inheritance (Mackintosh, 1983), few have touched the surface of how cultural transmission in a globalized era affects adolescents' perception towards their own set own inherited cultural values and whether these sets of values have experienced cultural erosion. A number of researchers recommend to conduct further study on the prosocial reasoning in relation to local cultures (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018). Therefore, this study aimed to examine adolescent attitudes towards local cultural values and their contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. The understanding of the roles of local culture in promoting prosocial moral attitudes can improve the knowledge of developmental psychology. As Luengo Kanacri et al., (2014) suggest a decline in adolescent prosocial behaviors from the age of 13 to 17, although the behaviors can gradually increase until someone reaches the age of 21.

### ***Local Cultures***

The local culture in this study is *Siri'* which has four key elements: *Pajjama*, *lempu'*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau* (Abdullah, 1985). These four local cultures are a set of separable yet integrated values in *Siri'*. *Sipakatau* is a value that reflects the nature of caring and respect, and good courage for fellow human beings. This proves that *Siri'* cultural values manifested in being well mannered to others. Care and respect can only exist with support from other quality values. A person will not be able to do good to others if s/he refuses to exert all his/her abilities in doing something, has weak self-confidence, is not willing to accept simultaneously affect prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence, although it seems that there are specific values that have a higher tendency compared to the others.

The *sipakatau* value underlies the caring and respectful behaviors towards others that lead to friendship, togetherness, sharing. This value is clearly and explicitly related to pro-sociality since prosocial behaviors contain those

elements. The empirical test conducted in this study shows that among other *Siri'* cultural values, *sipakatau* has the highest contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence.

*Pajjama* refers to high morale in carrying out an activity. Someone who behaves prosocial towards others requires the elements contained in *pajjama*. The *pajjama* contains seriousness, perseverance, tenacity, crafts, and a sense of optimism in helping others. It also contains the spirit of hard work to help other people.

*Lempu'* is a moral value that guides behaving. Individuals that behave based on *lempu'* are reliable, ready to take a risk, disciplined, and useful for others. *Lempu'* is oriented to the principle that every course of action that is taken should be right both for the doer and for the others (Punagi, 1985). That is why this value has the highest contribution to prosocial moral reasoning.

*Getteng* is built on the belief that the right decision should be based on logical considerations that are inseparable from the decision itself. Inside *getteng*, there are elements of assertiveness, courage, and consistency. Therefore, it can be assumed that the inculcation of *Siri's* cultural values in early adolescence will contribute significantly to the adolescents' prosocial moral reasoning. As is explained by Karaeng ri Juntana (Rahim, 1985), *getteng*, from a negative perspective, refers to an act of kindness that has not been done seriously or is merely a plan. This pessimistic interpretation of *getteng* fails to reflect a moral virtue, while prosocial behaviors are strongly associated with empathy and sympathy.

Therefore, *Siri'* cultural values emphasize not only human responsibility for others but also guide people to comply with moral standards. These local values may provide a significant contribution to prosocial moral reasoning attitudes.

Thus, the motivation of this study is to describe adolescent attitudes on the roles of local culture in promoting prosocial moral reasoning in the Indonesian context, since not many studies have uncovered this issue both nationally and internationally.

## METHODS

### *Research Design and Question*

This study was designed as ex post facto research that aimed to test a structural model of early adolescents' attitudes towards local cultural values in promoting prosocial moral reasoning in the globalized era. The key questions addressed in this research are: to what extent do the attitudes of local cultures contribute to the early adolescents' prosocial moral reasoning? The research scheme is described in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** The Structural Model of The Research Variables

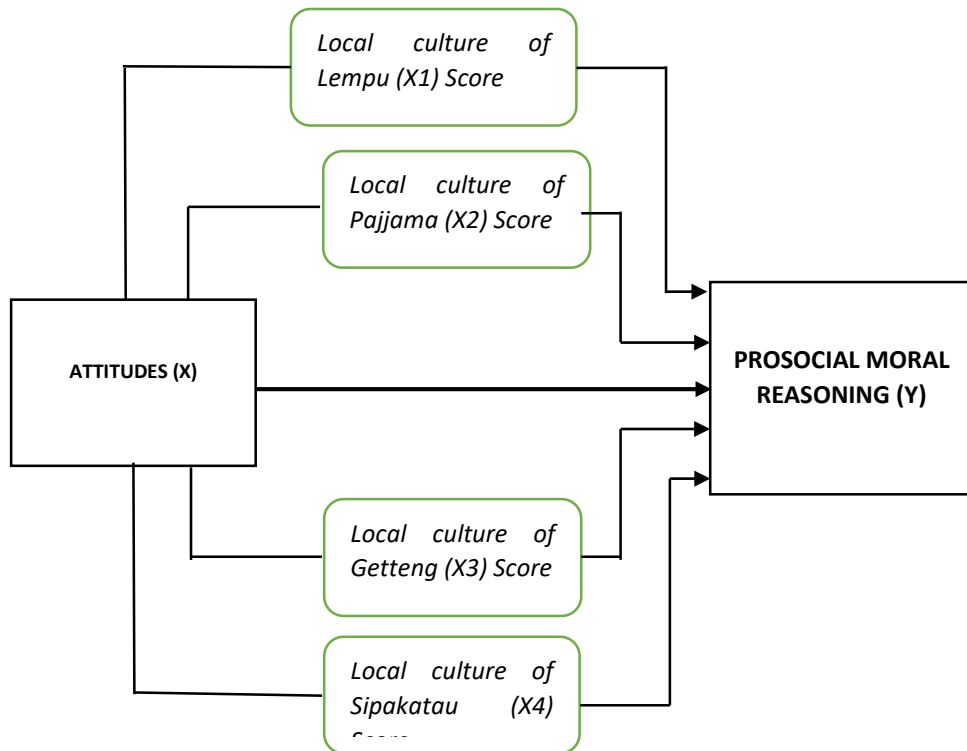


Figure 1 indicates that X is the interdependent variable of this research. The X1, X2, X3, and X4 are control variables. Y is the independent variable of this research.

**Research Participants and Sampling**

This study involved 200 Buginese students (95 boys and 105 girls) who attended several Public Junior High Schools in Makassar. The participants were selected based on the following characteristics: (1) they were born to Buginese ethnic parents (both mother and father are Buginese); (2) they were raised within the Buginese social culture environment and had experienced the cultural transmission of *Siri'*. The students were sampled from 3781 students, which consisted of 1807 boys and 1974 girls. The sampling procedures were explained as follows: *First*, iterative statistics were used to determine the minimum sample size (n) by calculating the coefficient value of rho correlation (ρ) between variables with low correlation (0.20 - 0.40), determining the significance level (α) and the desired power of the test (1-β), and doing the iteration using the Cohen’s formula (Al-Rasid, 1994):

$$Up = 1/2Ln \frac{(1+\rho)}{(1-\rho)} + \frac{\rho}{2(n-1)}$$

$$n = \frac{(z1-\alpha+z1-\beta)^2}{(Up)^2} + 3 \quad \text{Where:}$$

n = minimum sample size

z1 - α = Constant from the normal distribution table;

z1 - β = Constant from the normal distribution table.

$$Up = 1/2Ln \frac{(1+\rho)}{(1-\rho)}$$

*Second*, after the number of samples had been determined (200 participants), the two-stage cluster sampling technique was performed to select the sample. The primary sampling unit or cluster that was selected at the first stage was the selected Public Junior High Schools in Makassar, while the secondary sampling unit, which served as the observation unit, was selected at the second stage. Since the cluster was homogeneous, simple random sampling was employed. Three schools were selected in the first stage. In the second stage, the participants were randomly selected from the schools handpicked at the first stage. The samples were nominated from the sampling frame that had been organized by considering the selection categories (proportional).

### ***Research Instruments***

The data of the study were gathered using two questionnaires that aimed to examine the adolescent participants' attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values (*pajjama*, *lemphu*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau*) and scenarios of prosocial situations. The research instrument has been tested to ensure validity and reliability of the instruments. The former was developed on a Likert scale where the respondents were asked to choose one of the five alternative answers based on trust, feelings, and the tendency to behave. This questionnaire obtained a reliability score of 0.6063. The second questionnaire was constructed by referring to the six levels of prosocial moral reasoning consisting of compliance and concrete defined reinforcement, compliance, internal initiative, normative behavior, generalized reciprocity, and altruistic behavior. Each of the items in the second questionnaire was equipped with a scenario describing a dilemmatic moral situation. The respondents were asked to picture themselves as the main character in the scenario. The respondents were expected to provide answers based on several considerations or reasons that were arranged following the six levels of prosocial moral reasoning presented earlier. The prosocial moral situations were investigated within various settings of interactions experienced by the participants daily. The questionnaire moved between 1-6, according to the six levels of prosocial moral reasoning. The reliability score of this questionnaire was 0.6343.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis was performed using inferential and descriptive statistics. The inferential statistics were used to test the research hypothesis through SPSS assisted path analysis, whereas the descriptive statistics were used to obtain a general overview of the research variables.

### ***Findings and Discussion***

The early adolescents' attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values were in the "high" category. This finding suggests that there is a tendency in the adolescent participants to perform a course of action based on *pajjama* (to work hard), *lemphu* (to be honest and responsible); *getteng* (to have integrity and compliance with norms); and *sipakatau* (to care, love, and respect others). The

tendency of the participants to behave in such a way is visualized in detail in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Description of Early Adolescents’ Attitudes Towards *Siri’* Cultural Values

<i>Siri’</i> cultural values	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
<i>Pajjama</i>	01- 22	1	0.5%	Low
	23 - 44	24	12%	Medium
	45 - 65	175	87.5%	High
	<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>	-
<i>Lempu’</i>	01 - 15	-	-	Low
	16 – 30	37	18.5%	Medium
	31 - 45	163	81.5%	High
	<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>	-
<i>Getteng</i>	01 - 10	-	-	Low
	11 – 20	69	34.5%	Medium
	21 - 30	131	65.5%	High
	<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>	-
<i>Sipakatau</i>	01 - 17	-	-	Low
	18 – 34	148	74%	Medium
	35 - 50	52	26%	High
	<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>	-

**Note:** Low Means a Low Understanding of Local Cultural Values, Medium Means Partially Understanding of Local Cultural Values and High Relates the High Mastery of Understanding of Local Cultural Values.

Findings in Table 1 indicate that the early adolescent participants can perform a course of action in line with *Siri’s* cultural values when interacting with society. The trust built upon *Siri’* cultural values and the pleasure found in performing actions based on the values show that inside the adolescents lies a strong foundation to shape such positive attitudes towards the values. The high percentage of perception portrays the solid understanding of early adolescents (Makassar-Buginese) on *Siri’* cultural values and shows *Siri’* cultural values as one of their guidance in promoting prosocial moral reasoning. Similarly, to promote prosocial moral reasoning, Poelinggomang (1986) stated that Makassar-Buginese people respect the *Siri* local cultural values .’ It implies that *Siri’* serves as guidance for the Makassar-Buginese early adolescents to thrive in every aspect of life and prosocial moral activities.

The early adolescents’ moral reasoning in conducting prosocial behaviors is categorized as medium and high. The detailed information related to this finding is described in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The Description of Early Adolescents’ Moral Reasoning

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
01 - 10	-	-	Low
11 - 20	52	26%	Medium
21 - 30	148	74%	High
<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>	-

Table 2 indicates that two categories of prosocial attitudes of early adolescents in this study: medium and high. It indicates that the majority of the participants in this study have high prosocial attitudes and the only a small number of them have medium or partially prosocial attitudes.

Information presented in Table 2 indicates that early adolescents consider reciprocity and altruism before deciding to help or share with others. Reciprocal considerations are made by individuals because they believe that someday if they need help, there will be somebody offering them a favor. On the other hand, altruistic motives lead to voluntary actions in giving help or sharing with others. Also, the results of the statistical analysis show that early adolescents’ attitudes towards *Siri’* cultural values have a significant contribution to their prosocial moral reasoning. The empirical proof that supports this hypothesis is visualized in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The Results of The Path Analysis on The Contribution of The Early Adolescents’ Attitudes Towards *Siri’* On Their Prosocial Moral Reasoning

Variable	F <sub>hit</sub>	F <sub>05</sub>	T <sub>hit</sub>	T <sub>hit</sub>	Interpretation
X1 → Y	-	-	3,499	1,960	significant
X2 → Y	-	-	4,721	1,960	significant
X3 → Y	-	-	2,087	1,960	significant
X4 → Y	-	-	2,308	1,960	significant
X <sub>tot</sub> → Y	15,263	2,370	-	-	significant

Note: → : effect

Table 3 indicates that early adolescents’ attitudes on *Siri’s* prosocial moral reasoning in this study. It indicates that there is a strong indication of prosocial attitudes of adolescents have been influenced by *Siri’s* local cultural values.

Table 3 suggests that the early adolescents’ attitudes towards *Siri’* cultural values (X) have a significant contribution to their prosocial moral reasoning (Y) ( $F_{\text{calculated}} = 15.263 > F_{\text{table}} = 2.370$ ). Therefore, the conceptual hypothesis “attitudes towards *Siri’* cultural values in the globalized era simultaneously have a significant contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence” is accepted. In addition, the results of the path analysis revealed that the scores of *pajjama* ( $t_{\text{calculated}} = 3.499$ ), *lempu’* ( $t_{\text{calculated}} = 4.721$ ), *getteng* ( $t_{\text{calculated}} = 2.087$ ), *sipakatau* ( $t_{\text{calculated}} = 2.308$ ) are more significant than  $t_{\text{table}} = 1.960$ . The path analysis indicated that the majority of respondents in this study retain high *Siri’*

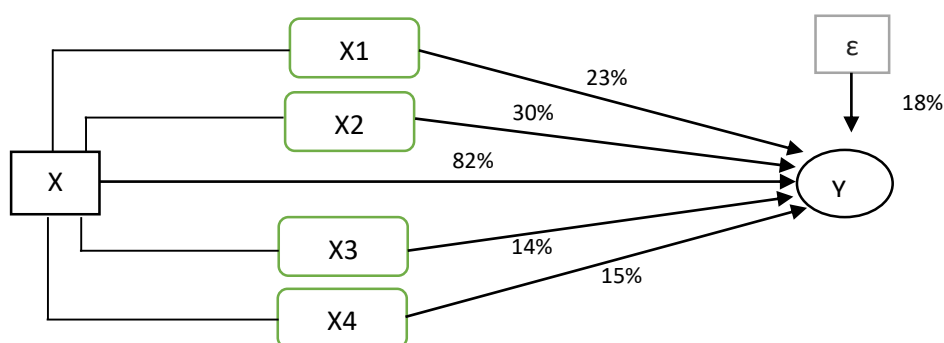


local cultural values of *lempu* and *pajama*, compared to the *getteng* and *sipakatau*.

Concerning that, *pajama*, *lempu*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau* simultaneously and partially have a significant contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. Therefore, attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values, *pajama*, *lempu*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau* have a significant contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. This empirical evidence indicates that the “adolescents’ attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values simultaneously have a significant contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence.

The contribution of the attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values (*pajama*, *lempu*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau*) to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence is portrayed in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** The Contribution of Attitudes Towards *Siri*' Cultural Values to Prosocial Moral



**Note :** Figure 2 Indicates That X (Attitudes) Is The Interdependent Variable Of This Research. The X1 (*Pajama*), X2 (*Lempu*'), X3 (*Getteng*) And X4 (*Sipakatau*) Are Control Variables. Y (*Prosocial Moral Reasoning*) Is the Independent Variable of This Research.

Figure 2 implies that the adolescent participants’ attitudes towards *Siri*' cultural values contribute 82% to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. The adolescents’ attitude towards *pajama*, *lempu*, *getteng*, and *sipakatau* contribute 23%, 30%, 14%, and 15% to their prosocial moral reasoning, respectively, while the epsilon variable contributes 18% to the adolescents’ prosocial reasoning. The early adolescents’ attitude towards *lempu* has the highest contribution to their prosocial moral reasoning, followed by *pajama*, *sipakatau*, and *getteng*.

From the findings, it shows that adolescent attitudes towards local cultural values show a positive contribution to the development of prosocial moral reasoning. The local cultural values can become supporting factors to realize prosocial moral reasoning components in their lives (Malonda et al., 2019). There is a strong possibility that adolescence in this study imitate their surrounding communities in applying prosocial moral reasoning (Mesoudi &Whiten, 2008) and through parenting (Brooks, 2011). The realization of the prosocial moral reasoning can be also influenced by adolescence experiences in

their everyday life (Luke & Banerjee, 2013).

Prosocial behavior in this study is recognized as voluntary behavior that benefits others, such as helping, donating, or sharing (Ferschmann et al., 2019; Malonda et al., 2019). Individuals with prosocial behaviors are identified as reliable and cooperative people (Jirsaraie et al., 2019); they are liked and accepted by the community (Wang et al., 2019). Prosocial behavior is a social “adhesive” that keeps people living in harmony, peace, and productivity (Lay & Hoppmann, 2015; Luengo Kanacri et al., 2014; Penner. et al., 2005).

## CONCLUSION

The early adolescents’ attitudes towards *Siri’* cultural values were significant suggesting that the early adolescents still hold on tight to *Siri’* cultural values as one of their guidance in life. Nevertheless, today’s *Siri’* proves to be mediate for prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence, which can be categorized as “high”. It means that early adolescents have reciprocal or altruistic considerations before deciding to help or sharing with others. It is indicated that one reason why some cultures retain more of their distinct cultural forms over more extended periods than others is that they continue to be relevant in the practical and/or spiritual life and the interaction between the individual and the group and their physical environment. Since the cultural transmission of *Siri’* is still being practiced (some are enforced) by the Buginese community, it reduces the chance of cultural erosion within the globalized era. Thus, the findings show that *Siri’* cultural values have a positive contribution to prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence. This suggests that attitudes towards *Siri’* cultural values can mediate prosocial moral reasoning in early adolescence.

It is suggested for further investigation on the roles of parents, teachers, peers, siblings, community or faith leaders that play a crucial role as the socialization agents of *Siri’* cultural values in the family. Also, it is essential to research the impact of globalization on prosocial values in students in many different settings and activities such as group work, classroom discussion, and opinion sharing activities both inside schools and in community contexts. Therefore, further investigations on those issues can develop an overarching understanding of prosocial moral reasoning in different settings.

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