DOES INTERNALISATION OF MORAL VALUES PREDICT ADOLESCENTS' PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND LESS TOLERANCE TOWARDS ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

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Abstract. The purpose of the current qualitative cross-sectional design study was to examine relations between the internalisation of moral values and prosocial behaviour as well as tolerance towards antisocial behaviour in adolescence. A total of 385 adolescents (192 girls and 193 boys) aged 13 and 16 years (mean age = 14.6, SD = 1.11) completed the self-reported measures of moral values internalisation, adolescents' prosocial behaviour, and tolerance towards antisocial behaviour. Girls scored significantly higher than boys on moral values internalisation and such prosocial behaviour types as altruism and help in emergency situations. Girls were significantly less tolerant towards antisocial behaviour. Multiple regression analysis showed that external and introjected value regulations were the significant predictors of altruistic behaviour. Only the identified regulation was a significant predictor of adolescents' intention to help others in emergency situations. Adolescent tolerance towards antisocial behaviour was predicted by the identified and integrated value regulations. Overall, these findings reflected the importance of personal values, especially moral values for encouraging adolescents' moral behaviour and intolerance towards antisocial behaviour of peers.

Keywords: adolescents' antisocial behaviour, moral values internalisation, prosocial behaviour.

Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial period in the development of abstract thinking skills that fully integrates the moral values and principles influencing the self-concept of adolescents (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Furthermore, the period is inseparable from the search, selection, awareness and integration of values (Aramavičiūtė, 2016). On the basis of daily experiences and examples, the impact of environment, adolescents develop their moral self-awareness that constructs their action strategies and regulates decision-making behaviour while coping with challenges and solving problems. Thus, the moral self-awareness of adolescent values is their moral decision-making and behavioural factor (Hardy & Carlo, 2005) as well as

the level of internalisation of moral values. According to Aramavičiūtė (2016), the internalisation of values reveals the transition of values to the inner world of a person, in other words, the development of values into an individual's personality, provokes concrete actions and expands the range of possibilities for values' perception. Thus, "the internalisation of values is viewed as a perspective research direction in the dynamics and stability of values as well as the essential basis for the values' development" (Aramavičiūtė, 2016: 150-151). Inter alia, values are internalised as the standard of personal behavioural regulation (Harter, 1998), and this internalisation continues to evolve as adolescents shape their moral identity (Hart, 2005). Values internalisation model is reflected by the Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1991). The emphasis is placed on four continuously outlined value regulation forms taking into account the degree of self-regulation and internalisation: the external regulation, where a person perceives external encouragement and punishment as a stimulus to act; the introjected regulation is the most closely related to the functioning of a person's ego, when values are taken from the outside, but are not yet perceived as one's personal self; the identified regulation demonstrates a clear perception and realization of values in activities, and the highest form of internalisation is considered - the integrated regulation, when values are interspersed with a person's identity and are perceived as one of thinking and behavioural projection factors (Hardy et al., 2008). Thus, lower levels (external and introjected) are referred to as emerging from the environment, while the higher levels of internalisation (identified and integrated) are the closest to the internal, independent choices of an individual. Supposedly, the degree of adolescent moral values is considered to be related to their intention to behave honourably. Jonhston & Krettenauer (2011) add that the importance of moral values relates to the expression of prosocial behaviour, while the adolescent's moral identity is supposed to positively predict their prosocial behaviour (Hardy, 2006). Studies have shown that the relationship between the moral values of internalisation and prosocial behaviour is weak or moderate (Kromerova, 2016; Paciello et al., 2013; Shields et al., 2017). Therefore, it has long been claimed that moral reasoning is important but insufficient aiming to explain prosocial behaviour (Blasi, 1980). Recent research shows that people do not necessarily need to perceive values as part of their own self, but if they are considered more important than other personal values, they become part of their identity over time (Blasi, 2009). A recently performed meta-analysis of 111 studies on moral identity and moral behaviour substantially confirms the idea that moral identity encourages ethical and prosocial behaviour and inhibits the manifestation of antisocial behaviour (Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016) as the adolescent's behaviour reflects their moral decisions, reasoning and internalisation of values. As people tend to judge the surrounding actions according to their moral prism, it is assumed that a higher

level of internalisation of moral values predicts the prosocial behaviour of adolescents and less tolerance to antisocial actions in their environment.

The purpose of the current study was to explore relations between internalisation of moral values and prosocial behaviour as well as tolerance towards antisocial behaviour in adolescence.

Methods

Participants

The sample included 385 adolescents (192 girls and 193 boys) between 13 and 16 years old (M age =14.6, SD =1.11) from four public schools in Kaunas city (the second biggest city) in Lithuania. Nearly two thirds (64.8 %) of adolescents lived with both biological parents, while 3.7 % of them lived with foster parents.

Measures

Moral values internalisation was assessed using the 24-item adolescentreport Moral Values Internalisation Questionnaire (Hardy et al., 2008) which was based on the Self-Determination Theory approach to internalisation (Deci & Ryan, 1991) and Prosocial Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Ryan & Connell, 1989). The questionnaire contained six questions with four answer options. As the questionnaire measures the internalisation of moral values, two questions were associated with fairness, two questions were associated with honesty and two ones – with the value of kindness. Each question asked the participants to rate the importance of different reasons why they might or might not engage in certain behaviour, on scale from 1 - not at all important to 5 - very important. The four items for each question represented the four forms of value regulation. Therefore, in total, six items for external regulation ($\alpha = .79$), six items – for introjected regulation ($\alpha = .82$), six items – for identified regulation ($\alpha = .84$) and six items – for integrated regulation ($\alpha = .82$) were represented. Composite scores for each level of internalisation (i.e. each form of values regulation) were created by calculating the mean of the six items corresponding to each level. It is possible to calculate a composite of overall internalisation, but in this study we analysed separate forms of value regulation.

Prosocial behaviour was measured applying the revised Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM-R, Carlo et al., 2003). This measure was adapted and validated to the Lithuanian population in previous studies (Šukys & Šukienė, 2015). The participants completed the 21-item questionnaire to access how likely they were to engage in prosocial behaviours across a variety of situations. The participants rated the extent to which the statements characterized them using a 5-point Likert scale (from $1 = does \ not \ characterize \ me \ at \ all$ to $5 = characterizes \ me \ greatly$). The original scale assessed six types of prosocial behaviour: public,

anonymous, dire, emotional, complaint and altruistic. Public prosocial behaviour was defined as behaviour intended to benefit others enacted in the presence of others. Anonymous behaviour was defined as the tendency to help others without other people's knowledge. Dire behaviour involves helping others during emergency or crisis situations. Emotional is behaviour intended to benefit others enacted under emotionally evocative situations. Compliant behaviour involves helping others when asked. Altruistic behaviour involves helping others when there is little or no perceived potential for a direct, explicit reward to the self. A higher score on each of these scales reflected a stronger endorsement. In Lithuania, the four forms of prosocial behaviour were distinguished during the process of questionnaire adaptation: help in asking for it or in case of emergency, anonymous, public and altruistic prosocial behaviour (Šukys & Šukienė, 2015). The four forms of prosocial behaviour were evaluated taking into consideration the factor of different cultures in this data analysis. Cronbach alpha ranged from 0.60 (for altruism) to 0.87 (help in emergency).

Tolerance towards antisocial behaviour was measured using *Attitudes about Behaviour Measure* (Loeber et al., 1991, 1998). This is a 16-item measure that assesses the youth's tolerance regarding a variety of delinquent behaviours ranging from skipping school to stealing, assault and substance use. The items were rated on a four-point scale from 1 = not wrong at all to 4 = very wrong. Although two sub-scales are identified (attitude towards substance use, and attitude towards delinquency), because of high inter subscales correlations (r=.96), the total score of all scale was used. Cronbach alpha for all scale was 0.87.

Procedure

The research of schoolchildren was subject to permission of school directors and verbal consent of schoolchildren that had to be obtained prior to the research. After the successful agreement with the school administration and arrangement of survey time the researchers arrived to place. The survey was carried out in classrooms during lessons. The teacher of the schoolchildren or the school's deputy director was participating in the survey. Prior to each survey the schoolchildren were explained the research purpose and instruction of the questionnaire filling. Emphasis was always given to the survey anonymity and possibility to refuse to participate in the survey at any time.

Data analysis

All the analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows software (version 22.0). The analysis included Cronbach's alpha coefficients, descriptive statistics and correlations calculation. The statistical or null hypothesis (Ho) of equality of the mean (M) between groups was tested using independent sample t-test and Cohen's d effect size was calculated. Hierarchical regression analysis was used for predictions of moral values internalisation on prosocial and antisocial behaviour as applied.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations were computed using the entire sample and presented in Table 1. The adolescents reported the identified regulation more, followed by the introjected, integrated and external regulations, respectively. In the study of prosocial behaviour, it was determined that adolescents were more likely to help others in an emergency. The research showed that adolescents were not tolerant to antisocial behaviour, since the mean of responses was higher than three.

Bivariate correlations were also conducted for the study variables (see Table 1). The four forms of values regulation were all associated positively with each other. All four forms of values regulation were significantly correlated with prosocial behaviour except anonymous prosocial behaviour. In addition, all forms of value regulation were positively associated with less tolerance towards delinquent behaviours. Lastly, help in emergency situation was positively related to adolescents' less tolerance towards antisocial behaviour.

Table 1 Correlations and descriptive statistics for values internalisation, prosocial behaviour and tolerance towards antisocial behavior

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. External									
2. Introjected	.79**								
3. Identified	.73**	.81							
4. Integrated	.64**	.73	.74						
5. Altruism	22**	21**	12*	11*					
6.	.07	.07	.06	.09	43**				
Anonymous									
7. Public	.20**	.23**	.21**	.23**	48**	.51**			
8. Help in	.36**	.38**	.42**	.37**	39**	.45**	.58*		
emergency							*		
9. TTAB	.34**	.39**	.41**	.26**	.02	05	.02	.19**	
Mean	3.82	3.93	4.05	3.87	2.92	2.91	3.09	3.55	3.25
SD	.79	.81	.79	.77	.85	.93	.86	.80	.71

Note. TTAB – tolerance towards antisocial behaviour. * p<.05; ** p<.01

Furthermore, we investigated gender differences in the study variables (Table 2). Comparing moral values internalisation girls scored significantly higher than boys on all internalisation forms. Further, we assessed prosocial behaviour by gender. Girls scored significantly higher than boys on altruism and help in an emergency situation. Comparing adolescents' tolerance towards antisocial behaviour significant differences emerged. Girls were significantly less tolerant towards antisocial behaviour as compared to boys.

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Table 2 Study variables comparison by gender

	Girls n=192)	Boys(n=193)		Cronbach's
Variables	M(SD)	M(SD)	— ι	α
External	4.02 (0.71)	3.62 (0.82)	5.15***	0.52
Introjected	4.08 (0.75)	3.77 (0.84)	3.78***	0.39
Identified	4.22 (0.72)	3.87 (0.83)	4.45***	0.45
Integrated	3.98 (0.71)	3.79 (0.82)	2.41*	0.25
Altruism	3.01 (0.88)	2.84 (0.80)	2.00*	0.20
Anonymity	2.83 (0.90)	2.99 (0.95)	-1.76	0.17
Public	3.10 (0.84)	3.06 (0.88)	0.54	0.05
Help in emergency	3.68 (0.77)	3.41 (0.80)	3.26***	0.34
TTAB	3.39 (0.64)	3.11 (0.74)	3.89***	0.41

Note.TTAB – tolerance towards antisocial behaviour ,* p < .05; *** p<.001

Table 3 Multiple linearregression analyses for the influence of moral values on prosocial and tolerance towards antisocial behaviour

	В	SEB	β	ΔR^2	\overline{F}			
			Altruism					
Gender	-0.29	0.09	17***	0.08	7.54***			
External	-0.24	0.09	-0.22**					
Introjected	-0.24	0.10	-0.23*					
Identified	0.15	0.10	0.14					
Integrated	0.08	0.09	0.08					
	Public prosocial behaviour							
Gender	003	0.09	0.02	0.05	4.89***			
External	0.03	0.09	0.03					
Introjected	0.11	0.11	0.10					
Identified	0.02	0.10	0.02					
Integrated	0.14	0.09	0.12					
		He	elp in emergend	e y				
Gender	-0.12	0.08	-0.08	0.19	17.99***			
External	0.04	0.08	0.04					
Introjected	0.07	0.09	0.07					
Identified	0.23	0.09	0.22**					
Integrated	0.13	0.08	0.12					
	Tolerance towards antisocial behaviour							
Gender	-0.14	0.07	0.10*	0.19	18.71***			
External	0.01	0.07	0.01					
Introjected	0.18	0.08	0.20*					
Identified	0.29	0.08	0.33***					
Integrated	-0.13	0.07	0.14*					

Note. * p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if the forms of moral value regulation significantly predicted adolescents' prosocial behaviour and tolerance towards antisocial behaviour (Table 3). In each analysis, variable of gender was also included as an independent variable. The analyses of anonymous prosocial behaviour according to the non-significant correlation with independent variables of value internalisation were not conducted. The results of the regression indicated that externalized ($\beta = -.22$, p < .01) and introjected ($\beta = -.23$, p < .05) value regulation significantly related to the outcome for altruism, however, adolescent gender was also a significant predictor ($\beta = .17, p < .001$). The analyses showed that none of the predictors significantly predicted public prosocial behaviour. The results of the regression analyses indicated that only the identified value regulation ($\beta = .22$, p < .01) was a significant predictor for help in emergency situation. Further, adolescent tolerance towards antisocial behaviour was predicted by introjected ($\beta = .12, p < .01$), identified ($\beta = .33, p < .001$) and integrated ($\beta = .14$, p < .05) value regulation with gender being also a significant predictor ($\beta = .10, p < .05$).

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to explore relations between internalisation of moral values and prosocial behaviour as well as tolerance towards antisocial behaviour in adolescence. It was assumed that a higher level of moral values internalisation would predict the prosocial behaviour of adolescents and less tolerance to the antisocial activities of the surrounding people. The research revealed that the introjected value regulations was significant predictors of altruistic behaviour but only the identified regulation was the significant predictor of adolescents' intention to help others in emergency situations. Adolescents' tolerance towards antisocial behaviour was predicted by the identified and integrated value regulation. Partly, as expected, a higher internalisation of adolescents' moral values predicts the expression of prosocial behaviour and a more critical attitude to antisocial activities. Commenting on these data, it should be mentioned that growth from childhood to adolescence is related to the development of cognitive abilities, which allows recognition of the needs of others and ways of help, as well as the moral awareness of the importance of helping others (Eisenberg et al., 2006). The importance of a cognitive maturation factor in constructing one's behaviour towards others is justified by the fact that values provide meaning, energize and regulate human behaviour, but only if they were "cognitively activated and central to the self" (Verplanken & Holland, 2002: 434). The study by Johnston and Krettenauer (2011) confirms the idea that prosocial behaviour is best predicted by a moral person's self-awareness. On the other hand, the existence of such moral content based self-awareness is indicated by a high level of internalisation of moral values. A person with socially acceptable values tends to take into account the needs of others, and their moral reasoning is based on a sense of individual responsibility towards others and the community (Paciello et al., 2013). Although adolescents with moral reasoning tend to behave more tolerantly (Breslin, 2006), according to this research, the internalisation of moral values relates to moral considerations and prosocial behaviour, but the antisocial behaviour of the surrounding people, referring to the internal prism of human values, is valued more critically than that of adolescents whose choice of values is influenced by external factors. Thus, the level of internalisation of adolescent moral values and moral reasoning are very important. The latter ones form the basis of civic activity, a conscious choice of goals and ways to achieve them, a critical adolescent's attitude to antisocial activities as well as help to set limits of tolerance and promote a sense of responsibility for society and community.

The research results also demonstrated that the identified value regulation was expressed more than the integrated, introjected and external regulations. It means that adolescents accept moral values as individuals and are guided by them in life. This form of regulation is considered to be one of the most autonomous value regulation forms and, according to Vansteenkiste et al., the supporters of Self-Determination Theory (2006), a motivating, growth-orientated human model. Individuals who perceive themselves as initiators of their behaviour experience pleasure in causality (Nuttin, 1973), while the needs for competence and personal causality, which are very closely related to the concept of autonomy, are the basis of the underlying motivational behaviour (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). According to Vansteenkiste et al. (2006), motivated activities are the natural basis for learning and development. It is believed that this can lead to many positive emotions (greater number of friends, better health, better skills), which strengthens the will of adolescents later (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). On the other hand, "the introjected regulation, which refers to extrinsic motivation more when a person does not fully accept values as their own and their own actions are still associated with expectations of self-approval, expresses alike integrated regulation that refers to the most self-determined form of internalized regulation" (Kromerova & Šukys, 2016: 27). However, according to Deci and Ryan (2000), all external motivation form (external, introjected & identified) differences were related to different experiences and outcomes of the respondents. The more individuals were regulated by the outside factors, the less interest and effort they showed to achieve results, tended to blame others and avoided responsibility for negative outcomes more. The introjected regulation was positively related to increased efforts, but also showed the increased respondents' anxiety, excitement and poorer coping with failures. Meanwhile the identified regulation, according to the authors, was associated with greater satisfaction and interest in school, as well as with more positive behavioural styles and greater respondents' efforts (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, it can be argued that a higher form of internalisation of values not only indicates the autonomous choices of a person's activity, but also provides an internal sense of satisfaction, a stronger sense of responsibility, a feeling of self-realization, and acts as the basis for natural development.

The research results demonstrated that girls scored significantly higher than boys on moral values internalisation and such prosocial behaviour types as altruism and help in emergency situation. Other studies (Hardy et al., 2013; Shield et al., 2017) also found that girls had higher moral values and more prosocial behaviours than boys. This can be explained by the fact that boys, more than girls, need external reinforcement, social support, group membership and peer recognition, which is regarded as components of external internalisation. Gillian (1982) states that the moral reasoning of girls is focused on concern for others, while the moral reasoning of boys manifests by following the norms and rules and are described as justice orientation. It can be interpreted that the moral judgement of boys depends directly on cognition, and for girls it is a fundamental emotional reaction. Silfver-Kuhalampi (2008) believes that sometimes the purpose of the research itself can lead to a perception among respondents about the distribution of social roles, so they may be inclined to present themselves as more emphatic. On the other hand, the author considers, if gender differences are in fact constructed by the gender factor itself arising from stereotypes, the latter are likely to be sufficiently strong rooted in order to influence their true behaviour. It can be claimed that the micro-environment plays an important role, and the different activities of boys and girls encourage them to develop different skills, influence the attitude, and the refinement of values, which is reflected in adolescents' social behaviour.

Conclusion

The research results showed that higher level of moral values internalisation predicts prosocial behaviour by adolescents. Specifically, identified regulation was the significant predictor of adolescents' intention to help others in emergency situation. Adolescents with higher level of moral values internalisation were less tolerant towards antisocial behaviour. Overall, these findings reflected personal values, especially the importance of moral values for encouraging adolescents' moral behaviour and intolerance towards antisocial behaviour of peers.

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