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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ALTRUISM

ZWIĄZEK ZACHOWAŃ PROSPOŁECZNYCH Z ALTRUIZMEM

Abstract

The article deals with the definition and description of the concept of altruism from its ethical and philosophical side against the background of prosocial behaviour. We point out the relation between prosocial behaviour of man and altruism based on a summary of respondents' opinions on the issues of trustworthiness and efficiency of charitable organizations, respondents' participation in their support and the most common way of donation.

Effective altruism is supposed to be a kind of helper for people who want to donate part of their money to charity organizations to improve the world, but are unable to make the right decision about whose financial contribution they are donating. Distrust of charities is becoming more and more current, leading people to stagnate charity. The lack of information on efficiency, functioning, results and a non-transparent list of sources of funding for charitable organizations has prompted us to be more interested in this area. A transparent list of the most effective charities with detailed information on the use of funds to which every person would have access could be a way to express charity and humanity more than ever before. The most ideal scenario is for all people to adopt such behaviour, but in today's world there is the opposite extreme - egoism, selfishness, individualism, materialism and lack of interest in others, which, unfortunately, often hide behind altruism. Society, as such, cannot do without altruistic behaviour, so even "impure" motives can bear fruit, of course, to some extent. Altruism is most often confused with the concept of pro-sociality, as a way of helping others, without expecting the reward that can come, but forms the core not only of ethical education but of each education because it leads to

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more positive relationships. Living in a society where there is positive energy and people are helping each other is a fuller life.

Keywords: Altruism, Egoism, Prosocial behaviour, Social ethics, Effectiveness

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy definicji i opisu pojęcia altruizmu od strony etycznej i filozoficznej na tle zachowań prospołecznych. Zwracamy uwagę na związek między prospołecznym zachowaniem człowieka a altruizmem w oparciu o podsumowanie opinii respondentów na temat wiarygodności i efektywności organizacji charytatywnych, udziału respondentów w ich wsparciu oraz najczęstszego sposobu dawstwa.

Skuteczny altruizm ma być rodzajem pomocnika dla osób, które chcą przekazać część swoich pieniędzy organizacjom charytatywnym na rzecz poprawy świata, ale nie są w stanie podjąć właściwej decyzji o tym, czy wkład finansowy przekazują. Nieufność organizacji charytatywnych staje się coraz bardziej aktualna, co prowadzi do stagnacji działalności charytatywnej. Brak informacji o wydajności, funkcjonowaniu, wynikach i nieprzejrzystej liście źródeł finansowania organizacji charytatywnych skłonił nas do większego zainteresowania tą dziedziną. Przejrzysta lista najskuteczniejszych organizacji charytatywnych ze szczegółowymi informacjami na temat wykorzystania funduszy, do których każda osoba miałaby dostęp, mogłaby być sposobem na wyrażenie miłości i ludzkości bardziej niż kiedykolwiek wcześniej. Najbardziej idealnym scenariuszem jest przyjęcie takiego zachowania przez wszystkich ludzi, ale w dzisiejszym świecie istnieje przeciwna skrajność - egoizm, egoizm, indywidualizm, materializm i brak zainteresowania innymi, które niestety często kryją się za altruizmem. Społeczeństwo jako takie nie może obejść się bez altruistycznych zachowań, więc nawet „nieczyste” motywy mogą oczywiście przynieść owoce. Altruizm jest najczęściej mylony z koncepcją prospołeczności, jako sposobu pomagania innym, nie oczekując nagrody, która może nadejść, ale stanowi rdzeń nie tylko edukacji etycznej, ale każdej edukacji, ponieważ prowadzi do bardziej pozytywnych relacji. Życie w społeczeństwie, w którym jest pozytywna energia i ludzie pomagają sobie nawzajem, jest pełniejszym życiem.

Słowa kluczowe: Altruizm, Egoizm, Zachowanie prospołeczne, Etyka społeczna, Skuteczność

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Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.

"So do people love the real good, or just the good that is good for them?" (Aristotle)

Prosocial behaviour, including true altruism, which can be considered the most noble manifestation of the human being, creates the necessary counterbalance to this attitude of life, calling on the present person in an imperative way to his ethical responsibility to others, especially those who find themselves in emergency situations types of support and assistance. Altruism is a problem that concerns mainly the motives of conduct of actions

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concerning other people, which are not always easily recognizable. It may be accompanied by an altruistic theme or egoistic. The egoistic motive, that is, helping others based on the idea of future self-benefit given the helping person gains, directly or indirectly. There are authors according to which human behaviour is always motivated by egoistic motives. Human action can also be assessed on the basis of the ultimate objectives of the proceedings. These goals (as well as motives) are associated with the value ladder of a person on the basis of which action can be selfish or selfless. However, not only the motives and objectives but also the results and consequences determine the nature of the proceedings. Man can act from altruistic motives, but we do not always characterize the resulting act as altruistic, and vice versa.

Altruism as an exceptional feature, and a key feature of human nature, is predominantly perceived and characterized as a philosophical and simultaneously ethical concept. Philosophical and ethical teachings of altruism seem to be one of the main pillars. The term is evaluated on the basis of assessment of the morality of human behaviour in society. Altruism occurs amongst people living together as a moral duty of each individual, as a moral principle, norm and attitude of perception of others. Altruism, its manifestations and expressions are related to human behaviour and society, nowadays, we see it as a philosophical and ethical problem. Altruism is attributed to a high social potential, which is why it is a precondition for cooperation between people. True altruism had immense social value. It has its meaning, purpose and aim in itself. Under the influence of various social changes, the degree of human tactfulness has transformed so much that humanity has lost the ability to express collective human empathy. People tend to follow their own egoistic interests, regardless of the benefit of the common interest. They perceive donation and charity only in the context of money and do not understand the fundamental value of altruism, namely the perception of compassion. Altruism is not only about the money side, but also about donating its time, talent, knowledge and knowledge to promote a universally beneficial purpose. Effective altruism can be a way that will lead humanity to change and promote better development of society. Choosing the right form of aid or choosing effective charities can have a huge positive impact on society. Due to the information society and the boom of social networks, altruism and charity are amongst large number of people, whom are willing to help. Charity is one of those activities that bring joy not only to us but also to whom we give it.

“One evening, an old Indian took his grandson and told him about a battle going on inside each person. He said to him, 'Boy, the battle in each of us is between two wolves. One is bad. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sadness, selfishness, rudeness, hatred, self-pity, falsehood, pretentiousness and ego. The other one is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, equanimity, modesty, kindness, empathy, generosity, loyalty, compassion and trust.' Grandson thought about all of that and after a minute he asked: 'And which wolf will win?' The old Indian responded: 'The one you feed more.' (Khera, 2018)

The moral intent of virtuous behaviour directed at others is to do good only for them and to create the biggest benefits for them. Altruism as a characteristic manifestation of a human is an interesting topic and has been present throughout the history of human culture. It was dealt with by philosophers in the ancient history of diverse philosophical currents and schools. The concept of the term itself and thus its content fulfilment differs in different schools and authors depending on their emphasis on altruism. Záškodná and

Mlčák (2015) perceive altruism as a motivational state, aimed at improving the well-being of another person, Sýkora (2015) understands altruism as a selfless way of thinking and acting for the benefit of others. Bruni (2016) points to altruism based on a specific way of thinking and selfless attitude towards people.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated.

Goal

In our article, we focused on specifying the concept of altruism in the perception of pro-social behaviour based on the principles of philosophy and ethics and the attitude of the general public to the issues of confidentiality and efficiency of charitable organizations in Slovakia. The analysis yielded results for an unspecified target group, which consisted of the general public from the age of 18-65 years. The target group consisted of 200 respondents in the Žilina self-governing region.

Aims of paper. Methods

File and methodology

The survey was carried out in the form of questionnaires intended for an unspecified general public in the Žilina self-governing region, which were used to find out public attitudes to the issue of confidentiality and efficiency of charitable organizations in Slovakia.

The questionnaire was anonymous and realized in September-October 2019. The implementation was carried out in the Žilina self-governing region.

The primary source for us was Muehlhauser L., (2015). *Four Focus Areas of Effective Altruism*. Secondary sources Sýkora P., (2015), Rachels J., (2015). Khera S., (2018).

Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion

Results and Interpretation

Contemporary philosophical discourse on "altruism vs. egoism" is often helped by knowledge from evolutionary biology and behavioural sciences, and theory of reciprocal altruism holds strong position here, its compatible with the knowledge of evolutionary biologists and psychologists. It is called a "reconceptualization of the concept of altruism" (Sýkora, 2015) and the reasons for such an initiative need not to only be purely theoretical, but also quite pragmatic (e.g. an effective solution to the problem of donation).

Hrehová (2011) describes the views of S. Freud in her publication. According to psychiatrist and psychologist Sigmund Freud, altruism is a manifestation of the neurotic need of the subject to minimize guilt for manifested egoism. The mechanism of manifestation of altruism can manifest itself differently. Either in some particular threatening situation without realizing the magnitude of the deed (e.g. saving a person's life at the cost of one's own life), or there is a case where altruism becomes the conscious value of a person that affects behaviour and it becomes the meaning of life. Freud claims that altruism should absolutely not be underestimated under any circumstances.

"Selfless behaviour manifests itself very clearly in some cases of heroism, leading to man's destruction, or at least to losing his position, to a difficult struggle with the whole society." (Losskij in Remišová, 2011) In ordinary life, however, the manifestations of selfless acts manifests itself in different forms, such as a conscientious doctor and mother

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of their children. "... the essence of altruism is providing some benefit to the other person without expecting external rewards" (Záškodná - Mlčák, 2015) However, in this procedure it is very important to mention that if a person acts altruistically, selflessly, they act like that on the basis of their own beliefs and identities. It is internally motivated. "Only selflessness makes a friend a true friend, different from a "casual" friend, makes the family a system other than a pure exchange of goods and services, makes a work of art more than just a commodity and does not identify true prayer with superstitions" (Bruni, 2016) It defines altruism as an activity that contributes to an individual at the expense of the individual, who performs that activity.

We can define altruism as a behaviour, in which we do not care for ourselves, for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others. More precisely, it is a kind of thinking and action which main motive is to benefit the other person or people, even at the cost of their own losses, which often exceed the value of the act. On the contrary, we consider behaviour in which the individual thinks exclusively or primarily of themselves egoistic, they are solely interested in their own benefit and is not at all interested in others.

Záškodná - Mlčák (2015) points out that the concept of prosocial behaviour has only recently emerged, although reflections on various manifestations of prosocial behaviour and altruistic behaviour within religion and philosophy have been going on for thousands of years. In the early days, until around 1930, prosocial and altruistic manifestations were seen as manifestations of egoism. More interest in prosocial behaviour emerged in the 1964 after a tragic incident in which a woman was murdered with the participation of many witnesses. Unfortunately, this case has not been resolved to this day. In this case, B. Latané and J.M. Darley empirically sought to explain the passive behaviour of witnesses.

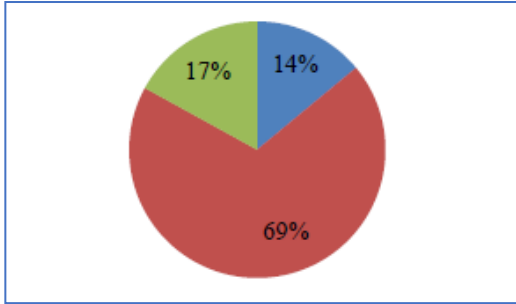
The process of helping others is often referred to as help, prosocial behaviour and altruism. These words are often used as synonyms, but there are authors who distinguish them on certain theoretical levels. D. A. Schroeder understands prosocial behaviour as a "superior category, which includes three subcategories of behaviour; helping, altruism and cooperation." (in Záškodná - Mlčák, 2015)

E. Staub considers that prosociality is essentially equivalent in meaning to the term altruism. It mentions the following Leeds features of altruistic behaviour (Nákonečný, 2012): "action is for its own purpose and is not profit-oriented, action is done on a voluntary basis, action causes good." On the basis of a deeper analysis of these concepts we can conclude that and prosocial behaviour cannot be identified. In the case of pure altruism, it is an inner satisfaction without recourse to aid, whereas, on the contrary, prosocial behaviour is largely conditioned by emotional motivation.

Questions for respondents:

The questionnaire created by us was completed by 200 respondents in the Žilina self-governing region. Of the total, 49% were men and 51% were women. The same number of respondents was 27% between the ages of 21-35 years, 36-50 years and 51 years and over. At least 19% of respondents were in the 18-20 age range.

Figure 1. Question for respondents no. 1: Do you support charitable organizations?

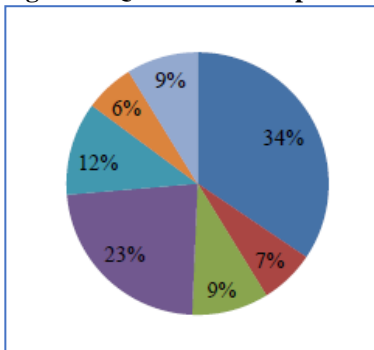


14% Yes, regularly
69% Yes, sometimes
17% No

Source: Authors' calculations

The aim of the question was to find out to what extent the respondents were involved in supporting charitable organizations. Most respondents (69%), is involved in the occasional support of charities. 14% of respondents participate in regular support of charities and 17% do not support charities at all. The stated reasons for not contributing, are, for example lack of money, mistrust of some charities, uncertainty in the efficient use and misuse of funds, transferring responsibility to socially disadvantaged citizens to the state, lack of time, poor personal experience of contributing to charities.

Figure 2. Question for respondents no. 2: How do you contribute to charities?



34% giving money to street collections
7% money sent to the account
9% through SMS donation
23% donating through 2% of the tax

Source: Authors' calculations

The aim of the question was to find out the most common form of donation to charities. Most respondents (34%) contribute through giving money to street collections. 8% of respondents are involved in donating 2% of the tax, 6% of respondents by purchasing various charitable items, 2% of respondents through a donation SMS, 1% of respondents through money sent to bank account, and by different means 3% of respondents. A total

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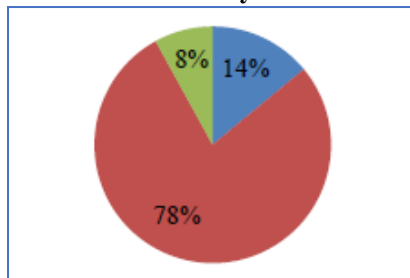
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of 28% of respondents reported combined responses consisting of two options. A total of 9% of respondents indicated three or more response options. 13% of respondents indicated empty answer. Among other ways respondents mentioned: clothes, toys, food, help given to a particular person, providing work, donating personal belongings.

Figure 3. Question for respondents no. 3: Do you inform yourselves after your contribution about how your funds were used?

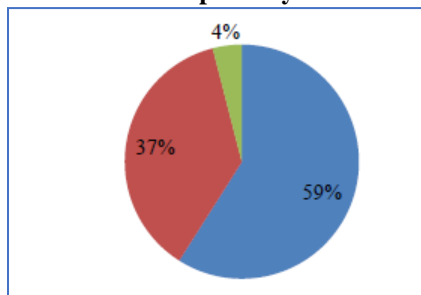


14% Yes
78% No
8% Empty

Source: Authors' calculations

The aim of the question was to find out to what extent respondents are interested in how charities use their funds. Up to 78% of respondents stated that they were not interested in how their financial contributions are used. By contrast, only 14% of respondents stated that they were interested in how their funds were used. 8% of respondents did not comment on this issue. Based on the results obtained, we assume that the respondents are not interested in verifying the subsequent use of financial contributions by charities after the financial contribution.

Figure 4. Question for respondents no. 4: Do you think charitable organizations use the donations responsibly and efficiently?



59% Yes
37% No
4% Empty

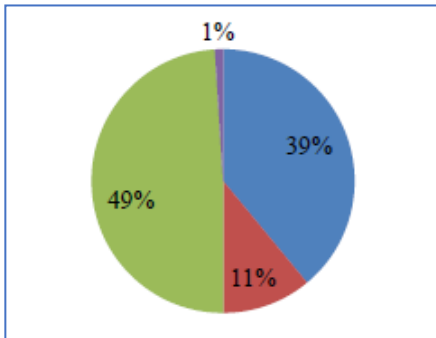
Source: Authors' calculations

The aim of the question was to find out to what extent the respondents are convinced about responsible and effective handling of charitable organizations with donated funds. A total of 59% of respondents stated their trust in charities. On the other hand, 37% of respondents stated their mistrust. Of the total number, 4% of respondents did not respond.

Question for respondents no. 5: What specific charities do you contribute to?

The aim of the question was to find out to what specific charities respondents contribute to. This question was of an open-ended nature, to which the respondent could give an answer at their own discretion. Listed charities include: League Against Cancer (Daffodil Day), Union of Blind and Visually Impaired Slovakia (White Crayon), Unicef (Blue Button), Smile as a Gift, Children's Oncology, Drop of Hope, Red Cross, Long Nose, Children's Hour, Night Hope, Jašidielňa, Náruč, Heart for Children, Children's Homes, Women in Need, Good Angel, Church Collections, Retirement Homes, Multiple Sclerosis, MANGA Children in Need, Mental Health League and more. The answers given are not ranked by the highest percentage.

Figure 5. Question for respondents no. 6: Do you watch shows that present themselves by helping others like V “siedmom nebi, Hodina det’om, Noc nádejí, Srdce pre deti” and more?

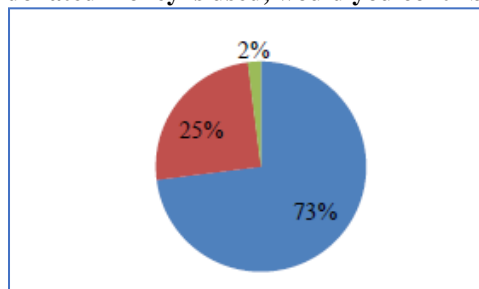


39% Yes, I watch it but I do not engage during watching
11% Yes, I watch it and actively participate
49% No, I don't watch it

Source: Authors' calculations

The question asked was to identify the link between tracking the sessions and actively supporting them. 49% of respondents reported that they do not watch shows that are focused on helping others in need. 11% of respondents reported watching and actively participating in the sessions. Only 39% of respondents reported watching the sessions without engaging. Only 1% of respondents stated the unanswered answer.

Figure 6. Question for respondents no. 7: If there was a transparent and easily accessible list of the most effective charities in Slovakia, where you could see how the donated money is used, would you contribute more to the charities than before?



73% Yes
25% No
2% Empty

Source: Authors' calculations

The aim of the question was to establish a link between the development of a transparent list of charities, where the use of financial contributions and expenditure would be detailed, and increased charitable behaviour of respondents. 73% of respondents would contribute more to charities. For 25% of respondents, contributing to charitable organizations would not change by developing a transparent list. An empty answer was given by 2% of respondents.

The word "pure" evokes, first and foremost, the pure motives for helping others. If the motives (the first step in the decision-making) of the acting person are pure, without any forms of egoism, then the fact whether the result is associated with reward or not plays no significant role. Acquiring prosocial behaviour not only helps to coexist in the community, because if each individual behaves pro-socially, this creates harmonic relationships and eliminates egoism, but also helps shape the personality of individuals. This type of behaviour must be led from birth. Certain forms of prosocial behaviour appear to be innate, I would call them basic instincts, such as the mother instinct to help a child. People who behave prosocially are very popular in society and therefore they create role models for others. Through their behaviour, which has a positive effect on the environment, this behaviour also develops in other people. The path of learning others to prosocial behaviour is most effectively guided through direct experience with this behaviour.

People are pursuing their goals, wanting only the best for themselves, but also wanting others to perceive them as perfect altruists. More profit brings them to behave altruistically in the form of "more to mine than to lose" than to be a staunch egoist who "does not want to lose anything and just wants to mine".

Discussion

However, the results of the perception of altruism and the level of credibility in the field of ethics and philosophy that we obtained through the analysis of the questionnaires submitted are not of a general nature, since they are made up of only a small number of respondents. However, the obtained results revealed current opinions of the lay public on the issue of transparency and efficiency of charitable organizations and also showed the

level of charity among respondents. In Slovakia as well as abroad, a transparent list of the most effective charities would be beneficial not only for people who are active donors, but also for new potential donors who are deciding where to donate their money. An annual list of each charity would be needed to produce a detailed list. Data analysis would have to be entrusted to the responsible and professionally competent experts who would be able to move in the field. Another possible recommendation would be to inform the general public about the need to know where their donated money is going and whether it is being used efficiently and responsibly by individual charities. For this purpose, a list of recommendations could be made on what donors should focus on and, on the contrary, be careful about. Based on the selfish gene theory or reciprocal altruism as one of its species, we can conclude that "pure altruism" does not exist. Since we know that altruistic behaviour is biologically conditional to some extent, the scope for promoting 'pure altruism' remains a non-biological factor. Pure altruism represents a unique and true form of altruism, as a selfless behaviour towards other people. An important factor in this behaviour is motivation, which must always be internal. Such altruism represents "true morality, independent moral consciousness, spiritual nature, or religious nature that somehow overcomes our selfishness and dictates our genes." (Blackmore, 2010) for the person who performs the act. Only this kind of remuneration, the inward fulfilment of the act, is acceptable. Real pure altruists are able to sacrifice not only their time, strength, money and property but also their health and safety to help others. For them the needs of others are paramount, and then their own. But identifying an act as a manifestation of "pure altruism" is not easy because we cannot prove the focus of motivation. This fact has also been realized by the author himself, H. Spencer (2010) sees altruism and egoism as equal opponents, and their assessment must be situational and at the same time advocate that there must be a compromise between altruism and egoism: "... all they will at the same time be selfless and selfish at the same time, willing to hurt themselves for the benefit of others and to receive adversity at the expense of others: these are features that exclude themselves." Bruni (2016) notes that prosocial behaviour has great benefits in interpersonal relationships, as it is done through emotions and emotions, creates a positive attitude among people and ultimately contributes to minimizing egocentrism. A person who lives in the society of prosocialists does not help others with the intention of gaining reward because they understand society as a harmonious whole. With prosocial behaviour, which has certain features in common with altruism, it is a bit easier in practice. The willingness to volunteer to help, to compass, to help them and to accept their integrity without expecting a reward that may or may not come is, in my opinion, a key point in any coexistence of people around the world, so we would define our own understanding of pure altruism.

Conclusions

Altruism has played a very important role in the evolution and formation of human society, and by these processes altruism itself is influenced and transformed under the influence of time. The work has tried to offer a holistic and comprehensive view of the topic of altruism and its perception as a philosophical and ethical problem.

Altruism as a philosophical and ethical problem represents a wide range of understanding and interpretations. To really understand this is a deep reflection on what altruism is, what

leads to altruism and what altruism brings. Various scientific disciplines such as socio-biology, evolutionary biology and, of course, psychology offer answers to these questions. Theoretically, it is not easy to explore altruism as it is an important part of society. Acting altruistically with others, whether genetically related or not, is not easy for many people, albeit very important. "The principle of selflessness is the basic principle every human relationship and authority and hierarchy rely on it and from there draw their legitimacy." (Bruni, 2016)

In today's world, egoism is slowly spreading more and more, and at first glance, the obvious manifestations of altruism are only a computational form of enrichment and being the one who will benefit from the action. The main criterion for deciding whether or not to help was the question: "What will I get out of it?" However, it should be recalled again that man is a social creature and must get along with others, whether or not he wants to, because he would not be able to live in isolation from others.

Altruism itself lies in the foundations of human nature and in the biological constitution of man. It thus forms an integral part of life. Determining correctly whether we are altruists, and to what extent, depends primarily on the nature of our nature, decisions, concrete actions and complex assessments of situations. We assume that education for altruism should be carried out from early childhood, because it plays a big role in human life.

Internal focus reflects social responsibility. The notion of a just world means that a person seeks to eliminate injustice and reduce suffering. Their fulfilment has a positive effect and increases the willingness to help, the altruistic behaviour is increasing. Intense empathy is the disposition that is necessary for the practice of altruism.


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