

Understanding Pro-Social Behavior: The Impact of Empathy on Adolescents in Rural and Urban Areas

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Abstract. Pro-social behavior is a form of someone's action that aims to help others. One of the factor that supports pro-social behavior is empathy. Empathy can be interpreted as a person's ability to understand the feelings and circumstances of others. The purpose of this study is to see the effect of empathy on prosocial behavior among adolescents in rural and urban areas. The research subjects were adolescents total of 95 people. Data analysis used descriptive test, and Linear Regression Test. The results showed that the majority of adolescent in rural and urban areas had a moderate level of empathy and prosocial behavior. While the results of regression analysis show that empathy generally has an influence on the prosocial behavior of adolescents in rural and urban areas of (31.2%) with $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Empathy affects the prosocial behavior of adolescents in rural areas by (34.4%) with $p = 0.00 < 0.05$, whereas in adolescents of the urban areas empathy has an influence on prosocial behavior of (31.8%) with $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. This means that empathy has a greater effect on prosocial behavior of adolescents in rural areas compared to adolescents in urban areas.

Keywords: Empathy, pro-social behavior, adolescent

Introduction

Pro-social behavior is a form of someone's action that aims to help others (Asih & Pratiwi, 2010). Pro-social behavior aims to help a person become better physically and psychologically, and make a better relationship between individuals (Istiana, 2016). Nowadays with the rapid development of technology, people's dependency on gadget, internet, and social media are growing bigger, and that affect a person's prosocial behavior. Some examples can be found among adolescent nowadays, they are too busy with social media and their own problems, thus making them less concerned about the people around them. A study also explained that social media influences adolescent's prosocial behavior (Asmaya, 2015).

Factors that can improve pro-social behavior are supported by several aspects, one of which is empathy. A study found that empathy is related to prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Empathy can lead to someone's prosocial behavior in the elderly (J. N. Sze, Gyurak, Goodkind, & Levenson, 2012). In addition, empathy also affect children's prosocial behavior (Sakurai, 1986). Empathy is a major influence on prosocial behavior compared to personal pressure (Williams, O'Driscoll, & Moore, 2014).

The level of empathy and pro-social behavior differ in each environment or culture. This is showed in Barr and Higgins's research (2007), that students from ordinary schools show more empathy and higher prosocial behavior than students in excellent schools. Other studies said, people who live in villages have higher levels of prosocial behavior than people who live in the cities (Afolabi, 2014). Amato (1983) said, people who live in a city environment have lower levels of helping behavior than people who in the village.

However, other studies said, there were no significant differences between people in the village and in the city in demonstrating their prosocial behavior (Kuntz & Gunderson, 1996).

Based on the problems, it is important to reviewing the influence of empathy on prosocial behavior, and see whether there are differences in levels of empathy and prosocial behavior in different environments or cultures. Therefore, the aim of this study is to see the effect of empathy on prosocial behavior, and to prove whether there are differences in levels of empathy and prosocial behavior in different environments.

Literature Review

Any form of behavior that aims to help others is called prosocial behavior (Barr & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2007, Decety, Bartal, Uzevovsky, & Knafo-Noam, 2016).

Empathy can be defined as an effective response that is when a person is able to understand and feel the conditions and emotions of others, and is able to feel as if he is in the situation (Barr & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2007, Eisenberg & Miller, 1987).

Method

This study uses a quantitative method 2 variables that aim to determine the level of empathy and prosocial behavior in adolescents in rural and urban environments, and see how much empathy affects adolescent's prosocial behavior.

This present study was carried out on 95 adolescents, consist of $N = 50$ adolescents from the village, and $N = 45$ adolescents from urban environments. The average ages is between 12-18 years. 43 male participants, and 52 female participants. The research participants were high

school students taken from 2 different schools. The participants are determined based on purposive sampling technique.

Data collection techniques in this study consist of 2 instruments, that is EC (Empathic Concern Scale) developed by Davis (1983) and HAS (Helping Attitude Scale) by Nickell (1998).

Before conducting research, researchers first determine the research theme, then look for a valid scale to be used as a research instrument. Next the researcher adapts the scale and then takes the data by asking the subject to fill in each statement written on the instrument. Scale is distributed and given directly by the researcher to each subject. After taking the data, the researcher conducts analysis data and interpretation.

Data analysis used in this study is a descriptive test analysis technique and Linear Regression Test using SPSS 21.0 for Windows software.

Results

Based on the results of demographic analysis, showed that there were 95 subjects consisting of N = 43 males and N = 52 females. Participant age range between 12-18 years, consist of age 12 years amounted to N = 2 adolescent, 13 years N = 6 adolescent, 14 years N = 15 adolescent, 15 years N = 29 adolescent, 16 years N = 29 adolescent, 17 years N = 10 adolescent, and 18 years N = 4 adolescent. The majority of participant education is high school student N = 74, and junior high school = 21 people. Subjects from rural areas amounted to N = 50 adolescent, and urban areas N = 45 adolescent.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis it was found that out of 50 adolescent participants in rural areas, there were 8 adolescents who had high empathy (16%), 32 adolescents had moderate empathy (64%), and 10 adolescents had low empathy (20%), (M = 42,76 with an SD value = 5,093). At the level of prosocial behavior in the village areas it was found that, there were 10 adolescents that had high prosocial behavior (20%), 29 adolescents had moderate prosocial behavior (58%), and 11 adolescents had low prosocial behavior (22%), with SD = 6.690, and M = 62.24. Based on these results it can be said that the majority of adolescents in the village have a moderate level of empathy and prosocial behavior.

The analysis also showed the level of adolescent empathy in urban areas, total of 45 participants, 7 adolescents have a high level of empathy (16%), 34 adolescents have moderate empathy (76%), and 4 adolescents have low empathy (8%), with SD value = 6,324, and M = 40.9.

Meanwhile, adolescents pro-social behavior consist of, 8 adolescents had a high level of pro-social behavior (18%), 27 adolescents had a moderate level (60%), and 10 adolescents had a low level of prosocial behavior (22%), with SD = 6,880, and M = 62.11. Based on these results it can be concluded that adolescents in the city have moderate level of empathy and prosocial behavior.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Rural and Urban Adolescents

Rural	Category	F	%	M	SD
Empathy	High	8	16%	42,76	5,093
	Moderate	32	64%		
	Low	10	20%		
Prosocial Behavior	High	10	20%	62,24	6,690
	Moderate	29	58%		
	Low	11	22%		
Total		50	100%		
Urban					
Empathy	High	7	16%	40,9	6,324
	Moderate	34	76%		
	Low	4	8%		
Pro-social Behavior	High	8	18%	62,11	6,880
	Moderate	27	60%		
	Low	10	22%		
Total		45	100%		

Based on the results of the regression analysis results it can be obtained that, empathy has significant effect of prosocial behavior, with amount of R² = 0.312 (31.2%) and p = 0.00 <0.05. Empathy affects the prosocial behavior of adolescents in rural areas by R² = 0.344 (34.4%) with p = 0.00 <0.05, whereas in adolescents of the urban areas, empathy has an effect on prosocial behavior by R² = 0.318 (31.8%) with p = 0.00 <0.05. Based on these results it can be interpreted that, empathy has a significant effect on the prosocial behavior of adolescents in the rural and urban areas. Besides that it can be said that, empathy has a greater effect on adolescent's prosocial behavior in rural areas compared to adolescents in the urban areas.

Table 2. Linear Regression Analysis

	R Square	B	Sig	N
Rural				50
Adolescents	,344	,587	,000	
Urban				45
Adolescents	,318	,564	,000	
Total	,312	,559	,000	95

Dependent Variable: Prosocial,
Predictors: (Constant), Empathy.

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be seen that the majority of adolescents in urban and rural environments had moderate levels of empathy and prosocial behavior. There is no significant difference between the two in terms of prosocial behavior. The results of this study are supported by previous research that there is no significant differences between rural and urban participants in showing prosocial behavior (Kuntz

& Gunderson, 1996). However, when compared between these two environments, the adolescent from rural areas have higher levels of empathy and prosocial behavior compared to urban adolescents. This result is supported by Afolabi (2014) who said that subjects from rural areas had higher prosocial behavior compared to subjects from urban areas. Amato (1983) also said that, people in urban environments have weaknesses in carrying out prosocial behavior. Most of them only help people they know, such as family or close friends.

The results of regression analysis above also showed that empathy has positive effect on adolescent's prosocial behavior. This research is in line with the findings of Roberts and Strayer (1996) that empathy has a significant effect on the prosocial behavior of male and female adolescents. Eisenberg and Miller (1987) also said that, empathy has a positive and significant relationship with prosocial behavior. The higher the adolescent's empathy, the more their prosocial behavior increases. Empathy and prosocial are very important to shape and maintain long lasting interpersonal relationships (J. A. Sze, Gyurak, Goodkind, & Levenson, 2012). When analyzed in more depth, it turns out that the influence of empathy on prosocial behavior is greater among adolescents in rural environments when compared to urban areas. That is 34.4% among adolescents in rural areas, and only 31.8% among adolescents in urban areas, but this differences is not too significant.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that empathy has a significant positive effect on prosocial behavior of adolescents in rural and urban environments. The majority of adolescents in rural and urban areas have moderate levels of empathy and prosocial behavior, so it can be said that there is no significant differences between adolescents from rural and urban areas in showing empathy and prosocial behavior. However, from the result of the analysis, participants from rural areas have higher levels of empathy and pro-social behavior compared to urban adolescents, but this differences are not too significant.

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