

# Research highlights impact of Ukrainian President Zelensky's traits on global perceptions

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A new study reveals that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's communal personality traits significantly increase empathy and pro-social behaviors towards Ukrainian citizens amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The study was conducted by Prof. Meital Balmas Cohen from the Department of Communication and Journalism, alongside Nitzan Attias and Prof. Eran Halperin from the Department of Psychology at the Hebrew University,

The work is [published](#) in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

The research, which aimed to explore how national leaders can leverage their personality traits to influence [public opinion](#) and garner support beyond their borders, found that emphasizing Zelensky's communal traits such as warmth and morality led to increased [empathy](#), willingness to help, and actual monetary donations for Ukrainians. The study was conducted through two experimental studies in Israel and the United States, providing robust evidence of the impact of personality traits on global perceptions and actions.

Since the onset of the Russian invasion in early 2022, President Zelensky has become a prominent figure on the world stage. His appeals to both world leaders and ordinary citizens have been pivotal in maintaining international support for Ukraine. Zelensky's frequent updates on [social media](#) and direct communications have aimed to elicit empathy and support from the global community.

"This study delves into the psychological mechanisms behind these efforts, revealing the power of communal traits in fostering empathy and pro-social behavior," said Prof. Meital Balmas Cohen. "Our findings have [profound implications](#) for understanding how national leaders can shape global public opinion and mobilize support. By highlighting communal traits, leaders can potentially overcome psychological barriers and foster a sense of connection and responsibility among international

audiences."

This study underscores the critical role of personality in [international relations](#), offering valuable insights for leaders seeking to galvanize global support for their nations. It also highlights the importance of media representation in shaping perceptions of foreign leaders.

By focusing on communal traits, [media outlets](#) can enhance empathy and support for populations in conflict zones. These findings have significant implications for international diplomacy and humanitarian efforts, suggesting that strategic communication can be a powerful tool in mobilizing global assistance.

These findings offer a hopeful perspective on the power of empathy and the role of leadership in fostering global solidarity. The research underscores the potential for leaders to influence public opinion and drive positive action through the strategic emphasis of their [personality traits](#).

**More information:** Meital Balmas et al, The Warm War: The Effect of Ukrainian President's Communal Personality Traits on Empathy and Pro-Social Behavior towards the Ukrainians, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/00220027241258379](https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027241258379)

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