

Positive Empathy and Prosocial Behavior —Possible Connection Mechanism

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Abstract

Empathy refers to the psychological process in which individuals perceive and imagine other people's feelings and partially share and experience other people's feelings. It is the foundation of our emotional and social life. At present, there is a large amount of evidence that empathy is an activator of prosocial behavior. However, the influence of empathy on prosocial behavior is mostly studied in combination with negative emotional empathy, and there is little research on positive emotional empathy, especially the relationship between positive empathy and displayed prosocial behavior has not been deeply discussed. The emotional maintenance hypothesis holds that people in a positive emotional state will look at things in a positive way and increase their positive cognition, making them more likely to help others and better perceive potential help opportunities, because doing so can prolong their good mood state. However, empathy for other people's positive emotions is also affected by social comparison, which leads to jealousy of other people's psychology; thus it is difficult to feel happy for the positive benefits of others, that is, social comparison plays an important role in the relationship between positive empathy and pro-social behavior. This paper reviews and summarizes the research evidence on positive empathy and prosocial behavior, and expounds the relationship between positive empathy and the promotion and maintenance of prosocial behavior, so as to illustrate that the social comparison level and the motivation to maintain positive emotion are a possible mechanism to connect positive empathy and prosocial behavior.

Keywords

Positive Empathy, Pro-Social Behavior, Positive Emotions, Social Comparison

积极共情与亲社会行为 ——可能的连接机制

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摘要

共情是指个体感知和想象他人情感,并部分分享体验他人感受的心理过程,是我们情感和社交生活的基础。目前已有大量证据表明共情是亲社会行为的促动剂,然而共情对亲社会行为的影响大多都是结合消极情绪共情来进行研究的,对积极情绪的共情研究较少,尤其是积极共情与表现出的亲社会行为之间的联系尚未得到深入探讨。情绪维持假说认为处于积极情绪状态的人会以积极的方式看待事物,并增加积极的认知,使得他们更可能去帮助别人,也能更好地感知潜在的帮助机会,因为这样做能延长自己的好心情状态。然而,对他人积极情绪的共情同时也会受到社会比较的影响,导致嫉妒他人的心理,从而很难对他人的积极获益而感到高兴,即社会比较这一因素在积极共情与亲社会行为的关系中起着重要的作用。本文回顾和总结了关于积极共情与亲社会行为的研究证据,阐述了积极共情对亲社会行为的促动和维持的联系,以说明社会比较水平与维持积极情绪的动机是连接积极共情与亲社会行为的一种可能的机制。

关键词

积极共情, 亲社会行为, 积极情绪, 社会比较

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1. 引言

共情在传统研究上多与消极情绪联系在一起,如对于痛苦、悲伤等的共情与亲社会行为之间的关系(Brehm, Powell, & Coke, 1984; Batson, Eklund, Chermok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007),认为对他人消极情绪的共情是促发亲社会行为的重要影响因素,而对积极共情的关注却少得多(Sallquist, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Eggum, & Gaertner, 2009)。随着积极心理学的发展,越来越多的研究者将目光转向了对积极情绪的共情研究。Light等人(2009)提出了共情愉悦一词,指出由于他人的积极情绪所引发的替代性愉悦;Sallquist等人(2009)提出了积极共情的概念,将积极共情界定为对他人所处的积极情境或者情绪的认知理解所产生的积极情绪,Morelli等人(2015)将积极共情视为对他人积极情绪的理解和分享。研究发现积极共情与消极共情虽然在神经基础上存在很大的重叠(岳童, 2016; 岳童, 黄希庭, 2016; Mischkowski, Crocker, & Way, 2016),但是在认知加工和社会行为上表现出与消极共情不同的独特特点(Conoley et al., 2015; Andreychik & Lewis, 2017)。正如Rameson和Lieberman(2009)所言,没有正当的理由来解释为什么共情他人的积极情绪状态比共情消极情绪对平稳和充实的社会关系更不重要,但对于积极共情和亲社会行为之间的联系却很少受到重视。

2. 积极共情与亲社会行为的关系

Batson和Toi(1982)的研究对积极共情引发亲社会行为提供了实证依据,在实验中,获得受助者积极反馈的被试相较于未获得积极反馈的被试有更高的提供帮助的意愿,这背后的原因可能是由于被试认为获得积极反馈意味着更高的互惠可能性或者被试认为帮助受助者是有意义的。为了更进一步探讨原因,Batson在随后的研究中没有提供帮助的机会,而是仅仅只让参与被试了解受助者的状况,并询问他们是否愿意跟进进展,其中受助者状况好转的几率分别为20%和80%。结果发现人们更愿意跟踪好转概率为80%的受助者的情况。由于在此研究中被试并没有获得直接帮助的机会,因此互惠可能性以及自我提升

动机的影响可以得到排除,即积极共情能促使人们继续跟进受助者状况。Morelli 等人(2015)采用积极共情量表测量了被试的积极共情水平,结果发现积极共情与亲社会行为二者存在正向相关,积极共情水平高的人更愿意帮助有需要的人。Andreychik 和 Migliaccio (2015)向被试提供了一些日常生活中的亲社会行为场景,例如为他人指路、为服务员留下慷慨的小费、帮忙按电梯等,结果发现被试面对他人积极事件的所产生的替代性积极情绪水平越高,即积极共情水平越高,越有可能产生日常亲社会行为。Andreychik 和 Lewis (2017)指出传统研究中对处于消极场景下个体的共情激发了帮助他人减少消极情绪和避免不愉快后果的特定目标,而积极共情则激发了帮助他人增加积极情绪和接近成长与发展的目标。这表明,一旦他人的痛苦减轻并回到某种功能基线,共情他人负面情绪所带来的帮助可能会停止,但共情他人正面情绪的的帮助可能会继续下去,因为积极共情不仅限于“简单地”让他人恢复功能,而是帮助他们成长、发展和繁荣。换句话说,对消极情绪的共情激发帮助他人生存的动机,而积极共情则激发帮助他人茁壮成长的动机(Elliott et al., 2006)。然而不难发现研究虽已发现积极共情与亲社会行为之间的关系,但对于两者之间产生的机制的探讨却缺乏应有重视。

3. 积极情绪对亲社会行为的影响

积极共情是由于他人的积极经历所引发的替代性积极情绪状态。积极情绪状态有助于提醒行动者积极的体验并鼓励将来采取类似行为。由此可能说明积极情绪促进亲社会行为,同时亲社会行为也将促进积极情绪,而两者之间的正向循环可能是由情绪维持动机激发的。

3.1. 积极情绪促发亲社会行为

积极情绪状态会激发亲社会行为这一发现得到了许多实验的验证, Rosenhan 等人(1981)发现经历积极情绪的成年人比没有经历积极情绪的人会更提供更多帮助。报告更多幸福感的成人花费更多时间做志愿者(Thoits & Hewitt, 2001),在更大的群体中,这种关系依然存在,例如幸福感的地理差异与诸如器官捐献等亲社会行为存在正相关(Brethel-Haurwitz & Marsh, 2014)。尽管很少有调查认为积极情绪是否会促进儿童亲社会行为,但现有实验证据也与成人研究一致。Moore 等人(1973)发现当7岁和8岁的孩子被分配去思考让他们快乐的事情,他们捐赠给另一个孩子的钱比被分配去思考让他们感到悲伤或中立的事情的孩子多。越来越多的证据表明积极情绪和亲社会行为之间具有循环和自我强化,不仅积极情绪会促进亲社会行为,同样亲社会行为也能增加积极情绪。在为期6周的研究中,被指派为其他人做出善意行为的成年人在研究结束后比控制组的人更加快乐(Nelson, Layous, Cole, & Lyubomirsky, 2016);同样,花费金钱进行捐赠使得参与者获得更高的积极情绪水平(Aknin et al., 2013; Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2014)。当捐赠者与受益人没有直接接触时,同样可以检测到捐赠产生的积极情绪(Martela & Ryan, 2016)。亲社会行为产生积极情绪的现象在幼儿身上同样得到了体现,当儿童发现他们的观察目标得到了所需要的帮助时会感到满意(Hepach, Vaish, Grossmann, & Tomasello, 2016; Hepach, Haberl, Lambert, & Tomasello, 2017),儿童不仅能意识到给予会使他们快乐,而且还会利用这种信息来指导他们的行为(Paulus & Moore, 2017)。

也有研究呈现出了不同的结果,Forest 等人(1979)研究发现,当帮助任务本身令人愉快时,那些感觉愉快的人表现出更多的帮助行为,这与先前研究一致,但是当帮助任务令人厌恶时,处于积极情绪的被试比处于中性情绪和消极情绪的被试帮助行为更少。研究者对此的解释是积极情绪可以促进亲社会行为,但只有当亲社会行为能够延长情绪状态时才会成立,愉快的帮助任务可以延长积极情绪状态,而不愉快的任务则会破坏它。

3.2. 情绪维持维系亲社会行为

情绪维持假说是一个非常简单且得到广泛支持的理论,解释了为什么积极的情绪会导致亲社会行

为的增加,研究为人们亲社会行为背后的情绪维持动机提供了证据。在 Mischel 的一项研究中,获得成功任务成功反馈的参与者比失败或控制组的参与者花更多的时间回顾关于自己的积极信息,在成功条件下,参与者因成功而经历了积极情绪,并被激励延长这种情绪状态(Mischel, Ebbesen, & Zeiss, 1973)。由此他们进一步提出,当经历积极的情感状态时,人们不仅倾向于延长这种情感状态,而且也有动力避免可能驱散他们积极影响的负面信息或行为,即情绪维持动机假说。Hirt 等人(2008)提出,人们不仅保护他们的积极情绪,而且他们还试图延长或增强这种情绪,如果必要的话,甚至通过调整任务来减少对情绪的威胁。例如,Isen 等人(1988)发现,在有损失风险的情况下,处于积极情绪的个体比处于中性情绪的个体表现出更消极的主观效应。这表明,处于积极情绪状态的人对损失的评估比处于中性情绪状态的人更消极,对损失更敏感。Nygren 等人同样有类似的发现,当可能发生损失时,经历积极情绪的人比中立控制者更不愿赌博,即使获胜的概率对其是有利时,也能观察到这种行为(Nygren, Isen, Taylor, & Dulin, 1996)。Handley 和 Lassiter (2002)通过阅读文章的方法来操纵被试的情绪,结果发现中性情绪参与者不管刺激的价态如何,获得和处理信息的程度相同,而积极情绪参与者回忆积极视频内容的信息量显著高于中性视频。

一旦情绪是积极的,人们通过参与最有可能产生积极反应的行为来延长这种情绪。因此,经历积极情绪的人可能会被激励表现出某些行为,因为他们可能期望这些行为将维持他们积极情绪。帮助他人可以是这样的行为之一,因为帮助他人有助于改善一个人的情绪(Dulin & Hill, 2003)。研究中采用电子日记跟踪了 322 名被试,结果发现更高的日常生活中的积极情绪伴随着更高的亲社会行为(Bos et al., 2016)。Isen 和 Simmonds (1978)发现当要求被试阅读积极情绪陈述时,经历积极情绪的受试者比经历中性情绪的受试者在两个亲社会指标上都呈现出更高的水平。相反,如果被要求阅读消极情绪陈述,经历积极情绪的受试者的帮助程度不如经历中性情绪的受试者。在最近的一项长期研究中,研究者对 629 名被试完成了 7 个月的日记跟踪调查,研究发现了日常生活中亲社会行为和积极情绪之间的双向动态关系。在日常生活中,积极的情绪状态和亲社会行为倾向相互加强。这一观察结果与人们从事亲社会行为以保持积极情绪的情绪维持假说相一致(Snippe et al., 2018)。

情绪维持假说解释了积极情绪对亲社会行为的维系作用。

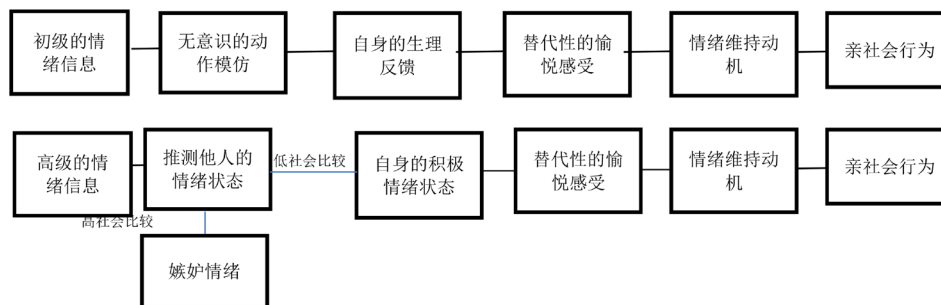
4. 社会比较调节亲社会行为

共情的产生有两种不同的渠道,一种是对初级情绪信息(面部表情、声音、动作)的具身模仿机制,其基础是镜像神经系统(Jabbi & Keysers, 2008)。例如 Krolak-Salmon 等人(2004)向被试呈现了一组厌恶的面部表情图片,结果发现图片激活了与处理厌恶相关的脑区,例如前脑岛,从而使观察者体验到了相同的情绪。在积极情绪方面, Bernhardt 和 Singer (2012)研究发现了对于积极情绪的共情激活了前脑岛和前扣带回等共情核心脑区,不仅如此,对愉悦面部表情的共情还引起了腹侧纹状体、眶额皮质等大脑奖赏系统的活动(Molenberghs et al., 2014)。以上研究表明在加工他人初级情绪时能够激活与加工自我情绪相同的神经回路,他人所传递的初级情绪信息会自动激活加工情绪的相应脑区,从而引起对情绪的无意识模仿。但是包括共情在内的许多社会认知加工都发生在一定的社会情境中,此时的情境中就不仅仅只是简单的初级情绪信息,还包括更为复杂的抽象社会情境。在这种情况下,观察者只有通过将自我投射到他人所处的情景中,理解情景对他人的意义,才能更容易处理他人的情绪事件,从而达到共情(Fogelson & Fernandez-del-Olmo, 2013; Gu & Han, 2007)。在这个过程中,共情主体对情境的认知加工就起着重要的作用。由于积极情绪并不是来自于当事人本身,而是通过对他人积极情绪的分享获得的,因此在积极共情影响亲社会行为的路径中,不仅需要感知到他人的积极情绪,重点在于还要能够分享获益当事人的积极情绪。因此,当个体在对他人的积极情绪或事件产生共情时,可能会推测他人的心理活动并计算该积极

结果的价值与自身的关系,研究发现在面对他人的积极情绪信息时,常常会出现嫉妒的心理(Eastwick & Finkel, 2008; Lange, Weidman, & Crusius, 2018),这是因为观察者在面对他人的积极事件时常常会拿自身去和获益主体进行比较,而比较的结果往往会威胁到自己的自尊,从而减少对他人的共情(党健宁, 2015; Ganegoda & Bordia, 2018)。

Belot, Bhaskar 和 van de Ven (2010)通过设置被试获得的奖励的来操纵社会比较方向,他们发现,当一方获得奖励,而另一方没有奖励时,未获得奖励的一方通过比较发现自己处于劣势地位,助人意愿更低。Molenberghs 等人(2014)通过神经学研究发现,被试在外群体获益时,主管奖赏的脑区的激活水平显著低于内群体,这是因为被试在外群体获益时会产生分别心,即社会比较;在积极场景中,相比于外群体,主体在比较过程中处于劣势,这通常导致心理压力与自我威胁,与获益的他人进行比较通常会导致消极的情感反应(Crosby, 1976; Vogel et al., 2015; Appel, Crusius, & Gerlach, 2016),并且影响到自尊(Friend & Gilbert, 1973; Hanna et al., 2017; Schmuck et al., 2019)。在这种情况下,个体更容易将注意力集中在自己身上,从而减少对他人的共情,对于内群体,被试倾向于将他们纳入自我的概念中,从而较少发生社会比较。岳童(2016)通过研究发现,积极共情水平与自我建构方式相关。积极共情水平越高,自我概念中他人的成分也越多,从而在他人获益时,更能分享他人的快乐,而不是和他人进行比较(刘娜, 2017; Miyahara et al., 2018)。神经学证据表明(Lemogne et al., 2010),楔前叶及背内侧前额叶在大脑静息态自发神经活动上的强度与其积极共情水平呈负相关,这些区域与自我关注程度倾向密切相关,较低的关注使得观察者能够将更多的注意力放在他人身上,使人从自我思考中脱离出来,衷心地分享他人的快乐。

低社会比较促进个体分享他人的快乐,从而获得替代性的积极情绪(Fehr, Fulmer, Awtrey, & Miller, 2017),当人们感受到积极的情绪时,他们可能有内在的动机去表现亲社会行为,因为亲社会行为是维持这种愉快情感状态的可行方式(Aknin et al., 2012)。依据上述结论可列出积极共情对亲社会行为的影响路径:



5. 总结与展望

虽然我们认为维持积极情绪的动机是连接积极共情对亲社会行为促动与维系的可能机制,也有社会比较对亲社会行为调节的辅助解释。但也有可能还要其他解释,例如积极共情的体验可能促进对人性或整个社会的积极看法,从而使人们认为他们随后的亲社会行为将更有用,或者能在将来得到更大的回报(Masters & Furman, 1976)。也有可能处于积极情绪会引发一种相对于其他人的普遍优势感,同时伴随着通过为他人服务来恢复普遍公平感的愿望(Rosenhan, Salovey, & Hargis, 1981),这些机制可以协同工作,共同促进亲社会行为。它们也可能根据其他情境特征而有所不同,例如目标类型(亲属与非亲属、内群体与外群体)和事件紧急程度(紧急与日常情况),但其中维持积极情绪的动机仍然是非常基本的影响因素(Augustine et al., 2010)。总之,社会比较与情绪维持动机可能在积极共情与亲社会行为的关系中共同起着重要的作用,未来研究需要检验积极共情是否真的通过人们分享他人积极情绪和延长积极感受的愿望促进亲社会行为。如果这种动机是明确的和有意识的,那么可以利用 Handley 等人(2004)所用的方法来验证

人们,然而,如果情绪维持动机是在一个隐含的、潜意识的水平上运行,那么就需要采用隐含的和非侵犯性的方法来揭示人们亲社会的动机。其次,需要澄清积极共情与消极共情对亲社会行为影响。积极共情对亲社会行为的影响通过积极情绪维持的动机是利己的,这是因为亲社会行为主要是由共情者延长和增加积极情绪的利益驱动的。如 Batson 和 Shaw (1991)的研究表明,消极共情促进亲社会行为是通过对他人的利益的关注从而产生利他动机来实现的,正因此他提出了共情利他假说。使用强迫选择困境的研究可能会澄清利己主义和利他主义动机的条件和相对力量,在这种困境中,必须在帮助一个快乐的人从而保持一个人的积极情绪,或者帮助一个处于困境中的人从而暂时牺牲一个人愉快的情感状态之间做出决定。未来的研究还应该评估积极共情和消极共情可能同时发生的情况。为了研究这个问题,研究需要找到一种方法,在共情的目标上同时映射积极信息和消极信息,因为共情在很大程度上与特定的目标相关联,例如特定的情境或人们感知的情绪。初步证据表明,当被试同时对受助者表现出积极的共情作用(例如,基于对目标人正面面部表情的感知)和消极的共情作用(例如,基于关于目标人发生的悲伤事件的口头/上下文信息)时,共情作用一般会减弱,但并不完全消失(Telle & Pfister, 2012),这需要进行更多的研究来进一步澄清这种特定的关系。

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