

ACCEPTANCE OF OTHERS – AN INDICATOR OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR*

Vali ILIE¹

DOI: 10.52846/AUCPP.43.13

Abstract

The present study focuses on the analysis of prosocial behavior. The forms or subspecies of prosocial behavior, the compositional variables constituted in determining factors and its explanatory models are highlighted. The research part presents the answers of the students to the questions of a test regarding the acceptance of others, understood as a necessary condition in the development of prosocial behavior. The theoretical basis is a starting point in our constative research and it includes the results of certain investigations that are considered benchmarks in the study of this topic.

Key words: Prosocial; Altruism; Help; Acceptance.

1. Introduction

The study of prosocial behavior is relatively new. An event that took place in the 1960s drew the attention of social scientists: on March 13, 1964, a woman was killed by a stranger right in front of her block in New York. What is shocking about this event is not so much the violence of the crime, as the fact that it was watched by 38 neighbors, so it was a public event. Although the event lasted 30 minutes, none of those watching from the windows of their “safe” homes (in a residential area) intervened and they did not call the police either. After analyzing the “effect of the show”, J. Darley and B. Latané (1968) state that as the number of the people present in an emergency situation increases, it is less likely that an individual will help someone in need. The bystander effect, or bystander apathy, is a social psychological theory that states that an individual’s likelihood of helping decreases when passive bystanders are present in an emergency situation). They identified three different psychological processes that might prevent a bystander from helping a person in distress: (1) diffusion of responsibility; (2) evaluation apprehension (fear of being publically judged); and (3) pluralistic ignorance (the tendency to rely on the overt reactions of others when defining an ambiguous situation).

* This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. Authors retain the copyright of this article.

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, Teacher Training Department, University of Craiova, Romania, e-mail address: vali.ilie@edu.ucv.ro

Prosocial behavior is essential in human social existence. Being a conscious, voluntary, free, intentional and disinterested act, it falls into the category of acquired behaviors, although the latest research on the subject suggests that there are also genetic influences.

Typical prosocial behaviors include volunteering, sharing personal resources, instrumental help, costly help (sometimes life-threatening), and the emotional support of others during times of suffering. Prosocial behaviors can be self-initiated (that is, spontaneous, without an explicit request) or compliant (repeated in response to an explicit request). For example, “cooperativeness has also been shown to be partly under genetic influence. (...) Thus, some (but not most) individual differences in prosocial behavior are attributable to genetic differences” (Conway & Slavich, 2017, p. 152).

Among the characteristics of prosocial behavior there are (Bierhoff, 1987; Derloga & Grazelak, 1982, *apud* Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998): (1) they explicitly aim to help, support or protect people in difficulty or who leave the impression that they are in such a situation; (2) they preserve and promote positive social values, norms and models; (3) they are carried out outside any formal or professional obligations, without waiting for external rewards; (4) they are based on the possibility and freedom of choice to provide help, support or protection.

Prosocial behaviors can be thought to require three components (Dunfield, 2014): (1) the ability to take the perspective of another person and recognize that they are having a problem; (2) the ability to determine the cause of that problem; and (3) the motivation to help them overcome the problem. Indeed, simply recognizing that someone is distressed is of little value if one is not willing to actually do something about it, nor is motivation helpful if you don't know how to intervene. Together, the ability to successfully navigate each of these steps is necessary – but not alone sufficient – for the production of effective prosocial behavior.

2. Forms of prosocial behavior

Previous studies indicate that the link between happiness and prosociality is two-way – not only do happy people have personal resources to do good for others, but urging people to engage in prosocial behavior also increases well-being (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). A first condition is accepting the others. We need to find in others whatever it is good, valuable. For this, we need goodwill (action that seeks the good of the other, but not obtaining an external reward).

Empathy may be conceptualized as part of a larger prosocial personality trait that develops in children and motivates helping behaviors into young adulthood (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1999). It “reflects the natural ability to perceive and be sensitive to the emotional states of others, coupled with a motivation to care for their well-being” (Decety *et al.*, 2016, p. 1). It has evolved in the context of parental care for offspring, as well as within kinship bonds, to help facilitate group living. Referring to research on the subject (Barnett, 1982; Bryant, 1982; Clark, 1980; Feshbach, 1982; Kurtz & Eisenberg, 1983; Strayer, 1980; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1979), M. A.

Barnett (1987) believes that, in relation to prosocial behavior, empathy has begun to be investigated in a broader framework of emotional and interpersonal development.

The experience of gratitude can increase both psychological (Watkins, 2004) and physical well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Based on research that has demonstrated the positive value of gratitude (Baron, 1984; Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; van Overwalle, Mervielde & De Schuyter, 1995) and social nature (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; van Overwalle și colab., 1995; Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1978; Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1979; Zaleski, 1988), J.-A. Tsang defines gratitude as “a positive emotional reaction to the receipt of a benefit that is perceived to have resulted from the good intentions of another” (2006, p. 139). It motivates individuals to act prosocially. Tsang points out that “gratitude is a significant emotion in modern day society. Several world religions teach about the importance of gratitude (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000), and many people claim that expressing gratitude brings them happiness (Gallup, 1998)” (2006, p. 138).

The help given to those in difficulty, as well as relief or care for other fellows are forms of prosocial behavior. For example, the decision to make a contribution or dedicate time to a charity is usually the result of caring for those in need. There are several types of help: casual helping (e.g., small favours for casual acquaintance), substantial personal helping (e.g., tangible benefits given to friends), emotional helping (e.g., offers to support for personal problems), and emergency helping (e.g., aid given in dangerous, uncontrollable situations) (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015, p. 5). Depending on the attribution of responsibility for the situation that requires prosocial behavior, as well as the perception of the responsibility to find a solution, S. Chelcea distinguishes four models of help (1996, p. 440): the moral model, the enlightenment model, the compensatory model and the medical model. These models have been analyzed before by P. Brickman *et al.* (1982) and H. W. Bierhoff (1987). As he states Bierhoff, “Although there has been progress toward a better understanding of the relation between endocentric altruism and exocentric altruism, the question of whether these types of helping reflect the operation of a single motive remains unsettled” (1987, p. 116).

Helping, protecting and supporting human development – altruism – occupies a central position in the system of prosocial behavior, being a subspecies of it. “Experimental evidence that guilt contributes to altruism has been obtained in a number of studies in which adults who were led to believe they had harmed someone showed a heightened willingness to help others. They did this by engaging in various altruistic deeds such as volunteering to participate in a research project (Freedman, Wellington & Bless, 1967), contributing to a charitable fund (Regan, 1971)” (Hoffman, 1973, p. 39). Sharing (sharing wealth through donations to a charity or sharing your deepest thoughts, beliefs, and experiences with a trusted friend) is a form of prosocial behavior.

Altruism would appear to have deep roots in ontogeny and phylogeny: “While there is no doubt that socialization practices can profoundly influence the expression of altruistic (as well as selfish) tendencies, it appears that these practices shape and refine an altruistically oriented psychology that we share with our closest

evolutionary relatives” (Warneken, 2016, p. 54). There is evidence that monkeys share several basic abilities to help: “Current research thus suggests the possibility that chimpanzees are able and willing to help, but they display this behavior only in very restricted contexts” (Warneken *et al.*, 2007). There is, however, a difference between modern humans and their ancestors. Human cultural groups have created unique social mechanisms for cultivating the tendency to act altruistically (e.g., internalizing social norms, sanctioning selfish behaviors).

Being a type of cosocial behavior, collaboration involves the positive interaction and interdependence of the actors or social groups in order to achieve common goals. The collaborative construction of knowledge is based on social negotiation, collaboration reflecting a certain way of relating. Negotiation appears as a process of collaboration, for building the association, although it encounters lots of difficulties, errors, verbal confrontations, risks and stress.

3. Determinant factors

There are a number of factors that influence prosocial behavior. Some are internal in nature and others are external in nature. The analysis of prosocial behavior involves complexes of variables difficult to capture in pure forms, but which, in essence, can be reduced to the following: biological, psychological, relational, pedagogical or organizational-decision-making, socio-cultural or contextual.

3.1. Biological variables

It is stated that “the individual differences in the tendency to behave prosocially are partially hereditary. (...) Despite overwhelming evidence supporting the role of genetic factors in predicting prosocial behavior, we know very little about the specific genes involved. They can influence prosocial behavior through small effects on different behavioral, cognitive and affective components, in an additive or interactive way” (Knafo-Noam & Israel, 2009).

There is evidence that genetic effects may contribute to individual prosocial differences (e.g., Knafo and Israel, 2009; Fortuna and Knafo, 2014) and to prosocial values and attitudes (e.g., Rushton, 2004; Knafo and Spinath, 2011) (Knafo-Noam *et al.*, 2015). With age, children show more sympathy and more prosocial behaviors. Other genes relevant to altruism, empathy, and other aspects of prosocial tendencies may be discovered in the coming years.

3.2. Psychological variables

Personality factors are very relevant in the analysis of prosocial behavior. Characteristics such as positivity (e.g., joy, warmth) lean toward prosociality (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). Empathy and sympathy provide a cognitive and affective basis for prosocial behavior. For example, sympathy favors prosocial behavior, while distress inhibits it (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1989).

Prosocial behavior is influenced by the mood: when we are happy, euphoric and tend to help others (we perceive too great a gap between our exuberance and the misfortune of the other). People with high self-esteem are more likely to exhibit prosocial behavior (Reykowski, 1975). Different prosocial acts may be based on

different motivations. At the behavioral level, sharing, helping, and comfort do not always correlate, suggesting that behaviors reflect different psychological factors.

3.3. Relational variables

In the family, the quality of the interactions between the parents and the child is very important. Longitudinal studies highlight the idea that parenting styles sustain the development of prosocial behaviors in children over time, but not always as much as the researchers would expect (Hastings *et al.*, 2007). Colleagues may also affect prosocial development due to their part as role models (Eisenberg *et al.*, 2006). The similarity of the personality traits of those who request them with those who are asked for help is an element of prediction of the prosocial behavior (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998). It results that both parents (but also brothers and sisters), as well as colleagues and friends can be models with a strong impact in the acquisition and modification of prosocial responses.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of uncertainty was frequently encountered at all levels of social life. In this sense, it is interesting to observe how people react in a state of uncertainty, to what extent they accept others. Starting from the idea that uncertainty does not always provoke selfishness, a distinction is made between two types of uncertainty, which have opposite effects on prosocial behavior: “While outcome uncertainty introduces optimistic and self-serving narratives that mitigate personal responsibility, impact uncertainty may lead people to think more about protecting the welfare of potentially vulnerable others, and thereby increase prosocial behavior” (Kappes *et al.*, 2018). We appreciate that exposure to prosocial models increases the likelihood of human mutual help. In crisis situations, people need to help each other, be compassionate and work together to solve problems (social, health, educational, etc.).

3.4. Pedagogical or organizational-decisional variables

Being a sustainable behavior, which creates social cohesion, prosocial behavior is more likely to be achieved by people who are more socially competent. S. Chelcea (2004, p. 189) mentioned that, “for a person who is competent in the field in which help is requested, the cost of prosocial behaviors is lower than for the people who do not know how to intervene, as they do not have the necessary competence”. Also, prosocial behavior is more likely to be achieved by people who have greater control over the course of events (Rotter, 1966). It is appreciated that the success of a task increases the willingness of the adults to help others (Berkowitz & Connor, 1966; Isen, 1970).

It is also stated that “socially competent children more often suggest prosocial and cooperative strategies in response to hypothetical social problems than their less competent peers (e.g., Asher & Renshaw, 1981; French & Waas, 1987; Sharp, 1983), and this association between general social competence and the use of prosocial approaches to solving interpersonal problems also has been found in observational studies of peer interaction (e.g., Dodge, 1983; Ruben & Daniels-Beirness, 1983) (Battistic *et al.*, 1989, pp. 148-149).

Some studies have shown that those children who have experienced this care from others longer are more prosocial, while others point out that the quality of time spent with the child is more important than the time itself (Hastings *et al.*, 2007).

3.5. Socio-cultural or contextual variables

It also matters how we were socialized: “People who have been socialized in the idea that people are good and their relationships are fair, honest, have a greater tendency to help others” (Phares & Lamiell, 1975, *apud* Chelcea, 1996, p. 450). Research that has looked at gender differences in relation to prosocial behavior provides some useful information.

For example, the following aspects highlighted by specialists (Papalia *et al.*, 2010) are highly suggestive: (1) Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) point out that girls tend to exhibit more prosocial behaviors than boys; (2) Fabes *et al.* (1999) find that this difference becomes more pronounced in adolescence; (3) Eisenberg and Moris (2004) state that girls tend to consider themselves more empathetic and prosocial than boys, and the parents of the girls place more emphasis on social responsibility than the parents of the boys. In addition, B. Whiting and C. P. Edwards (2010) found that support was higher for girls than for boys in six different cultures.

Lower-class individuals focus on the well-being of others as a means of adapting to their more hostile environments, and this orientation gives rise to greater prosocial behavior (Piff *et al.*, 2010). Material or social reinforcements can increase prosocial behavior in the immediate context, regardless of the social class to which the individual belongs.

The size of the group we are part of at a certain moment, the physical distance from the person to be helped, as well as the relevance of the pursued objectives influence the rate of displaying prosocial behaviors. When we are pressed for time, we give less or no help at all. In situations of social crisis, some people act selfishly and others show altruism. There are also people, especially those who are particularly vulnerable, who may experience more suffering. They need the acceptance and support of the others, kindness (action meant to help the other, but not to obtain an external reward). Rule-based cooperation and behavior are common in a number of emergencies and disasters. Therefore, focusing on those social values that ensure social harmony is a necessary condition for the proper functioning of the society.

4. Explanatory theories and models

4.1. The biological perspective

It tries to explain prosocial behavior through genetic factors. Within these theories, a central place is occupied by *sociobiology*, which aims to systematically study the biological basis of all social behaviors, in animals and humans, in an evolutionary perspective. Helping behavior is present throughout the animal world (from rescue behavior in ants to helping among elephants (De Waal, 2008; Dugatkin, 1997; Nowbahari *et al.*, 2009).

The central hypothesis is that, through a process of natural selection, certain social behaviors were born and maintained in order to give the human species the

necessary advantages to survive. Sociobiologists believe that altruism has a genetic basis: in order to ensure the representation of its genes, the individual must help others, depending on their degree of kinship. Attractiveness, love, altruism are largely based on similarity.

Prosocial behavior could be influenced by intelligence: “Less intelligent people simply fail to learn behavioural restraint, marriage-bonding techniques, moral rules or how to raise children adequately. Moreover, their low intelligence makes them less capable of predicting their environment or, indeed, of creating stable personal circumstances” (Rushton, 1985, p. 449).

4.2. The sociological perspective

Prosocial behaviors serve the following purposes (Kenrick *et al.*, 2002): they increase social status and approval, protect self-image and self-esteem, contribute to our personal well-being, and allow the regulation of our emotional mood. People help each other as a guide in the socialization process. In this sense, the normative theories emphasize the role of social norms. We feel obliged to provide help, especially since those who need it are more dependent on us. In such situations, the norm of social responsibility works. We subordinate ourselves not to be rewarded, but because we feel happy when our internal moral standards are reached. The rule of reciprocity applies depending on the circumstances: if the recipient of the aid perceives the intentionality of the act, then the probability of resorting to the rule of reciprocity increases. It was found that the rule of reciprocity is more frequently applied between people with the same socio-economic status. The norm of justice and social equity is based on two theses: (1) people tend to maintain fair interpersonal relationships and (2) the degree of inequity is calculated by comparing the relationships between what each person involved in the relationship gives and receives.

The theory of social learning highlights the importance of observing and imitating the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of those around us. This theory explains to some extent the emergence of prosocial behavior, both through persuasion and observational learning. Most human behaviors are learned observationally: by observing others, a person makes an impression on how new behaviors are manifesting, and, on subsequent occasions, this coded piece of information can serve as a guide for action. It is estimated that: “People can represent external influences symbolically and latter use such representation to guide their action; they can solve problem mentally without having to enact the various alternatives; and they can foresee the probable consequences of different action and alter their behavior accordingly” (Bandura, 1980, p. 144).

The theory of social action, based on the idea that circumstances influence the achievement of purposeful behaviors is also relevant. In addition to the circumstances, the perception of the situation, the way of knowing it by the social actors is also important.

4.3. The psychological perspective

The cost-benefit theory opens a unique perspective in explaining prosocial behavior. This theory, in line with the theory of equity, is based on the following

theses: people tend to maintain fairness in interpersonal relationships because inequitable relationships produce mental discomfort. The cost-benefit analysis focuses on the second thesis of equity theory, on the relation between what a person gives (the cost of the action) and what a person receives (the benefit). Thus, “cost means a wide range of material, financial, but also mental factors: consumption of material goods, spending money, time, physical exertion, mental fatigue, depression, pain, sadness, loss of health, putting life in danger. Similarly, the benefit includes both external rewards (money, the esteem of the others, mutual help, etc.) and internal rewards (increased self-esteem, satisfaction, acquisition of a sense of competence, etc.)” (Chelcea, 1996, p. 443). “People are less willing to help the drunk fallen on the sidewalk, to accompany the blind, to support the horribly mutilated because they imagine the cost of aid is too high, namely diminishing their prestige by associating with such people” (Duduciuc *et al.*, 2013, p. 168). This is how we bypass precisely those who need help the most, confirming the idea that the higher the cost, the lower the frequency of charity acts (Darley & Latané, 1968).

Learning prosocial behavior involves imitating role models (e.g., Americans are more willing to help strangers than the Japanese, but the latter are more willing to help their family and close friends). So, “a most people of all ages tend to help others in distress, although they may not do when more powerful competing motives such as obedience to authority are also aroused” (Hoffman, 1973). Perspectives invoked to explain prosocial behavior include socio-emotional learning, increased self-esteem, reduced tension, attribution, the idea of norm, and moral reasoning.

5. Elements of research on prosocial behavior in students

5.1. Research organization

Being of a constative type, our research identifies the sphere of preoccupations, studies and analyzes of the prosocial behavior and offers a transversal, synchronous perspective. We focused on the analysis of the primary sources and used the test as a research tool. Because the acceptance of the others is an important aspect in the analysis of this topic, we applied a test that represents the adapted form (after “The Mind Test” – R. Aero and E. Weiner, 1981) of a scale (“Acceptance of others scale”) developed by W. F. Fey (1955) (Chelcea, 1994, pp. 174-175). The main constructs are tolerance and kindness.

The research sample includes master students (year II) from the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Techniques who attend the courses of the psychopedagogical training module at the University of Craiova.

Because the topic pursued may be influenced by the age of the subjects and the specifics of their residence environment, we collected data on these two variables.

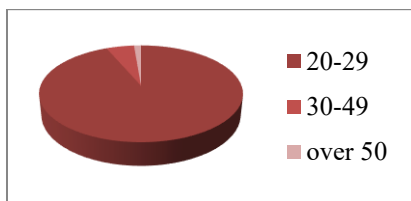


Figure 1. Age of respondents

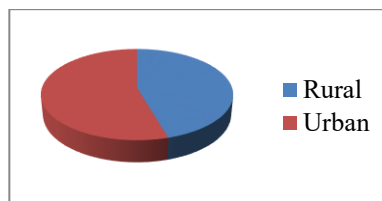


Figure 2. Respondents' place of residence

The objectives pursued aim at:

- a) Highlighting the prosocial values expressed in forms or subspecies of prosocial behavior;
- b) Analysing the theories or explanatory models of the prosocial behavior;
- c) Collecting, processing and interpreting the answers given by the students to the test, regarding the degree of acceptance of the others;
- d) Presenting some conclusions in relation to the theoretical substantiation and the results of the constative research.

The acceptance of others scale contains 20 statements about feelings and attitudes toward other people. Students were instructed to put in parentheses the number that indicates their position on each statement: 1 = fully true; 2 = usually true; 3 = both true and untrue; 4 = sometimes true; 5 = very rarely true. In calculating the score, the following were taken into account: except for statements 2, 5, 16, 18, 19 (in which the score is reversed – fully true = 5; usually true = 4; both true and untrue = 3; sometimes true = 2; very rarely true = 1), in the other statements the score remains the one written in parentheses by the students. The sum of the points in all the statements represents the score obtained by them.

5.2. Test content

1. People are too easily led.
2. I like people I get to know.
3. People these days have pretty low moral standards.
4. Most people are pretty smug about themselves, never really facing their bad points.
5. I can be comfortable with nearly all kinds of people.
6. All people can talk about these days, it seems, is movies, TV, and foolishness like that.
7. People get ahead by using 'pull,' and not because of what they know.
8. If you once start doing favors for people, they'll just walk all over you.
9. People are too self-centered.
10. People are always dissatisfied and hunting for something new.
11. With many people you don't know how you stand.
12. You've probably got to hurt someone if you're going to make something out of yourself.
13. People really need a strong, smart leader.
14. I enjoy myself most when I am alone, away from people.

15. I wish people would be more honest with you.
16. I enjoy going with a crowd.
17. In my experience, people are pretty stubborn and unreasonable.
18. I can enjoy being with people whose values are very different from mine.
19. Everybody tries to be nice.
20. The average person is not very well satisfied with himself.

5.3. The processing and interpretation of the results

Theoretically, the score on this test can be between 20 and 100 points. Those who get low scores (below 65 points) are characterized by intolerance towards others. Their life experience has caused them to lose confidence in people, and not accepting others can betray their lack of reconciliation. For those with average scores (between 65 and 84 points) life seems to be a mixture of rejection and acceptance of others. The precaution in establishing connections with others is counterbalanced by the desire to get closer to people. High scores (between 85 and 100 points) belong to people who accept others and are, in turn, accepted in interpersonal relationships.

The results/scores obtained by students following the application of this test are presented in the figure below:

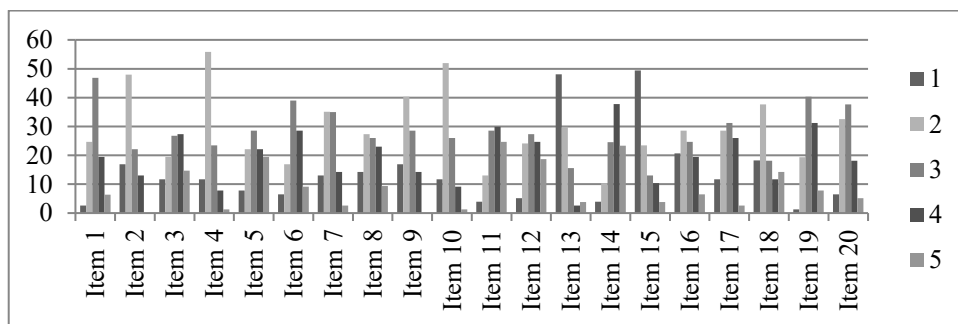


Figure 3. Collective scores obtained after applying the test

Following the data processing, we make the following clarifications:

a) Theoretically, the score on this test can be between 20 and 100 points. Because the scales are relative as they depend on the age, type of culture, environment and level of education of the respondents, we interpreted each answer in relation to the group average. We referred to the average score of 75 points proposed by W. F. Fey for the US population, but we changed the range corresponding to the average scores (50-80). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the degree of unconditional acceptance of others decreased. The social distance imposed due to the rapid contagion forced people to isolate themselves, to reduce direct contacts. Even if these aspects should not influence the degree of acceptance of others, they have changed social behavior.

b) The established interval represented a benchmark both in the interpretation of individual and collective scores. The number of subjects who completed the test is 77. Of these, 26 (33.77 %) obtained scores lower than 50 points, which places them in the category of those characterized by intolerance towards others. Only 11

subjects (14.49 %) obtained scores over 80 points, most of them with scores included in the middle range.

c) Compared to the scores obtained by W.F. Fey, the results obtained by us indicate a higher percentage of subjects who show intolerance (if in the mentioned study those with low scores are in proportion of 20 %, those with average scores are in proportion of 60 %, and those with high scores are in proportion of 20 %, in our study the percentages are distributed as follows: 33.77 % are in the lower range, 48.06 % have average scores, while only 14.29 % have high scores).

d) We found that subjects who confess that they think positively in relation to themselves and relate positively to others, do not explicitly express their desire for change. There may be a number of factors that explain the erosion of trusting others, the low degree of acceptance of peers, low tolerance in interpersonal relationships. There are psychological factors (e.g., non-acceptance of others can betray lack of self-reconciliation, a negative self-image) and social (e.g., conditions imposed during the pandemic), cultural factors and educational factors.

5.4. Discussions

In relation to the age of the respondents, the majority of respondents are in the range of 20-29 years (93.51%); four of them are between 30-49 years old (5.19%), only one being over 50 years old (1.30%). All those over the age of 30 have an urban background and have obtained high scores in terms of acceptance of others. Therefore, although the number of respondents in the 30-50 and over 50 age range is small and a larger sample is needed, we associate age with increased acceptance. Moreover, as research on the subject shows, “acceptance may therefore be an emotion regulation strategy that aging populations can rely on in the face of some cognitive declines” (Shallcross *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, acceptance is more likely to occur in a non-urban context than in an urban context. The research data indicate that the residence variable was not a decisive factor in the subjects' answers (urban: 33.33% low scores, 50.00% medium scores and 16.67% high scores; rural: 34.29% low scores, 54.29% medium scores and 11.42 % high scores).

Acceptance of others is an indicator of prosocial behavior. Because the theme of the course I took with the students is directly related to the application of elements of the sociology of education, the results of the investigation helped us to adapt the curriculum and work tasks so as to create the conditions for developing prosocial behavior in students.

6. Conclusions

The acceptance of others is understood as a necessary condition in the development of prosocial behavior. Part of morality, it is the result of several individual and situational factors, including parental variables and empathic traits. Given the widespread benefits of social behavior, many people are interested in promoting it. In addition to being able to give of our time or money, we can provide support and assistance in a variety of ways: keeping the door open for a stranger, caring for a sick relative, helping an elderly person cross the street, complimenting someone, returning a lost wallet etc.

When engaging in generous behavior provides opportunities for positive interactions and social relationships, help is likely to be particularly beneficial to the helper. Considered an “umbrella term” to describe actions taken to enhance the well-being of others (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), prosocial behavior should be encouraged and pursued in educational programs because it has long-term benefits both individually and from the perspective of achieving social harmony.

REFERENCES

1. Bandura, A. (1980). The Social Learning Theory of Aggression. In R. A. Falk and S. S. Kim (Eds.). *The War Sistem. An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 141-155. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
2. Barnett, M. A. (1987). Empaty and related responses in children. In N. Eysenberg and J. Strayer (Eds.). *Empathy and its development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Watson, M., Solomon, J. & Schaps, E. (1989). Effects of an Elementary School Program to Enhance Prosocial Behavior on Children's Cognitive-Social Problem-Solving Skills and Strategies. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 10, 147-169. Retrieved at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973\(89\)90002-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973(89)90002-6)
4. Berkowitz, L. & Connor, W. H. (1966). Success, failure, and social responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4(6), 664-669. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023990>
5. Bierhoff, W. (1987). Donor and Recipient: Social Development. Social Interaction and Evolutionary Processes. *European Journal of Psychology*, 17, 113-119. Retrieved at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.10-02/ejsp.2420170110?samlreferrer>
6. Brickman, P., Rabinowitz, C. V., Karuza, J. Jr., Coates, D., Cohn, E. & Kidder, L. (1982). Models of helping and coping. *American Psychologist*, 37(4), 368-384. Retrieved at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.37.4.368>
7. Chelcea, A. (coord.). (1994). Eu în relație cu ceilalți. *Psihoteste*. Bucharest: Știință și Tehnică.
8. Chelcea, S. (1996). Comportamentul prosocial. *Psihologie socială. Aspecte contemporane*. Iasi: Polirom.
9. Chelcea, S. (2004). *Psihosociologie. Teorie, cercetări, aplicații*. Iasi: Polirom Publishing House.
10. Conway, C. C. & Slavich, G. M. (2017). Behavior genetics of prosocial behavior. In P. Gilbert (Ed.). *Compassion: Concepts, research and applications* (pp. 151-170). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315564296-9>
11. Darley, J. M. & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4), 377-383. Retrieved at: <http://doi:10.1037/h0025589>
12. Decety, J., Bartal, I. B.-A., Uzefovsky, F. & Knafno-Noam, A. (2016). Empathy as a driver of prosocial behaviour: highly conserved neurobehavioural

- mechanisms across species. *Philosophical Transactions B*. Retrieved at: <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rs-tb.2015.0077>
13. De Waal, F. B. M. (2008). Putting the altruism back into altruism: the evolution of empathy. *Annual Review Psychology*, 59, 279-300. Retrieved at: <http://doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093625>.
 14. Duduciuc, A., Ivan, L. & Chelcea, S. (2013). Comportamentul prosocial. *Psihologie socială. Studiul interacțiunilor umane*. Bucharest: Comunicare.ro
 15. Dugatkin, L. (1997). *Cooperation among animals: an evolutionary perspective*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
 16. Dunfield K. A. (2014). A construct divided: prosocial behavior as helping, sharing, and comforting subtypes. *Frontiers in psychology*, 5, 958. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00958>
 17. Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Miller, P. A., Fultz, J., Shell, R., Mathy, R. M. & Reno, R. R. (1989). Relation of sympathy and personal distress to prosocial behavior: A multimethod study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(1), 55-66. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.1.55>
 18. Eisenberg, N., Guthrie, I. K., Murphy, B. C., Shepard, S. A., Cumberland, A. & Carlo, G. (1999). Consistency and development of prosocial dispositions: A longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 70, 1360-1372.
 19. Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., & Spinrad, T. L. (2006). Prosocial Development. In N. Eisenberg, W. Damon and R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 646-718). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
 20. Emmons, R. A. & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377>
 21. Fey, W. F. (1954). Acceptance of self and others, and its relation to therapy-readiness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 10, 269-271. Retrieved at: [https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-4679\(195407\)10:3<269::AID-JCLP2270100318>3.0.CO;2-E](https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-4679(195407)10:3<269::AID-JCLP2270100318>3.0.CO;2-E)
 22. Graziano, W. G. & Eisenberg, N. (1997). Agreeableness: A dimension of personality. In R. Hogan, J. A. Johnson and Briggs, S. R. (Eds.). *Handbook of personality psychology*, 795-824. Academic Press, San Diego.
 23. Hastings, P. D., Utendale, W. T. & Sullivan, C. (2007). The Socialization of Prosocial Development. In J. E. Grusec and P. D. Hastings (Eds.). *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research*. pp. 638-664. Retrieved at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2006-23344-025>
 24. Hoffman, M. L. (1973). *Empathy, Role-Taking, Guilt and Development*, Bethesda, Md. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED085109.pdf>.
 25. Isen, A. M. (1970). Success, failure, attention, and reaction to others: The warm glow of success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 15(4), 294-301. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0029610>

26. Kappes, A., Nussberger, A. M., Faber, N. S., Kahane, G., Savulescu, J. & Crockett, M. J. (2018). Uncertainty about the impact of social decisions increases prosocial behaviour. *Nature Human Behavior*, 2, 573-580. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0372-x>
27. Kenrick, D. T., Neuberg, S. L. & Cialdini, R. B. (2002). *Social Psychology. Unraveling the mystery*. Second edition, Allyn & Bacon.
28. Knafo-Noam, A. & Israel, S. (2009). *Genetic and Environmental Influences on Prosocial Behavior*. Retrieved at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238115339_Genetic_and_Environmental_Influences_on_Prosocial_Behavior
29. Knafo-Noam, A., Uzefovsky, F., Israel, S., Davidov, M. & Zahn-Waxler, C. (2015). The prosocial personality and its facets: genetic and environmental architecture of mother-reported behavior of 7-year-old twins. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6(112). Retrieved at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4327421/>
30. Nowbahari, E., Scohier, A., Durand, J.-L. & Hollis K. L. (2009). Ants, Cataglyphis cursor, Use Precisely Directed Rescue Behavior to Free Entrapped Relatives. *PLoS ONE*, 4(8), e6573. Retrieved at: <http://doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0006573>
31. Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W. & Feldman, R. D. (2010). *Psychologie du développement humain*. 7^e edition, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale.
32. Piff, P. K., Kraus, M. W., Côté, S., Cheng, B. H. & Keltner, D. (2010). Having less, giving more: The influence of social class on prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99 (5), 771-784. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020092>
33. Reykowski, J. (1975). Position of Self-Structure in a Cognitive System and Prosocial Orientation. *Dialectic and Humanism*, 2(4), 19-30. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.5840/dialecticshumanism1975242>
34. Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological monographs: General and applied*, 80(1), 1-28. Retrieved at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0092976>
35. Rushton, J. P. (1985). Differential K theory: The sociobiology of individual and group differences. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 6(4), 441-452. Retrieved at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869\(85\)90137-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(85)90137-0)
36. Shallcross, A. J., Ford, B. Q., Floerke, V. A. & Mauss, I. B. (2013). Getting better with age: The relationship between age, acceptance, and negative affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 734-749. Retrieved at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3609879/>
37. Schroeder, D. A. & Graziano, W. G. (2015). To Field of Prosocial Behavior: An Introduction and Overview. In D. A. Schroeder and W. G. Graziano (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Prosocial Behavior*. Oxford: University Press.
38. Tsang, J.-A. (2006). BRIEF REPORT Gratitude and prosocial behaviour: An experimental test of gratitude. *Cognition & Emotion*, 20(1), 138-148. Retrieved at: <http://doi:10.1080/02699930500172341>

39. Zamfir, C. & Vlăsceanu, L. (coord). (1998). *Dicționar de sociologie*. Bucharest: Babei Publishing House.
40. Warneken, F., Hare, B., Melis, A. P., Hanus, D., Tomasello, M. (2007). Spontaneous altruism by chimpanzees and young children. *PLoS Biol*, 5(7). Retrieved at: e184. <http://doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.0050184>
41. Warneker, F. (2016). Insights into the biological foundation of human altruistic sentiments. *Current opinion in Psychology*, 7, 51-56.
42. Watkins, P. C. (2004). Gratitude and subjective well-being. In R. A. Emmons & M. E. McCullough (Eds.). *The psychology of gratitude*, 167-192. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
43. Weinstein, N. & Ryan, R.M. (2010). When helping helps: Autonomous motivation for prosocial behavior and its influence on well-being for the helper and recipient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98, 222-244. Retrieved at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0016984>
44. Whiting, B. & Edwards, C. P. (2010). A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Sex Differences in the Behavior of Children Aged Three Through 11. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 91(2). Retrieved at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00224545.1973.9923040>