

Prosocial Behaviour of Teenagers and Adolescents: Concepts and Tendencies

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Abstract: The article provides a fundamental analysis in the detecting of the concept of "prosocial behaviour", relying on the existing studies. It is considered as a set of personality traits that determine a person's tendency to help others and willingness to benefit others and society. The structure of prosocial behaviour distinguishes the main components of prosocial behaviour: humanistic attitudes to interaction, empathy (the ability of a person to respond emotionally to the experience of another person), moral behaviour (moral values, moral actions, personal values) and altruism (selfless activity and helping people).

The level of altruism, selfishness, empathetic tendencies, prosocial tendencies of student youth, norms of prosocial orientation are recognized as diagnostic indicators of prosocial behaviour.

The following research methods are used: theoretical (analysis of scientific sources, generalization of the analysed literature and its systematization, identification of basic principles that the research is based on, formulation of conclusions); empirical and statistical methods.

The results of an empirical study showed that teenagers' self-esteem is dominant in comparison to adolescents', though the level of empathy among youth is proved to be much higher. It has been grounded that the empathy of adolescents, as well as teenagers, increases in situations of support and enhancement of the well-being of others, selflessness and sincerity. It has been confirmed statistically that teenagers giving assistance are characterized by the assessment of cost, loss and reward; however, adolescents are strongly exposed to a higher social responsibility rate.

Keywords: *Teenage; adolescence; altruistic position; empathy; selfish orientation; prosocial tendencies; prosocial orientation; values.*

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1. Introduction

The problem of prosocial behaviour is given less attention than social behaviour in scientific research. The interest of scientists in this type of the human behaviour, which is aimed not at causing harm to others, but at assisting them, has been traced in the works since the middle of the XX century. However, there is still no single definition of this phenomenon, the mechanisms of its formation and the factors that underlie its manifestation have not been still disclosed.

At the present stage of society development, the issue of focusing on the formation of the younger generation with an active life position, capable of self-affirmation in a socially acceptable, tolerant way is of particular interest. Thus, the **purpose** of this article is to theoretically and empirically investigate the features of prosocial behaviour of students in their extracurricular activity, pursued in addition to their normal school course of study. In consequence, the realisation of forthcoming tasks is suggested: to develop a methodological basis for diagnostic and empirical research of the peculiarities of prosocial behaviour of students in their extracurricular activity and to analyse distinctness of prosocial behaviour among teenagers and adolescents.

2. Literature review

There is a significant number of concepts that reflect assisting behaviour – “prosocial behaviour”, “altruistic behaviour”, “humane relationships”. Based on the fact of the prolonged use of the term “prosocial behaviour” and a clear reflection of the concept designated by it, we believe that this term is suitable, familiar and universal for the nomination of the assisting behaviour. We also note that most scientists have lengthy and successfully operated on this term.

Currently, the concern related to the prosocial behaviour of teenagers and adolescents is steadily increasing. Readings in research on the prosocial behaviour of teenagers and adolescents strongly suggest that the issue calls for deep analysis. Even though many scientists are in considerable attentiveness to this subject, the formation of prosocial behaviour of teenagers and adolescents, the content, forms, methods of its effective diagnostic and corrective work is still under-researched.

The study of scientific and literary sources on the problem of prosocial behaviour revealed the absence of a unified approach to understanding this phenomenon. Scientists are considering various

manifestation scenarios of prosocial behaviour. However, we believe that the state of development of this problem in the global scientific space has some restrictions. In particular, most scholars in their studies take into account individual motives that influence the provision of assistance. Only in some cases, they establish a connection between a person's psychological characteristics on the one hand and his/her attitudes toward himself/herself and others. When studying the features of prosocial behaviour, researchers prefer its individual components, they rarely take into account the individual characteristics of people, pay little attention to the interaction between various components of prosocial behaviour.

A range of scholars emphasize the importance of prosocial behaviour in the present day. Prosocial behaviour has repeatedly attracted the attention of researchers (see, for example, James, 2011; Zanden & James, 1987; Stürmer & Snyder, 2009; Batson, 2011; Chaldini, 2002; Lazăr & Hatos, 2016, 2019; Van der Graaff, 2018; Eysenck, 2009; Kukhtova, 2014; Shamionov, 2009; Yusupov, 1991; Schwartz, 2008; Molchanova, 2013).

Based on the explanations of a kind of scientists, the key features of prosocial behaviour have been defined. Thus, it has become obvious that prosocial behaviour depicts actions that benefit others; ways of responding to people who show sympathy, cooperation, help and altruism (James, 2011; Zanden & James, 1987; Stürmer & Snyder, 2009; Van der Graaff et al, 2018). Noteworthy is the opinion of social psychologist C. Daniel Batson (2011), who believes that prosocial behaviour becomes voluntary and, over time, produces positive traits that benefit the individual and society. Referring to the scientists' views the context of situations in which the child is ready for social behaviour is expanding (Abrams et al., 2015).

R. Chaldini (2002) analyses prosocial behaviour as actions that are carried out by one person for another and for the sake of its benefit. However, further studies showed that at first sight, prosocial behaviour appears as a great appreciation of each other. Still, we could rarely meet just a purely altruistic motivation (Lazăr & Hatos, 2019). M. Eysenck (2009) remarks in this context that prosocial actions to be collaborative.

The theory of the gradual development of prosocial reasoning is clearly presented in the works of American psychologists (Eisenberg et al., 2005). Researches note that during childhood there is a complication of moral considerations. Towards the end of the teenage period of consciousness, an individual code of ethics is built that guides moral behaviour.

Alternatively, it is worth mentioning that a person may act pro-socially for his own benefit. Prosocial behaviour is caused by a combination

of egoistic and altruistic motives, a number of internal –stimulators, altruistic incentives, emotions and external influences – norms, reputation systems, social circumstances (Aronson, 2004; Simpson & Willer, 2015).

Kukhtova (2014) considers prosocial behaviour as the behaviour of an individual who is focused on the well-being of others, assisting them. In light of this definition Sh. Schwartz (2008) proposed a model of the activation of prosocial behaviour, which involves five consecutive stages of the altruism process, in particular: 1) attention (this phase involves awareness of another's grief, the choice of effective altruistic actions); 2) motivation (associated with the creation of a personal norm based on social values and the subsequent emergence of a sense of moral obligation); 3) evaluation (involves an assessment of potential rewards and costs: social (condemnation), physical (e.g., pain); 4) protection (e.g., from personal responsibility or the awareness of the importance of personal altruistic behaviour); 5) a deed.

It can be stated that there is an inseparable connection between prosocial behaviour and empathy. Empathy is mainly understood by domestic researches as the ability of a person to respond emotionally to the experience of the other. It is considered as one of the most important conditions for the manifestation of prosocial (altruistic) behaviour (Gavrilova, 2008; Yusupov, 1991). However, setting on an empathic response does not imply a prosocial orientation of the individual as a whole. Empathy, having reached its expression in teenage, becomes a stimulator of prosocial behaviour in further personal development. I. M. Yusupov (1991) believes that students' stimulation of empathic experiences can contribute to the formation of prosocial behaviour.

Summarizing the work of scientists in pedagogy and psychology we provide the universal definition of «prosocial behaviour», which is accepted in this work. Prosocial behaviour is a set of meaningful (quality and personality traits) and dynamic (motivation) personality characteristics that determine the propensity to help others and their willingness to benefit others and society as a whole.

The following main components have been identified in the structure of prosocial behaviour: humanistic attitude to interaction, empathy (the ability of a person to respond emotionally to the experience of another), moral behaviour (moral values, moral actions, personal values) and altruism (selfless activity and assistance to people).

3. Research Methodology

The research presented in this article is based on general theoretical methods of the analysis and generalization of pedagogical and psychological literature on the problem under investigation. A set of empirical methods was applied to highlight the main issues of the study, namely: conversation, observation and testing.

The following methods were used to study the formation of prosocial behaviour: "Measurement of prosocial trends" by G. Carlo and B. Randall (Kukhtova et al., 2014); "Social norms of prosocial behaviour" by I. Furmanov, N. Kukhtova (Kukhtova et al., 2014), Schwartz Value Questionnaire (Schwartz, 2008); "Diagnosis of the level of empathy" by I. Yusupov (Raygorodskiy, 2002); "Diagnosis of the socio-psychological personality attitudes in the motivational sphere" by O. Potemkina (Raygorodskiy, 2002). These instruments of the data collection and analysis are freely and publicly available in teaching aids for wide use, therefore, copyrights are not infringed. The authors were not obliged to obtain the copyright for the reason that the above mentioned aids are freely accessible in open sources.

The empirical study was conducted by involving 107 students in their extracurricular activity in the town Chemerivtsi of Khmelnytskyi region, Ukraine. Before the participating in the study, consultations with the applicants were held in the presence of teachers of their extracurricular activity. In the course of questioning all the interviewees were informed about of the withdrawing possibility, with no other consequences on their status and gave their informed consent.

The age of the respondents ranged 10 to 17 years. The boys presented the sample of 37.4%, the girls estimated by 62.6%. Regarding to individual age groups, it should be noted that 68 of the researched (63.6%) were teenagers 10-14 years old, namely: there were 23 boys (33.8%), 45 girls (66.2%); 39 of them were high school students at the age of 15-17 (36.4%), in particular: there were 17 boys (43.6%), 22 girls (56.4%).

4. Results

A detailed analysis of the experiment data according to the questionnaire "Diagnosis of social and psychological attitudes of the individual in the motivational sphere", made it possible to diagnose the attitudes aimed at "altruism-selfishness".

The distribution of the answers of the pupils under research by the level of development of "altruism-selfishness" indicators is presented in Fig. 1.

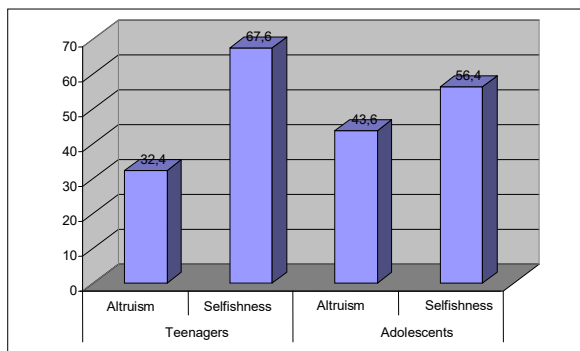


Fig. 1. Indicators of levels of altruism- selfishness of teenagers and adolescents

Summarizing the results of the study indicates that teenagers tend to express a selfish tendency (67.6%), contrary to altruism which is characteristic for 32.4% of teenagers. Seniors are featured with dominant altruistic motives (43.6%); compared to teenagers, there are significantly fewer youth with unstable selfish motives (56.4%). It should be noted that selfish motives prevail among teenagers rather than adolescents. Persistent altruists highly dominate among adolescents.

It is worth mentioning that respondents with an altruistic attitude are friendly to others, non-aggressive, unflattering, easily adaptable, always finding common ground with their peers. Such teenagers strive to realize themselves in creativity, to satisfy their cognitive interests. They are characterized by stable interests, rarely change beliefs.

Respondents with dominating selfish orientation, are characterized primarily by self-orientation, ignoring the interests of others. They seek to satisfy exclusively their own needs; they are not concerned about the interests of the group. Selfish people ignore other's feelings and well-being. It was proved that they are characterized by behaviour that depends entirely on the situation and their mood at the moment and is not conditioned by a system of stable value orientations, interests.

The distribution of respondents' answers on the empathy indicators as an important component of prosocial behaviour is carried out. The results of the survey in the form of quantitative indicators of the levels of empathic tendencies are presented in Fig. 2.

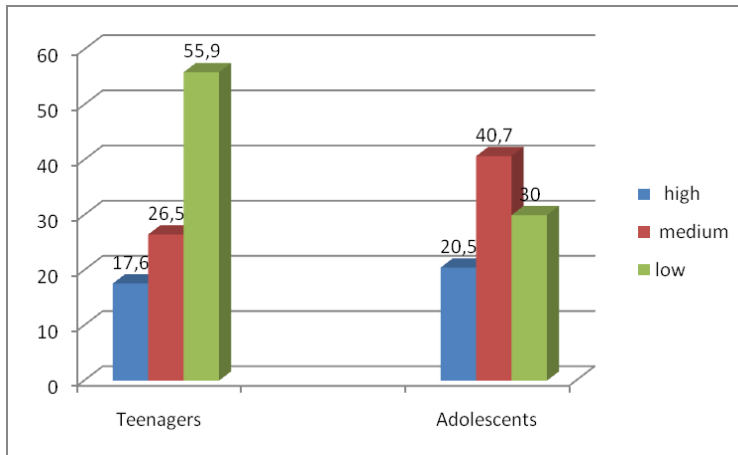


Fig. 2. Indicators of levels of empathic tendencies of teenagers and adolescents

Due to the meaningful analysis of empathy trends among teenagers and adolescents only 17.6% of teens and 20.5% of adolescents in the entire experimental group experience a high level of empathy. Whereas 26.5% of teens and 40.7% of adolescents acquire an average level of empathy. 55.9% of teens and 30.8% of adolescents identified a low level of empathy.

Comparing these quantitative indicators, it can be noted that the level of empathy among adolescents is much higher than among teens. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that the level of empathic trends among teens is influenced by several factors as follows: they are less prone to empathy, furthermore they need more time to develop it. By this we mean that adolescents understand people better, emotionally empathize with them, while teens are characterized by a lack of motivational interest in the problems and behaviour of others.

The purpose of the “Measuring prosocial trends” technique was to study the manifestations of prosocial behaviour, in particular, the evaluation of six different types of prosocial behaviour: compliant (obsequious, conformist), public, anonymous, emergency, emotional and altruistic. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of prosocial behaviour of teens and adolescents

Types of prosocial behaviour	Teens response results	Adolescents response results
Compliant (obsequious conformist)	19 %	17 %
Public	18 %	13 %

Anonymous	13 %	16 %
Emergency	13 %	18 %
Emotional	21 %	17 %
Altruistic	16 %	19 %
Total	100%	100%

Table 1 shows that compliant (obsequious, conformist) prosocial behaviour, which reflects a tendency to assist in connection with the request, is mentioned by 19% of teenagers and 17% of adolescents; 18% (of teens) and 13% (of youth) are characterized by public prosocial behaviour regarding assistance in the presence of others. People who assist need an appreciation of the actions of others; they need to know the opinions of the people who are significant to them or the public at large about their actions; 13% (teenagers) and 16% (youth) of respondents have anonymous prosocial behaviour, which is shown by assisting in cases where others are not aware of it. The person who assists does not need to evaluate the aid-related act, because in performing this action, he remains true to his normative values, that is, he is sufficiently self-supporting; 13% (teens) and 18% (adolescents) of respondents single out the extreme prosocial behaviour related to the manifestation of prosocial actions in emergency and difficult situations. A person provides help simply because the other person needs it, and it is a pleasure to assist in the current situation; 21% of teenagers and 17% of youth are characterized by emotional prosocial behaviour, aimed at assisting people in need of emotional support, and participating in situations where care is emotionally disturbed; altruistic prosocial behaviour, which provides for the possibility of selfless and charitable assistance without personal benefit, was stated by 16% of teenagers and 19% of young people.

The study allows us to affirm the superiority in the prosocial tendencies of teenagers of the following types: compliant (obsequious, conformist), public, emotional, for adolescents – compliant (obsequious, conformist), emergency, altruistic.

The methodology of "Social norms of prosocial behaviour" reveals the degree of severity of four types of norms that affect the prosocial orientation of behaviour: the norm of social responsibility, the norm of reciprocity, the norm of fairness, the rate of "cost-reward".

The norm of social responsibility is a social rule based on the fact that people should help those who need it, including a sense of responsibility for different social situations in order to avoid guilt and maintain self-esteem. This rule requires prosocial behaviour in all cases of need for help and depends on the person who can provide it.

The norm of reciprocity is associated with different responses to assistance, the so-called exchange relationships of different motivations (altruistic and selfish). As a rule, assistance is provided in exchange for prior assistance, it is the expectation of people that their help will increase the probability that they will also be helped in the future.

The norm of fairness is designed to help people "according to their deserts". It is based on the fact that the members of the group will be satisfied with the distribution of the benefit, which is proportional to the participation of each member of the group. People define it as "fairness" when each person receives a benefit insofar as it is established (made) to participate personally in a joint activity.

The cost-benefit norm is associated with the estimation of costs, losses and rewards in the provision of assistance.

All identified types of behaviour norms are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of behaviour norms of social orientation of teenagers and adolescents

Types of behaviour norms of social orientation	Teens response results	Adolescents response results
Social responsibility norm	22%	22%
Reciprocity norm	19%	20%
Social fairness norm	28 %	30 %
Cost-benefit norm	31 %	28 %
Total	100 %	100 %

As the Table 2 shows, teenagers put the "cost-benefit" norm in the first place (youths put the norm in the second place), and the norm of fairness in the second place (youths put this norm in the first place); teenagers and youths put the norm of social responsibility in the third place; the fourth place takes the norm of reciprocity among all respondents. Thus, it can be stated that teenagers are characterized by the estimation of costs, losses and rewards in the provision of assistance, and youths are characterized by the social fairness norm of 30% responses, which is based on the fact that people should help everybody in need, and includes a sense of responsibility for different social situations to avoid guilt and preserve self-esteem.

In this study, we used the Schwartz Questionnaire to investigate the values of the culture at the individual level (part two). The questionnaire consists of 40 descriptions of a person, which characterize 10 motivational

sorts of values: stimulation, hedonism, self-direction, achievement, security, conformity, universalism, tradition, power and benevolence.

Respondents' answers were as follows: independence is inherent in 14% of teenagers and 15% of adolescents, stimulation – in 8% of teenagers and 11% of youths, hedonism is detected in 7% of teenagers and 9% of adolescents, achievement is characteristic to 9% of teenagers and 10% of youths, power is found in 8% of teenagers and adolescents, security – 15% and 7% respectively, conformity – 10% of teenagers and 7% of youths, tradition – 6%, 8% respectively, benevolence – 12% in teens and youths, universalism – in 11% of teenagers and 13% of adolescents.

The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the study according to the Schwartz Questionnaire

Values	Teens response results	Adolescents response results
Independence	14 %	15 %
Stimulation	8 %	11 %
Hedonism	7 %	9 %
Achievement	9 %	10 %
Power	8 %	8 %
Security	15 %	7 %
Conformity	10 %	7 %
Tradition	6 %	8 %
Benevolence	12 %	12 %
Universalism	11 %	13 %
Total	100 %	100 %

The quantitative analysis gives grounds to state that on the individual level teenagers' value the alignments as follows: Security (stability, security and harmony of society, family and individual), Independence (freedom of thought and action) and Benevolence (maintaining and improving the well-being of the people with whom the person is in contact). Whereas the values of representatives of adolescence include Independence (freedom of thought and action), Benevolence (maintaining and enhancing the well-being of individuals, a person counteracts with) and Universalism (understanding, gratitude, tolerance and maintaining the well-being of all people and nature).

In order to identify the peculiarities of the prosocial behaviour of the pupils of the extracurricular institution, the results of the study were subjected to statistical analysis. In the first stage, Pearson's correlation r-analysis was applied.

The analysis made it possible to classify several features both in the teenagers' and the adolescents' groups (Fig. 3).

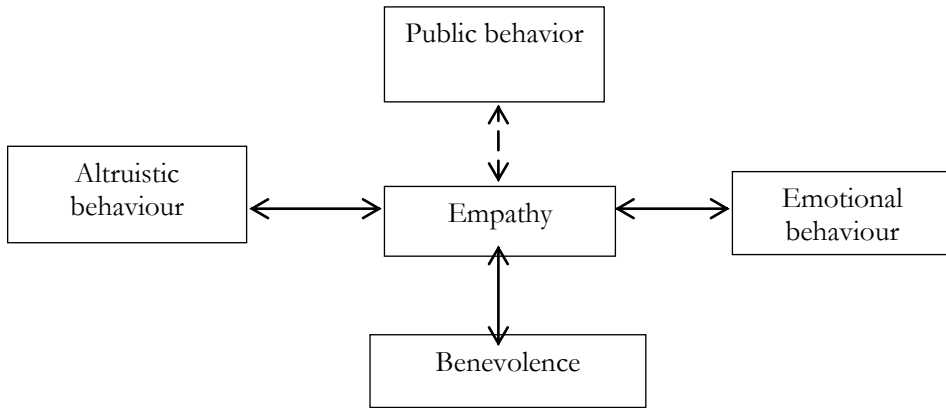


Fig. 3. Features of the correlations in the teenage group

It has been found that empathy among teenagers is associated with altruistic behaviour ($r = 0,463$; $p \leq 0,01$), emotional behaviour ($r = 0,326$; $p \leq 0,01$), benevolence ($r = 0,301$; $p \leq 0,05$). Direct correlational dependencies indicate that teenagers' empathy increases in situations where they provide assistance to others if needed; in providing assistance to people in need of emotional support and in the event of selfless and charitable assistance without personal benefit, and by supporting and improving the well-being of the people they keep in touch with.

It is statistically confirmed that teenagers' empathy is inversely related to their public prosocial behaviour ($r = -0.463$; $p \leq 0.01$). Thus, if it is needed to provide assistance in the presence of others, teens become less empathetic, which defines their empathy as a more private process.

In the adolescents' group, quite different statistically authentic dependencies have been singled out (Fig. 4).

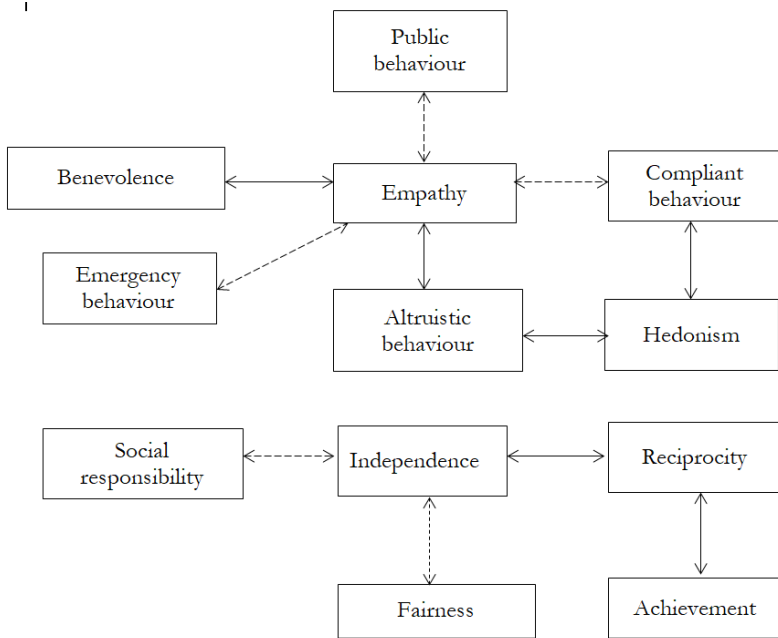


Fig. 4. Features of the correlations in the adolescents group

The results of the empirical research established direct correlative relations between adolescents' Empathy and their Altruistic prosocial behaviour ($r = 0,445$; $p \leq 0,01$); Empathy and Benevolence value ($r = 0,414$; $p \leq 0,01$). Thus, it can be argued that the empathy of teenagers as well as adolescents increases in situations of support and enhancement of others' well-being, selflessness, and sincerity.

In further analysis of existing correlations, we noted the following features: youth empathy is inversely related to the following types of prosocial behaviour: compliant prosocial behaviour ($r = -0.364$; $p \leq 0.05$), public ($r = -0,489$; $p \leq 0,01$) and emergency prosocial behaviour ($r = -0,403$; $p \leq 0,05$). Thus, adolescents reveal a reduced level of empathy in situations of rapid emotional response to emergency and difficult situations, in connection with the request of others and in cases where assistance is required to be provided publicly.

In addition to the above stated, the following relationships were noted. An inverse correlation was found between young people's social responsibility and their independence ($r = -0.323$; $p \leq 0.05$). It can be argued that the more youth are to help those in need, the more they have to be responsible, the less independent they are. Instead, youth independence depends on such a social norm as reciprocity ($r = 0,415$; $p \leq 0,01$) and the

exact opposite of fairness ($r = -0,383$; $p \leq 0,05$). Therefore, the expectations of the adolescents that they will also be assisted in the future shape their own independence, which is not dependent on their personal participation in joint activities.

It is grounded that the norm of Reciprocity depends on the value of Achievements of the youths ($r = 0,335$; $p \leq 0,05$). This suggests that the achievement of adolescents depends on mutual assistance from others.

It should also be noted that we found direct correlations between the value of Hedonism, Compliant ($r = 0,351$; $p \leq 0,05$), Altruistic ($r = 0,350$; $p \leq 0,05$) prosocial trends. Hence, the desire of adolescents to increase their well-being depends on their conformist behaviour and the ability to provide selfless help to others.

To determine the significance of differences between teenagers and adolescents in the second stage of the statistical analysis, a nonparametric criterion, Mann Whitney U-Criterion was used. Different categories were analysed. The following statistically significant differences were set up between the teenager group and the adolescents.

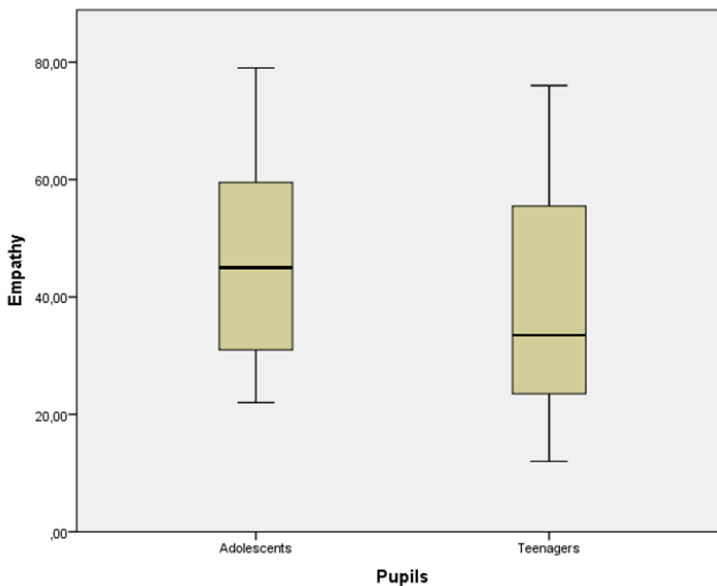


Fig. 5. Indicators of significant differences in feelings of empathy by Mann Whitney U-Criterion

It was established that the level of empathy development among adolescents was significantly higher than among teenagers ($U = 931,5; p = 0.011$). Teenagers are more likely to have low levels of empathy.

According to the criterion of Altruism-Selfishness significant differences between the two groups of researched are revealed (Fig. 6).

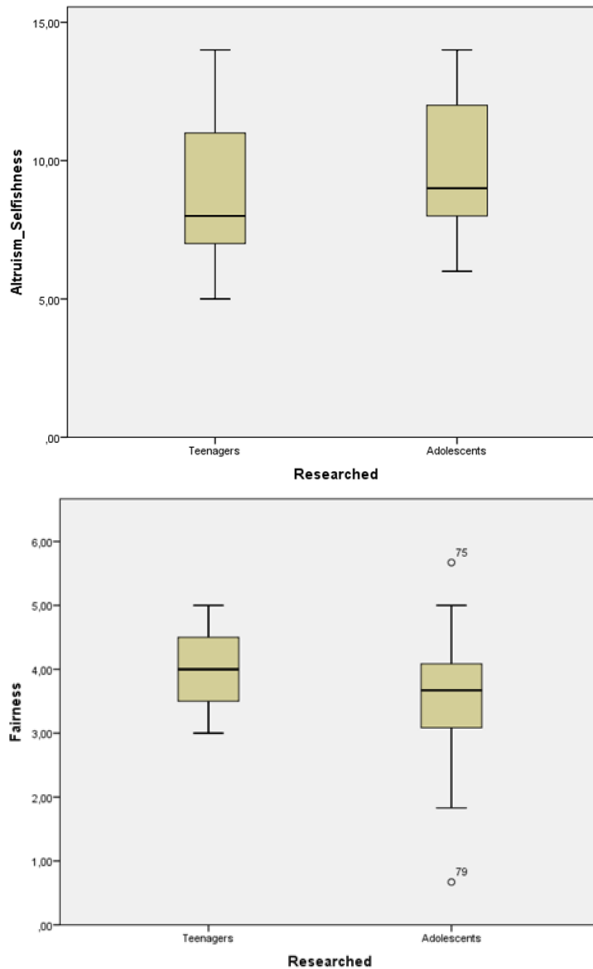


Fig. 6. Indicators of significant differences on the Altruism-Selfishness scale and Fairness by Mann Whitney U-Criterion

Teenagers tend to have a more selfish tendency ($U = 1750; p = 0.006$) than the adolescents group. High school students are dominated by altruistic motives.

Significant statistical differences between the group of teenagers and the adolescents group have been found by the criterion of Fairness (Fig. 6) as one of the norms of social behaviour ($U = 1005.5$; $p = 0.036$). In the adolescents group the variation scope of the sign of Fairness is much wider than in the group of teenagers.

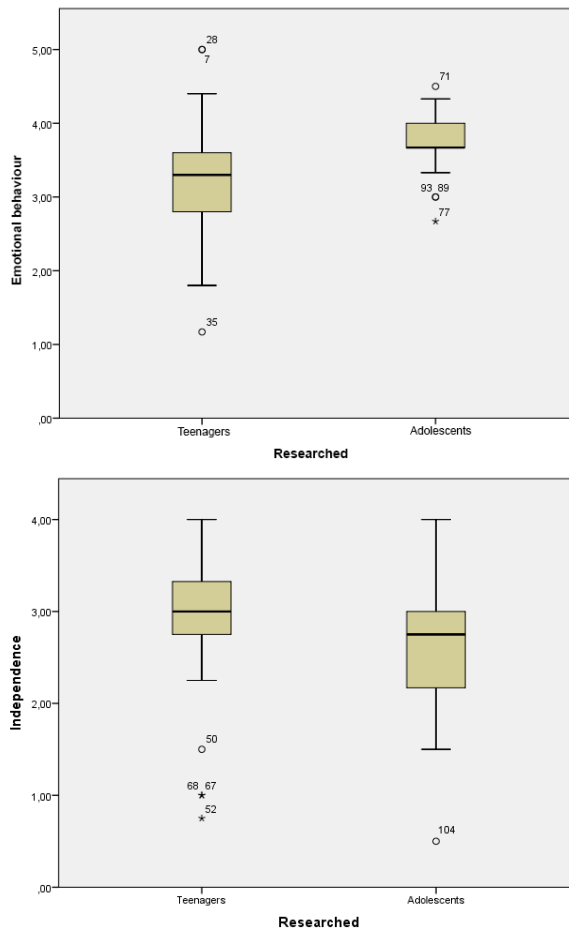


Fig. 7. Indicators of significant differences in Emotional behaviour and Self-esteem according to Mann Whitney U-Criterion

The differences between teenagers and adolescents (Fig. 7) are found according to the criterion of Emotional prosocial behaviour ($U = 1005.5$; $p = 0.036$) and the value of Independence ($U = 909.5$; $p = 0.006$). As we can see it is statistically confirmed that teenagers are more emotional while the

adolescents are more independent. There are no significant differences among other features in these groups.

Conclusions

The conducted study allowed the authors to make their own contribution to clarify the aspects in the field of prosocial behaviour, to expand and supplement information on the peculiarities of the prosocial personality trends and their determination during teenage and youth. The results of the experiment open up the prospects for forecasting positive social trends, and the study of age-related features of social behaviour contribute to the organization of proper psychological and pedagogical support of the process, the implementation of strategies for stimulating it, shaping and adjusting.

Thus, the analysis of the results of the study of features of prosocial behaviour presented in the article allows us to formulate a range of conclusions.

Prosocial behaviour is seen as a set of meaningful personality traits that determine a tendency to help other people and a willingness to benefit others and society as a whole.

The results of the empirical study indicate that teenagers have selfish motives, and the percentage of those belonging to persistent altruists is significantly increased in the sample of adolescents. Also, the level of empathy among the adolescent is much higher than among teenagers.

A comparative analysis of the manifestations of prosocial behaviour of teenagers and adolescents shows that teenagers are characterized by the following prosocial tendencies: compliant (conformist), public, emotional, while the adolescents regarded as compliant (conformist), emergency, altruistic ones.

Furthermore, the teenagers are characterized by their assistance in the assessment of costs, losses and rewards, and among the youth there is a higher standard of social responsibility. According to the individual level, the teenagers are dominated by the values of safety, autonomy and benevolence, while the youth group, along with independence and benevolence, still possesses a sense of universalism.

It should be noted that the research of prosocial behaviour as an important social phenomenon requires special attention. This, in its turn, emphasizes the significance of future investigations, which could focus on the development of an experimental-psychological program for the formation of prosocial behaviour of students in their extracurricular activity

as well as adults. Adolescence is a transitional period of development between childhood and adulthood. This includes changes in personality, along with intellectual, physical and social development. At this time of change, young people counteract with a number of social problems and solutions.

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