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FOSTER PARENT PROFESSION AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The article analyzes the approach to the foster family as an example of pro-social (helping) behavior. Three aspects of prosocial behavior of adoptive parents are investigated: prosocial identity, social norms of prosocial behavior, manifestations of care (compassion, altruism, empathy). A comparative analysis of the selected aspects in the groups of foster mothers and mothers raising blood children is presented.

Helping other people in any civilized society is considered one of the most important human values. Helping behavior is the provision of direct help to someone who needs it. From the point of view of psychological definitions, helping behavior is classified as prosocial activity.

In psychological science, the problem of prosocial behavior (activity) is not given as much attention as the problem of antisocial behavior. The hallmark of help-motivated activity is that it leads not so much to one's own well-being as to the well-being of another person, that is, it brings more benefit to the other than to the subject himself.

In the work of H. Heckhausen, based on the results of the analysis of experimental studies on the problem of motivation for providing assistance, it is concluded that experimental paradigms for studying the activity of assistance underestimate the influence of personal factors compared to situational ones [1]. Most of all, the reactions of the subjects were studied when help is required in unexpected, sudden situations and requires a quick decision. When help is needed by completely strangers in an unfamiliar environment, a person is guided rather than by stable personality traits, but by momentary emotional states.

However, in life there are many examples of premeditated, targeted assistance. For example, charity, voluntary work for the well-being of others, volunteering.

The profession of a foster parent is considered by us as a variant of prosocial behavior. The profession of a foster parent is help that is deliberate, planned in advance, and not situational. Therefore, such a manifestation of prosocial behavior is not situational, but long-term and purposeful, should be considered from the standpoint of the orientation of the individual (i.e., a set of stable motives that are characterized by interests, inclinations, beliefs, ideals, attitudes of a person).

One of the principles of the social policy of the Republic of Belarus in relation to orphans is the priority attitude to family forms of placement. Various forms of foster families have been created in Belarus. One of them is a foster family.

At present, in the psychological and pedagogical literature, it is possible to single out the concept of "foster family", understood in a broad context. This is the so-called traditional approach. According to this approach, I. N. Kurbatsky points out that "adopted children are children left without parental care, and accepted into new family groups, or brought up with the participation of a new family member – a stepfather or stepmother, as well as other persons replacing parents, in conditions of relations of adoption, guardianship (guardianship) [2, p. 36]. According to this definition, any form of family arrangement of an orphan child, as well as a family in which the child is adopted in relation to one of the parents, can be called a foster family.

The problem of correlating the legislative and traditional interpretation of this term is resolved as a result of harmonizing both positions by introducing a broad and narrow concept of a foster family.

A narrow understanding of the concept of "foster family" is based on modern family law and is interpreted as a form of placement for orphans and children left without parental care.

In the Republic of Belarus, a foster family is a model of family placement for orphans, where the work of parents is paid by the state. The regulation on the foster family was approved by the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated October 28, 1999 No. 1678.

In Western countries (Great Britain, Sweden, Germany, etc.), this practice has been going on for many decades.

In the Republic of Belarus, the number of orphans and children left without parental care who are being raised in families (in family-type orphanages, foster and foster families) at the end of 2018 amounted to 14869 [3]. In general, more than 18 thousand orphans and children left without parental care live in the Republic.

Raising children with a special destiny on the basis of creating a foster family is a professional activity, responsible and serious work that requires significant personal resources from the parent [4]. The key moment of motivation of a person working as a foster parent is the desire to help orphans, i.e. prosocial behavior.

In our opinion, external reinforcement in the form of a foster parent's salary and child allowance is not sufficient for a person to decide to become a foster parent. The current state of affairs is such that everyone who wanted to work as a foster parent has already done so, and new candidates are hardly found. So, on the example of the city of Gomel, adoptive parents are women, more than 60% of them over the age of 50, raising children from 11 to 18 years old (72%). Less than 10 new candidates for the role of a foster parent are trained in Gomel per year.

We are interested in the question why some people are ready to take on the upbringing of someone else's child and do it, while others are not. In the context of considering the profession of a foster parent as a purposeful prosocial behavior, in 2019 a psychological study was conducted on the basis of the Educational Institution "Gomel City Social and Pedagogical Center", one of the main areas of activity of which is the selection and training of candidates for foster parents (parents-educators), creation of a foster family (and other forms of substitution), psychological and pedagogical support of a foster family.

The study involved foster parents and parents-educators of family-type orphanages in the city of Gomel in the amount of 51 people, women, average age – 46 years, work experience as a foster parent for more than 5 years, education – secondary special.

As a control group, the study involved 60 women, average age – 38 years, the presence of biological children – 2, education – higher and secondary special.

The first hypothesis of our study was that there are differences in the prosocial identity of women who work as foster parents for a long time, in contrast to women who do not show long-term purposeful helping behavior.

The prosocial orientation of a person is a set of content and dynamic characteristics of a person that determine the propensity to help others and the willingness to benefit other people and society as a whole. The person who provides help wins, as helping behavior is considered prestigious and noble. Although the helper has to pay a certain price for this (for example, time, money, effort), the positive consequences of providing assistance can be more significant than the negative ones [5].

For the study, the methodology "Content of Prosocial Identity" (GSA, Barriga and et al.), adapted by N.V. Kukhtova [6]. The purpose of the methodology: to assess moral self-awareness and the degree that determines the importance of moral values for self-understanding, that is, to determine the totality of personal characteristics that reflect moral judgments and determine the reflexivity of actions to help people around.

Description of the technique. A list of 16 statements in the form of two words is proposed, the importance of which should be noted individually according to the degree of preference (from 1 to 4 points, where the first is the most significant). Personal characteristics are grouped into three blocks: eight non-moral qualities (imaginative, hardworking, sociable, intellectual, funny, logical, independent, energetic); four moral qualities (honest, loyal, fair, reliable); four prosocial moral qualities (attentive, kind, sympathetic, generous). To assess the content of prosocial identity, the meanings of non-moral concepts are subtracted from the meanings of prosocial virtues. For statistical data processing, Student's t-test was used.

The second hypothesis of our study is related to the social norms of prosocial behavior. It is possible that the social norms of adoptive parents differ in their degree of expression from the social norms that guide the behavior of ordinary parents raising blood children.

Prosocial behavior is any action aimed at the well-being of other people. According to H. Heckhausen, prosocial behavior should be analyzed from the point of view of several important points, one of which is personal norms that set the standards for assessing the subject of his altruistic act (which generally do not coincide with the normative standards prescribed by society) [1].

The social norms of prosocial behavior include: the norm of social responsibility, the norm of reciprocity, the norm of justice, the norm of "cost-reward" [5]. These norms are found in all human societies. They provide a cultural basis for prosocial behavior. In the process of socialization, individuals learn these norms and gradually begin to behave in accordance with the principles of prosocial behavior. The formation of prosocial behavior largely depends on the level of assimilation of social (social) norms, which is associated with normative regulation (behavior management).

The norm of social responsibility is a social rule based on the fact that people should help those who need it, includes causal attribution and a sense of responsibility for various social situations in order to avoid feelings of guilt and preserve self-esteem. This norm requires prosocial behavior in all cases where the person in need of help is dependent on a person who can provide help.

The norm of reciprocity is associated with various reactions to the provision of assistance, the so-called exchange relations of various motivations (altruistic and egoistic). Generally, aid is given in exchange for previous aid, the expectation that people give to help others will increase the likelihood that they will be helped in the future.

The norm of justice is designed to help people "according to merit." Based on the fact that the members of the group will be satisfied with the distribution of the reward, which is proportional to the participation of each member of the group. People define it as "fairness" when each person receives remuneration in the amount in which personal participation in joint activities was established (undertaken).

The cost-reward norm is associated with personal distress and emergency assistance.

Research methodology: "Social norms of prosocial behavior", developed by I.A. Furmanov, N.V. Kukhtova [5]. Purpose: to study the positions of appropriation of social norms and building interpersonal relations on the basis of four types of norms that influence the prosocial orientation of behavior: the norm of social responsibility, the norm of reciprocity, the norm of justice, the norm of "costs-reward".

For statistical data processing, Student's t-test was used.

The third hypothesis of our study was expressed in the fact that there may be differences in the manifestations of care, i.e. expressiveness of compassion, empathy and altruism between foster parents and parents raising blood children.

Empathy, responsiveness, altruism, responsibility, and a desire to help are important personality traits of any parent, and especially an adoptive parent. These characteristics constitute the content of prosocial identity.

Research methodology "Methodology for measuring care" (H. Kohut, B. J. Boome, F. N. Kerlinger), adapted by I. A. Furmanov, N. V. Kukhtova [5]. Purpose: to measure caring through the manifestation of compassion, empathy and altruism.

Description of the technique. It is a questionnaire consisting of 3 scales: compassion, sympathy (empathy), altruism.

According to the results of our study, the indicators of prosocial identity in the group of adoptive parents were: mean = 2.86. For the control group: mean = 1.75. The differences are significant: $t_{emp} = 2$ at $p \leq 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis of our study was confirmed.

Conclusions: the moral self-awareness of women who have been working as foster parents for many years is qualitatively different from the hierarchy of moral qualities of women who do not show long-term purposeful helping behavior. For adoptive parents, prosocial moral qualities (attentive, kind, sympathetic, generous) are of greater importance in the hierarchy of the moral self-awareness of the individual.

According to the results of our study, the indicators of the norms of social responsibility, the norms of reciprocity, the norms of fairness, the norms of "cost-reward" between the groups of women working as foster parents, and Women raising only blood children do not differ significantly (Table 1). Thus, our hypothesis was not confirmed.

Table 1 – Appropriation of social norms, averages for two samples

Social norms	Women who work as foster parents (average value)	Women raising only blood children (average value)	Differences
Norm of social responsibility	12,49	11,45	temp = 1,4 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05
Reciprocity norm	4,35	4,85	temp = 1 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05
Norm of Justice	11,04	10,55	temp = 0,6 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05
Cost-reward norm	8,53	8,33	temp = 0,3 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05

Conclusions: in our opinion, the results of the study can be explained by the belonging of both samples of respondents to the same socio-cultural stratum. The same culture, the same social norms accepted in our society and socialized by these representatives of society. It is likely that the reasons for adoptive parenthood as prosocial behavior are less related to learned social norms.

According to the results of our study, the indicators on the "Compassion" and "Empathy" scales between the groups of women working as foster parents and women raising blood children do not differ significantly (Table 2). However, significant differences between these groups were found on the "Altruism" scale.

Table 2 – Measures of care, two-sample averages

Measures of care	Women who work as foster parents (average value)	Women raising only blood children (average value)	Differences
Scale "Compassion"	17,29	17,27	temp = 0,1 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05
Scale "Empathy"	15,92	15,3	temp = 0,7 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05
Scale "Altruism"	18,9	16,95	temp = 2,0 tcr = 1,97; p≤0,05

Conclusions: women who have been working as foster parents for many years declare a greater inclination to altruism than women raising blood children. Those adoptive mothers are more inclined to selfless concern for the well-being of others, to selflessness, kindness and mercy.

According to J. Reikovsky, altruistic behavior is defined as "love and care for others", "the desire for the well-being of others in the absence of benefits for oneself", "the tendency to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the group without compensation", "the desire to help another, even if it entails some costs for the helper" [7]. In our opinion, such an understanding of altruism is closest to the position of the majority of foster parents, for whom the profession of a foster parent inalienably involves the investment of a huge amount of strength, kindness, patience, and complicity in the life of a foster child.

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PECULIARITIES OF THE SUBJECTIVE FEELING OF LONELINESS OF BELARUSIAN SCHOOLCHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL ORIENTATION

The article is devoted to the actual psychological problem of experiencing loneliness in adolescents. The article describes the results of an empirical study of the subjective feeling of loneliness among Belarusian schoolchildren. A comparative analysis of data on the manifestation of various types of loneliness in schoolchildren with a prosocial and socially inert personality orientation is presented. It is concluded that the pro-social orientation of the personality of schoolchildren, the desire to help others, to actively participate in socially useful activities, makes it possible to reduce the intensity of the subjective experience of loneliness and, in general, experience loneliness as a positive state.

At first glance, it may seem to a simple layman that the problem of loneliness least of all concerns schoolchildren, youth and the younger generation as a whole. But it's not. Modern teenagers are growing up in the era of information technology. On the one hand, constant access to the Internet and the ability to communicate at any time have led to the fact that modern teenagers have ceased to appreciate live communication and, in some way, have lost touch with the real world. On the other hand, the experience of loneliness for a teenager remains an acute problem. The concept of "digital loneliness" has appeared – the phenomenon of the subjective experience of loneliness by the digital generation [1].

Most psychologists are of the opinion that adolescence is the time of the formation of self-awareness, the formation of personality, when a teenager necessarily faces the experience of a feeling of loneliness. "The feeling of loneliness ... is a normal phenomenon, a consequence of the birth of inner life," notes the domestic psychologist I. S. Kon [2, p. 59].

In adolescence, the experience of loneliness can be more acute and have a negative impact on personal development. Teenage loneliness is dangerous because it can be accompanied by such consequences as depression, alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide attempts. This is associated with a sense of defenselessness and self-doubt, in their abilities. It seems to teenagers that no one hears or