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THE SENSE OF ADVENTURE AS A MOTIVATION FOR A PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The present research is checking the hypothesis that the prosocial behavior depends on the inclination of people to seek strong sensations as well as on their self-evaluation if they like strong sensations. For this purpose a multitude of 425 participants filled in the self-evaluation questionnaires for prosocial behavior as a dependent variable, on one side, and, for sensation seeking as an independent variable, on the other side. In addition, the participants defined to what extent they like strong sensations. Those evaluations were used as a second independent variable. As a result of a stepwise regression analysis we found that both of the independent variables have a statistically significant influence on the self-evaluation for prosocial behavior as a dependent variable.

Key words: prosocial behaviour, helping behavior, sensation seekers, interpersonal reactivity index.

Introduction: The *problem about helping* has been concerning researchers from different scientific fields for centuries. Since Darwin's time biologists have been trying to explain the behavior of organisms — from insects to man, *willingly sacrificing in the name of the group*.

Yet, while the evolutionary biologists are fighting with the paradox of the selection of altruistic features, the *brand new idea for the selfish gene* appears to be far more acceptable than the one for the evolutionary match. The latest researches in this direction tend to depict the mathematical theory of the evolutionary biology and are usually presented to us in the form of conceptual works [20; 25].

The views of psychologists are different from those of biologists mainly in their orientation towards the individual and the situation rather than towards the mechanisms for selecting a specific feature.

Usually the object of a research are the reasons to show *helping behavior*, varying from the elaborately considered researches *from the position of a bystander* of Darley and Latanĭ (1968) to those of the motivation provoking such behaviors [2; 20]. The effects of the situation are also analyzed in search of *contextual factors, leading to an increase of the possibility of the individual to be of help in a certain situation*. The existing disagreements, however, raise the following question: Is it possible to help led only by *motives directed to the other* or all our actions are dictated by purely *selfish interests*?

Later, those questions are referred to in the debate '*Egoism against Altruism*' [2]; that directs also to the *empathy* — to what extent it could influence the acts of *the helping behavior*. There are two sides in this argument — those

who support the possibility that the altruistic acts are provoked by altruistic motives, and the others, who do not support such a possibility.

However, whether one would help or not *seems predetermined both on the situation and the characteristic features of the potential helper*.

The present research is provoked by two basic moments:

– the two catastrophic events from 1912 in Bulgaria — the flood in the village of Biser and the fire in Bistritsa¹;

– ideas from an unfinished research for the people who risked their lives to save other people.

In the book '*Altruism and Helping Behavior*' edited by J. Macaulay and L. Berkovitz (1970), in a separate chapter named '*The Rescuers*', there is a description of an unfinished research for individuals who helped Jews during the Holocaust. The researchers James H. Bryan, Robert Kurtzman, David Rosenhan and Perry London find out the presence of a characteristic feature that is common for the *rescuers*² interviewed by them that predisposes involvement in prosocial acts.

The research described by London finishes prematurely because of lack of funds and the researchers themselves unanimously agree that the extract is too small to be analyzed in any way. The research has not been published and that is why there is a lack of any commentaries in response to the observations. Yet, the ideas of this research have a certain influence on some of the later theories for the development of '*altruistic behavior*' [16; 24].

Theoretical premises for sensation seeking as a characteristic feature

The English term '*sensation seekers*' was introduced by Marvin Zuckerman in 1960. Zuckerman separates people inclined to take risks into four categories corresponding the four subscales of the scale of the same name created by him.

Zuckerman defines *sensation seeking* as a personality trait determined to *strive to new and intensive experiences and readiness to take physical, social, legal and financial risks*.

In his longitudinal researches Zuckerman establishes that *sensation seeking* predicts the possibility to commit crimes and violate social norms³.

In a number of other researches it is proven that the *gender* is a significant indicator about the level of manifestation of the tendency to *seek sensations*. The type of religion that people profess is also a significant indicator about that. It is also proven that divorced men and women have higher results on the scale for sensation seeking than the married and lonely ones. The researches with twins show that '*sensation seekers*' are influenced by a gene provoking high levels of dopamine and serotonin. The high concentration of these two substances as well as the release of cortisol predetermine the tendency to risk behavior, while the lower levels of them lead to avoiding risk. Lower levels of

¹ The first — the ones who react are people who practice extreme sports.

² Further in the report '*rescuers*' means the participants in the described research.

³ The selfless acts of the *rescuers* could be simultaneously observed both as *prosocial* and as *prosecuted by law*.

monoamine oxidase 'A', which regulates the level of dopamine in the brain are observed in people attracted to risk.

Sensation seeking is analyzed additionally through psychophysiological evaluation of the reactions of the autonomous nervous system in response to different stimuli. The researchers compare the reactions of the participants in exciting situations, in situations that provoke *prosocial acts*, and in situations with an indefinite arousal (for example, yohimbine). Unfortunately, we did not find a research that finds a natural dependence between *sensation seeking* from one side and the *prosocial behavior* from the other. It is actually more likely that the sought connection is with such behavior that in no way carries the signs of prosociality.

However, the above-mentioned research of the *rescuers* suggests such a possibility. The establishment of a possible connection between *prosocial behavior* and *sensation seeking* that is described by London could be of help for a more profound understanding of *the motives* that provoke *prosocial acts*.

It is important not to forget that the individuals London (1970) interviewed represent a rather unusual group of people. Not only did they involve themselves in altruistic acts but they also kept that behavior for a long period of time realizing the deadly threat all the time. The behavior of those people symbolizes the ultimate level of altruism and it is unlikely that their motives could be detected with the help of a common model.

This research shows to a certain extent that the reasonableness of the hypotheses risen by London that one is capable of altruistic acts in extreme circumstances in which *sensation seeking* acts as a predictor for *prosocial behavior*.

Theoretical premises for prosocial behavior

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines *prosocial behavior* as *helpful and supporting relations in the coexistence in one and the same society* [22].

Yet, although we usually evaluate helping people as something *good, helping behavior* (at least in its definition) does not in itself define person's behavior as an act that could be accepted as socially or morally acceptable. For example, assisting someone in committing a crime is a type of *helping behavior* but it is not to be considered and action that one would support with pleasure as it opposes the statutory social norms.

Some researchers make an attempt to explain altruistic behavior from the *position of the evolutionary perspective* or through a *developed stage model of altruistic behavior* [12]. Davis (1994) defines empathy as a *reaction provoked by the other's experience*. Davis's theory has the additional advantage that it is operationalized to the level of a self-evaluation instrument for assessing empathy [6]. Hoffman's model (1987) is similar to Davis's one (1983c), but it allows *egoistic and altruistic motivators* to combine in the following behavior. From all the models of *prosocial behavior* created up to that moment the ones that are the most widely applicable and briefly presented are those of *Schwartz (1970)* about *taking decisions* and of *Staub (1978)* about *the con-*

sequences of a situation. These models predict to a great extent the possibility of helping in different situations.

Prosocial behavior is analyzed mainly as benefiting *the other* and demanding the helper to understand the needs, desires and goals of that *other* to undertake acts for their fulfillment. Moreover, in order to evaluate an act as a prosocial one, its final goal has to be *benefiting the other person*, which does not mean that the helper does not need to have any benefits.

A number of researchers of *prosocial behavior* agree that the *disposition to empathy, cognitions and acts* may be encompassed by a single definition connected with *the motivation to act*. Such a perception is important for the research work in this research since the motivation of the *rescuers* interviewed by London (1970), lies in the acts they had undertaken to save the Jews, and not in any *orientation or going through the sufferings* of the Jews in case they are sent to concentration camps.

The understanding of the potential helper that someone else really needs help is shown as one of the most usual premises for *prosocial behavior manifestations*.

Among the researches on prosocial behavior the one with the greatest contribution is that of Ervin Staub (1987). His two volume work *Positive social behavior and morality* is considered as a work in which the theoretic foundations of many researches on *empathy* and *prosocial behaviors* from the 1980s and 1990s are laid.

Most of the theorists accept some of the forms of *emotional response* in the helper as a necessary component of the prosocial behavior, but the reaction itself undoubtedly could direct the potential of the helper to deriving certain benefits. Before the initiation of the prosocial action it is necessary for it to *accept* the respective motivational direction. An appropriate direction for such a motivation would be *empathy to be combined with the situational factor*. The *empathy* construction seems, from one side, as an addition to Hoffman's theories (2000) and Eisenberg [10], and, from the other side, as a possible connection with the emotional direction of *altruistic behavior* [6].

In this research the *prosocial behavior* is analyzed as a behavior provoked by *motives in which the needs of the favored person dictate the behaviors of the helper*. Similar to Blum (1992) we also presume continuation of altruistic behaviors — from sparing time to direct someone to the correct direction to saving people from the flames of a burning building.

With the stipulation that we are going to use the terms *altruistic, helping* and *prosocial behavior* as exchangeable, in the present paper, everything connected to *altruism* will be directed to *prosocial behaviors*.

In most of the definitions for *altruism* it is unambiguously mentioned about *devotion or care for the others* as the specification that *altruism*¹ is the *primary cause for an action or a motive for a behavior* is clearly stated. The

¹ Both in everyday life and in science altruism is more and more often used as a synonym of prosocial behavior.

founder of the term is considered to be Auguste Comte (1851), who, in his works, defined it as a *selfless desire to live for the others*.

For a rather long period of time the dominant perception has been that behind *altruism* hides *disguised egoism* and that each altruistic action, regardless if its way of realization, is, in all cases, in favor of the helper [22]. If we take it for granted that the human being is an egoistic creature by nature, then, as a consequence, we have to also agree that he/she is a social creature, too. Based on a number of researches done in the 1990s, more and more researches tend to agree that *altruism* does exist.

In 1991, 15 noted researchers of *prosocial behavior* were invited by *Psychology Inquiry* Publishing House to discuss on the thesis of Batson and Shaw about *the pure altruism originating from empathy*. Although the invited researches often made critical remarks to the material suggested for discussion all of them unanimously supported the thesis that *one is capable of altruistic acts* [2]. The common for all the reasons presented from the positions of the biological perspective is that behind the altruistic behavior always stays *an outer element or compulsion*. We can find explanations for the prosocial actions from the positions of *the psychological perspective* in two influential psychological theories — the theory of *psychoanalysis* and the theory of *homeostasis*.

As it is known, *psychoanalysis* analyzes human behavior as a result of impulses. Anna Freud (1936) includes altruism among the *mature* protective mechanisms of the ego, defining it as *a protection in which, in order to cope with the threatening instinctive impulses, the individual undertakes actions to satisfy the others' needs*.

The task of the present research is to check experimentally if there is a connection between *sensation seeking and prosocial behavior*. Our hypothesis is that *sensation seeking* will have a statistically significant influence on *prosocial behavior*.

Design of the research

In order to check the research hypothesis for the influence of *sensation seeking* on the *prosocial behavior*, in the present research we used a quasi-experimental design. Although according to some researchers there are some limits concerning this plan connected to the validity of the results the quasi-experimental design has the decisive advantage as it is performed in natural environment and does not require the creation of any artificial laboratory conditions. The latter are often a problem in analyzing different behaviors as, in most of the cases, laboratory situations seem to be a distant analogy of the real ones. The influence of the variable *sensation seeking* on the *prosocial behavior* will be analyzed through a multiple regression analysis.

Method

Analyzed individuals. The research was done with the participation of 425 people working in the system of power engineering aged 19 to 61. 341 of them are men and 111 are women.

Instruments. The instruments we used for the present research were:

1. The **Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)** developed by Davis (1983c), as possibly the best proven instrument for evaluating empathy. IRI is a questionnaire that includes 28 items evaluating four components: *Empathic care*, *Personal distress*, *Acceptance of different perspective* and *Daydreaming*, encompassed in four subscales with 7 items each. The separation of the component *acceptance of different perspectives* from *the empathic care* again presents the Impersonal Reactivity Index as an extremely attractive instrument. The answers to these items are evaluated in accordance with the five-point Likert scale (from 0. *Does not describe me well* to 4. *Describes me well*). The subscale of *Empathic care* is used to evaluate empathy in the present research.

2. The **Sensation Seeking Scale** of Zuckerman SSS-V (*Sensation Seeking Scale — Form V, 1994*). The scale measures the necessity to look for *sensations*. The scale for analyzing the personal evaluation of **sensation seeking** of Marvin Zuckerman is a forced choice self-evaluation questionnaire, including 40 pairs of bipolar statements from which the participants have to choose answer 'a' or 'b' depending on which of the two describes them better. The items are divided into four subscales: *sense of adventure*; *seeking experiences*; *rejecting bans, intolerance to boredom*. Each of the four subscales includes 10 items, as the result from the different subscales shows the common need to seek sensation.

To evaluate the variable *sensation seeking*⁸ in the present research the self-evaluation of the participants has been used in accordance with the subscale of the instrument with the same name.

Procedure

Self-evaluation questionnaires and instructions for their filling in were sent in sealed envelopes to workers in thirty hydroelectric plants on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. All participants received written assurance that the information they fill in would not be connected in any way with their participation in the research. After they had been filled in, the questionnaires were returned, in sealed envelopes again, to the registry office of the *Hydroelectric plants Enterprise*.

The data from the questionnaires was entered in electronic tables and was processed with the help of a statistical program from the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 19.

Results and discussion

As a result of the conducted research we received the answers of 425 participants on the two above-mentioned instruments. For every participant we calculated the raw marks on both scales — the scale of Davis measuring the dependent variable *prosocial behavior* and the scale of Zuckerman measuring the independent variable *sensation seeking*.

To check the power of the influence of both independent variables — *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire

on the dependent variable *prosocial behavior*, we used the method of multiple regression. All analyzed variables are quantitative and are measured with the relevant instruments.

The regression analysis of the dependence of the variable *prosocial behavior* on the two independent variables *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 from the questionnaire 'I like strong sensations'* was conducted in accordance with the stepwise regression method.

The hypothesis formulated in the *Design of the research* section was decomposed into the following statistical hypotheses:

H_0 : No natural dependence is found of the *prosocial behavior* on the *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire. In other words, the Beta coefficients in front of both independent variables **are statistically insignificant**.

H_1 : Natural dependence is found of the *prosocial behavior* on the *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire i.e. the Beta coefficients in front of both independent variables **are statistically significant**.

Those statistical hypotheses are checked through the linear regression model. The linear regression model of the dependences between the above-mentioned variables looks as follows:

Prosocial behavior = $b_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Sensation seeking} + \beta_2 * \text{Item 6 'I like strong sensations'} + \varepsilon_i$ — $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$,

where:

N is the number of the analyzed people (the volume of the excerpt)

β_1, β_2 are the parameters of the model. They are presented as private regression coefficients and are used to measure the net change of the dependent variable at the single increase of the relevant independent variable.

At this stage we checked the hypothesis for presence of statistically significant connection, adequately modeled through the selected multiple regression model, between the dependent variable *prosocial behavior* and the independent variables *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire.

When deciding the selection of hypothesis we use the criterion of Fisher (F) and the criterion of Student (t). The appointed error risk is $\alpha = 0,05$.

Table 1

Model of the connection between the dependent and the independent variables^b

Model	Amount of the squares	Degrees of freedom	Average of the squares	F criterion	Error risk
Regression	177,233	1	177,233	12,409	,000 ^a
Deviation	8626,901	604	14,283		
Corrected amount	8804,134	605			

a. Independent variables;

— *Sensation seeking*

— *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire

b. Dependent variable: *Prosocial behavior*

From *Table 1* above it can be seen that the *criterion of Fisher* (F) = 12,409, its level of significance of Sig. — 0.000, i.e. Sig. $F < \alpha = 0,05$, which means that we have to reject the zero hypothesis for lack of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable and to accept the alternative hypothesis.

In this way we established that the prosocial behavior is function of the *sensation seeking* and *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire, i.e. prosocial behavior depends both on *sensation seeking* and on the answers of the participants to *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire.

In *Table 2* below the calculated values of R^9 and R squared¹⁰ are given in accordance with the summary model. *The coefficient of the multiple correlation* R characterizes the level of dependence between the valuables. In this case $R = 0,142$ which is in the interval 0,1–0,2 and this means that the dependence between the *prosocial behavior* and the two independent variables is very good. *The coefficient of the multiple determination* R^2 in this case is = 0,20.

Table 2

Summary model

Model	R	R ²	Corrected R ²	Standard error of the evaluation
1	,142 ^a	,020	,019	3,77928

Dependent variable: *Prosocial behavior*

a. Independent variables;

— *Sensation seeking*

— *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire

In percentage form the *coefficient of determination* $D = R^2 \cdot 100 \% = 20 \%$, which means that 20 % of the variation of the result variable may be explained with the overall influence of the two independent variables.

The values of the *Beta* coefficient for both independent variables are given in *Table 3* below. As it can be seen, *Beta* in front of the independent variable *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* is 20,585. It is statistically significant at very little probability of error ($t = 53,83$; $p=0,000$). This means that the zero hypothesis for lack of influence of the independent variable *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* on the *prosocial behavior* as a dependent variable is **rejected**.

The alternative hypothesis is accepted that the independent variable *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* has influence on the dependent variable. In other words, the more the participants like strong sensations, the higher their result is on the scale for prosocial behavior.

The *Beta* coefficient = -0,091 in front of the independent variable *sensation seeking* is also statistically significant ($t = -3,52$; $p=0,000$). Therefore, we should reject the zero hypothesis for lack of influence of the independent variable *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* on the prosocial behavior as a dependent variable and accept the alternative hypothesis that this independent variable also influences the prosocial behavior. The direction of the sense of adventure is reverse, i.e. with the increase of the sensation seeking, the prosocial

behavior decreases. With an increase of 1 in the sensation seeking we have a decrease in the prosocial behavior with $-0,91$.

On the basis of the comparison of the values of the *Beta* coefficients we can say that the influence of the independent variable *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* ($Beta = 20,58$) on the prosocial behavior is much stronger compared to the influence of the independent variable *Sensation seeking* ($Beta = -0,091$).

Table 3

Coefficients^a Beta

Model	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients	Student t	Error risk
	B	Standard error	Beta	Criterion	
Item 6	20,585	,382		53,830	,000
Sensation seeking	-,091	,026	-,142	-3,523	000

a. Dependent variable: Prosocial behavior.

Conclusions:

As a result of the conducted research we established that the prosocial behavior is function of the variables *sensation seeking* and the self-evaluation on *Item 6 'I like strong sensations'* from the questionnaire.

In future researches it would be good to include groups of participants who have different types of job, and especially directed towards the field of social activities or ones that are really different from the social activities. In this way it could be checked if the type of work done in the different jobs has a stronger or weaker connection with the altruistic behavior.

We would not recognize the altruists who walk among us neither by their way of dressing, nor by their hairstyle. No visible features distinguish the person who would help from the one who would walk away pretending that the need of the other does not exist. The altruist may be tangibly different but he/she may be different in a way that the others cannot recognize. No matter how different those people are they care about the benefit of the others, they enjoy life, and rarely feel bored by the things they are offered. Such findings have social importance as they outline the boundaries in which we can learn how to *help others*.

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ПРИСТРАСТЬ ДО ПРИГОД ЯК МОТИВАЦІЯ ДО ПРОСОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ

Резюме

У даному дослідженні перевіряється гіпотеза про залежність просоціальної поведінки від схильності людей шукати сильні відчуття, від самооцінки того, чи подобаються їм ці сильні відчуття. Для цієї мети 425 учасників дослідження заповнили опитувальники для діагностики просоціальної поведінки в якості залежної змінної і пошук сильних відчуттів як незалежної змінної з іншого боку. Крім того, було діагностовано, в якій мірі учасникам подобаються сильні відчуття. Ці показники були використані в якості другої незалежної змінної. В результаті покрового регресійного аналізу ми виявили, що обидві незалежні змінні надають статистично значущий вплив на самооцінку просоціальної поведінки.

Ключові слова: просоціальна поведінка, допомога, відчуття пошуку, міжособистісний індекс реактивності.

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СТРАСТЬ К ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЯМ КАК МОТИВАЦИЯ К ПРОСОЦИАЛЬНОМУ ПОВЕДЕНИЮ

Резюме

В данном исследовании проверяется гипотеза о зависимости просоциального поведения от склонности людей искать сильные ощущения, от их самооценки того, нравятся ли им эти сильные ощущения. Для этой цели 425 участников исследования заполнили опросники для диагностики просоциального поведения в качестве зависимой переменной и поиска сильных ощущений как независимой переменной с другой стороны. Кроме того, было диагностировано, в какой степени участникам нравятся сильные ощущения. Эти показатели были использованы в качестве второй независимой переменной. В результате пошагового регрессионного анализа мы обнаружили, что обе независимые переменные оказывают статистически значимое влияние на самооценку просоциального поведения.

Ключевые слова: просоциальное поведение, помощь, ощущение поиска, межличностный индекс реактивности.

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