

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PATH FROM CRITICAL MOTIVATION TO PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPATHY AND FAIRNESS

Gabriela Monica Assante *

*Alexandru Ioan Cuza University,
Romania*

Mariana Momanu **

*Alexandru Ioan Cuza University,
Romania*

Abstract

The present research explores the relationship between critical motivation, prosocial behaviour, empathy, and fairness as a moral foundation. Even though critical consciousness was linked to prosocial activity, the mechanisms through which critical consciousness components influence prosocial behaviour remain unclear. Therefore, we investigated the mediating role of empathy and fairness as a moral foundation in the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour. The study involved 308 young people aged 18-24. Participants were recruited from various urban high schools and universities, and invited to complete a set of questionnaires. The results show the importance of critical motivation as a predictor of prosocial behaviour. Also, indicate that empathy and fairness mediated the effects of critical motivation when it comes to prosocial behaviour. Further, the results indicate that in the case of fairness mediational suppression is present. These results provide insight into a mechanism through which critical motivation may affect behaviour and the engagement of young people in various social contexts. Also, it may underline the significance of considering the role of several factors simultaneously for increasing the understanding of the role of critical consciousness components on social behaviour.

Keywords: critical motivation; critical consciousness; prosocial behaviour; young people; empathy; fairness

Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to:

* Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași. Address: Toma Cozma Street, No. 3, 700554, Iași, Romania. E-mail: monica.assante@uaic.ro

** Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași. Address: Toma Cozma Street, No. 3, 700554, Iași, Romania. E-mail: momanu@uaic.ro

Introduction

In any society, young people's views and beliefs will be reflected in the behaviour of adults and youths from their respective social environments. The literature generally pictures young people as a vulnerable group rather than as active citizens participating in all areas of society although young people can play a crucial role inside their community (Finn & Checkoway, 1998). Young people are resourceful and represent important assets whose citizenship identity and whose development must be supported in a continuously changing society.

Some popular beliefs about the status of young people assume that they represent vulnerable groups, such as victims of poverty, racism, or of other uncontrollable forces, and that they represent a menace to the social status quo (Hancock, 1994; Males, 1996).

Furthermore, Finn and Checkoway (1998) express their discontent towards attempting to infuse specific values rather than engaging young people in a critical inquiry of the structures embedded in those values. They are explicitly supporting and emphasizing the role of young people as resources rather than vulnerable groups. This particular perspective pertains to the idea that young people are capable citizens, able to participate in the decision-making process that impacts their everyday reality, and with a strong responsibility to participate in their communities. Hence, the active participation of young people in the social arena is necessary to support the civic engagement of community members. Youth can act as fundamental actors in addressing the social injustice and other social problems directly related to their present and future lives by developing certain skills such as critical inquiry and leadership, and further by using them in the community (Hancock, 1994).

Young people's views, beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes provide a unique perspective from which to observe social change processes (Shildrick, Blackman, & MacDonald, 2009). According to Furlong and Cartmel (2007), studies on young people represent the ideal way to examine social theories and social order and to describe young people as individuals situated at the turning point of social reproduction (Shildrick, Blackman, & MacDonald, 2009).

The specificities of prosocial behaviour and critical consciousness in young people

One possible direction of young people actively participating in social and community life is represented by engagement in prosocial behaviour. Generally

referred to as positive interactions with others, this includes various behaviours such as helping and sharing actions as well as comforting (Jackson & Tisak, 2001; Hay, 1994). Prosocial behaviour is also described as voluntary actions initiated to help or benefit others (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Consequently, prosocial behaviour assumes actively participating in community life and civic engagement, which in turn will benefit communities and society at large (Lee, Morrell, Marini, & Smith, 2010). It is well known that this behaviour starts developing in early childhood (Warneken & Tomasello, 2006). Evidence shows that starting from middle childhood and adolescence, prosocial behaviour is similar to adults' prosocial behaviour, which emphasizes the idea that studying young peoples' prosocial actions will be a good predictor of future adult prosocial behaviour (House et al., 2020). As a valuable resource and critically important asset for any social context, prosocial behaviour needs to be supported in the community (Williams, O'Driscoll, & Moore, 2014).

It is well known that prosocial behaviour leads to various positive outcomes in youth, such as academic achievement, well-being, and satisfaction (Penner & Finkstein, 1998; Lenon & Eisenberg, 1987). Being described as critically important for the development of the well-being of young people (Hope, 2016; Lai, Siu, & Shek, 2015), prosocial behaviour links and ties need to be fully understood. Prosocial behaviour and civic action in young people are not only relevant for the positive development of youth as individuals, but are critical for the sustained positive development of their community and social context (Hope, 2016).

Another relevant aspect in the dynamic between young and prosocial behaviour is linked to the development of critical consciousness. Current formulations of the critical consciousness concept are mainly anchored in Freirean thought (Freire, 2005, 1970). Developing critical consciousness represents an emancipatory pedagogical process, the goal of Freirean education, and has four major qualities. First, it entails raising awareness, which refers to knowing that society can be built and changed by employing human action. Second, it implies critical literacy, which includes the analytic abilities of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and discussing, and can lead to discovering the profound meaning of any situation and applying that meaning to each particular context. The third quality is social de-construction by identifying and challenging various societal practices or values. Fourth, the self-organisation/self-education quality refers to the transformation of the school and society by introducing social change projects

(Peter & McLaren, 2002). Therefore, critical consciousness is oriented towards helping individuals develop the necessary skills to identify and act against social inequalities. Its central educational objective is to trigger individual creativity and a constant, critical, reflexive ability that will further lead to critical action in the social context (Macedo, 2014).

Defined as the ability to engage in a reflective process regarding society's prerogatives and action upon the world to transform it (Freire, 1970), critical consciousness includes three central components: critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action. The core process in Critical Consciousness Theory is critical reflection because it engages a process of learning to recognise social, political, and economic contradictions, and to act towards changing the restrictive elements of social reality. Through the critical reflection process, individuals learn to put under scrutiny the elements and structures that lead to marginalization. The commitment and perceived ability to address such structures shape critical motivation. The critical reflection process results in social analysis and moral rejection of societal inequities such as the socio-economic, ethnic, or gender inequities that limit individual agency, and well-being. Through this process emerges a systemic framework in which people examine social problems and inequalities. Critical action engages individuals to change perceived inequities. This entails individual or collective actions directed to change societal aspects that are perceived as unjust. Critical motivation or critical efficacy refers to the individual's perceived capacity to influence social and political change through their actions. This element has a great value especially because it is more likely for people to engage in various actions if they have the feeling that this will lead to change (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). Freire (1970) stresses that when individuals engage in a social analysis process, they feel compelled to act towards changing their social conditions. Moreover, this results in a deeper understanding of the social issues (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011).

Therefore, critical consciousness has been approached as an antidote to injustice due to its increase in awareness, actions, and motivation to identify, challenge and change social inequities (Diemer et al., 2016).

There is empirical evidence that critical consciousness in young people is related to various positive outcomes such as academic achievement (Godfrey et al., 2019; Seider, Clark, & Graves, 2020) as well as prosocial behaviour and civic engagement (Hope 2016; Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016). Research on critical consciousness focuses mainly on young people from oppressed or

marginalized groups (Diemer & Li, 2011; Chronister & McWhirter, 2006). More recently, it has been argued the crucial value of critical consciousness for the considered privileged groups while recognising the reciprocal nature of the relations between privilege and oppression (Patterson et al., 2021; Godfrey & Burson, 2018). Jemal (2017) emphasizes that for acquiring social change, privileged individuals need to learn to recognise social inequalities. Therefore, more privileged individuals would develop a critical consciousness about the oppression of others and will be able to recognise the mechanism through which their privilege is preserved through the marginalization of others (Diemer et al., 2016).

Even though recent findings indicate that critical consciousness developed in schools may be important for promoting prosocial behaviours (Patterson et al., 2021), the extent of the relationship between critical consciousness components and prosocial behaviours in privileged groups has not yet been clarified. The present study aims to fill this knowledge gap present in the literature by regarding the relationship between critical consciousness and prosocial activity.

The role of fairness and empathy in the relationship between critical consciousness and prosocial behaviour

Moral values and empathy are directly linked to engagement with various types of prosocial behaviour. Because prosocial behaviour meets a growth spurt during adolescence, its development is related to moral values and empathy (Lai, Siu, & Shek, 2015). Moreover, critical consciousness also aims to raise awareness concerning issues of fairness and equality present in various social contexts (Diemer et al., 2016). However, Tyler et al., (2020) shows that critical consciousness makes recognising equity-related situations easier especially when those inequalities conflicted with young people's moral values and fairness. As the means for fighting inequalities, critical consciousness is also directly related to issues of fairness and moral reasoning. Mustakova-Possardt (2004) states that critical consciousness is related to various aspects of the emotional, moral and spiritual life of the individual, and includes empathy and fairness.

Empathy refers to an individual's ability to accurately perceive others' emotions and feelings and to have adaptable reactions to them, hence, to succeed in emotional communication and prosocial behaviour. Despite the fact that it represents a far-reaching concept, it remains elusive a consensual approach over the definition of empathy (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar, & Levine, 2009). A

distinction has been made between the components of empathy, namely, cognitive and emotional (Keefe, 1980). The emotional component pertains to the emotional reaction to others' emotional response independent of a cognitive understanding of the person's feelings (Rankin, Kramer & Miller, 2005) although it may benefit understanding and the appropriate actions. In contrast, the cognitive component implies an intellectual comprehension of the emotional state of others (Spreng et al., 2009).

There is evidence that empathy represents the foundation of prosocial and altruistic behaviour. Consequently, young people with higher empathy levels are found to be not only more engaged in a prosocial activity but also linked to critical consciousness (Tyler et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2015, Hoffman, 2001). Critical consciousness and empathy are synergistic. Critical consciousness is applied when looking for solutions to social problems as they arise through economic fluctuation and social change. Empathy enhances this process by providing an orientation that fosters motivation and action rather than passivity during periods of change (Keefe, 1980).

Therefore, this may indicate that moral values and empathy might enhance the effect of critical consciousness on prosocial behaviour and the extent of this relation must be clarified. Young people must engage in a critical self-reflection process with their social reality, manifest empathy even in larger social contexts, and integrate their social experience in order to achieve greater differentiation and complexity. This process will lead to increased openness and engagement with the world as a whole (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004).

The present study

Previous research has highlighted the link between critical consciousness and prosocial activity (Patterson et al., 2021; Ajaps & Obiagu, 2020; Diemer & Li, 2011). In addition, aspects regarding moral reasoning, such as fairness, and empathy, have been proven to impact prosocial behaviour (Lai et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the extent of the relationship between critical consciousness components, prosocial behaviour, empathy and fairness has not yet been clarified.

Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to identify the extent of the relationship between critical consciousness components, fairness, empathy and prosocial behaviour in privileged populations of young people. Recently, several scales designed to measure critical consciousness have been made available, aiming to improve and consolidate the measurement of critical

consciousness and its parts (Diemer et al., 2015; Rapa, Bolding, & Jamil, 2020). Therefore, an evaluation of the relations between critical consciousness components, prosocial behaviour, empathy, and moral values was justified using the appraisal methods explicitly designed to measure critical consciousness. Critical reflection and critical motivation were hypothesised to be good predictors of prosocial behaviour and this relation is mediated by the levels of empathy and fairness.

Previous research that investigated critical consciousness development in young people has primarily focused on marginalized individuals but the study of these aspects on privileged groups might be more informative on how privileged individuals recognise social inequalities, which is crucial for acquiring social change (Jemal, 2017).

The hypothesised mediation model is depicted in Figure 1.

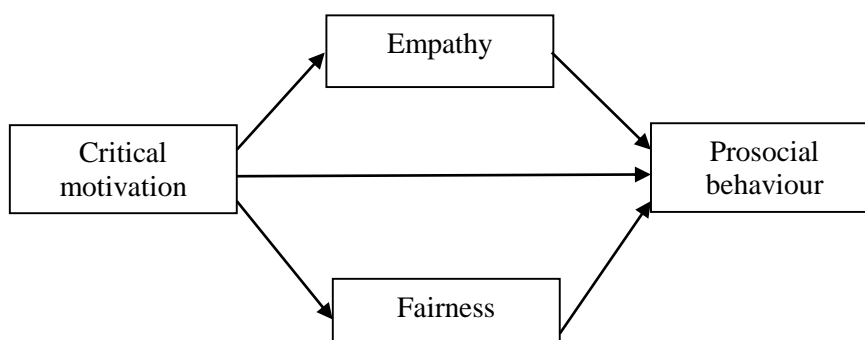


Figure 1. The hypothesized mediational model

Method

Participants

The research sample consists of 308 participants (mean age=19.20; SD=1.08). The participants were enrolled in the last year of high school (19.81%) including 48 female participants and 13 male participants, and first year at university (80.19%), including 200 female participants and 47 male participants. The questionnaire was made available to several high school and University teachers which disseminated the information among their students. The criterion for selecting the high school students was that they be at least 18-years-old.

University student participants had to be enrolled in their first year of university (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic and professional characteristics of participants; N=308

Sample characteristics	<i>n</i>	%	M	SD
Age			19.20	1.08
Gender				
Female	248	80.5%		
Male	60	19.5%		
School attended				
High-school	61	19.8%		
University	247	80.2%		

Instruments

All questionnaires, except the fairness measure, were translated from English into Romanian using the forward-backward translation design (Hambleton, Yu, & Slater 1999). Minor corrections to the translations were made based on the back-translation process. The forward-backward translated version of the fairness measure is available on Moral Foundations Questionnaire official Internet page (<https://moralfoundations.org/questionnaires/>).

The Critical Consciousness Scale - Short Form (CCS-S) (Rapa, Bolding, & Jamil, 2020) was used to measure critical consciousness. This study used the following sub-scales to measure critical reflection/perceived inequality (three items), critical reflection/egalitarianism (three items), and critical motivation (four items). Respondents were asked to rate their responses on a six-point Likert-type agreement scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree. This measure supports inquiry that elicits a more nuanced understanding of the pathways of critical consciousness development and highlights the interrelationships between critical consciousness dimensions (Heberle et al., 2020; Rapa, Bolding, & Jamil, 2020). Cronbach's alpha for the three sub-scales ranges from .61 to .63.

The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) represents a unidimensional, validated, and short empathy measure (Spreng et al., 2009). The questions investigate the frequency of behaviour rather than elusive tendencies. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale corresponding to various frequency levels (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always). TEQ consists of 16 questions that evaluate several attributes linked with the current formulations of empathy. Overall, the items refer to emotional contagion, emotion comprehension,

sympathetic physiological arousal, and altruism. Half of the items are reversed and reflect the frequency of circumstantial indifference towards another individual. The aforementioned questions items reflect various empathy-related behaviours acknowledged in the empathy-related literature (Spreng et al., 2009). Cronbach's alpha in our sample was .66.

The moral fairness foundation was measured using the scale from the short-form of the *Moral Foundations Questionnaire* (MFQ-S) (Graham et al., 2011). This scale was translated into Romanian by a researcher and back-translated into English by a professional translator (available at www.moralfoundations.org). Extensive cross-cultural research has been carried out using the MFQ questionnaire (Iurino & Saucier, 2018). The fairness moral foundation measure includes three items assessing the perceived relevance of moral concerns and three items assessing agreement with moral judgments. Participants responded to the relevance items on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Extremely relevant) and to the judgment items on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). After eliminating one item referring to moral judgment, Cronbach's alpha for the fairness foundation was .66.

Prosocial behaviour assessment was carried out using the *Prosocial Behaviour Scale* (PB) (Pastorelli et al., 1997). This measure consists of 15 items that are evaluated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 3 (Often). It includes five control items that do not contribute to the final total score. The items offer a description of a young person's behaviour explicitly on altruism, trust, and agreeableness. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .64.

Procedure

Participants were selected from local urban schools and universities situated in the North-East region of Romania and enrolled in the last year of high-school and first year at university. Participation was voluntary, even if some students received extra credit for their participation in the study. For the high-school students, the minimum age limit was set at 18-years-old. The researcher provided information regarding privacy issues such as anonymity, voluntary participation including the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time, data confidentiality, storage, and publication. Each participant gave informed consent after receiving the information regarding the study. Due to the health crisis restrictions, data were collected via self-report questionnaires administered online to the students at the end of their online school session. There were no missing data

on the measured variables, namely, critical consciousness, prosocial behaviour, fairness or empathy. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The Ethics Committee of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University approved the study. The data were gathered during the first two months of the current year.

Results

Pearson correlation analyses and descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows information regarding the correlations, Cronbach's alpha reliability index, means, and standard deviations between all the variables investigated in the study. Critical motivation showed significant correlations with prosocial behaviour, empathy, and fairness in the investigated directions. Specifically, critical motivation is positively associated prosocial behaviour ($r=.14$, $p<.05$), empathy ($r=.25$, $p<.001$) and fairness ($r=.31$, $p<.001$). Critical reflection/egalitarianism showed significant correlation with empathy ($r=.20$, $p<.001$), and fairness ($r=.22$, $p<.001$). Correlations between critical reflection/perceived inequalities and prosocial behaviour, empathy, and fairness are not significant. Further, we explored the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour, and the mediational role of empathy and fairness.

Table 2. Pearson correlations, reliability estimates and descriptive statistics between the studied variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Prosocial behaviour	.647					
2. Critical reflection/inequalities	.045	.610				
3. Critical reflection/egalitarianism	.048	-.030	.586			
4. Critical motivation	.146*	.133*	.362**	.639		
5. Empathy	.262**	.057	.202**	.258**	.661	
6. Fairness	-.051	.100	.225**	.318**	.319**	.666
Mean	19.19	7.57	16.87	19.86	25.45	54.10
SD	2.24	3.17	1.84	3.19	3.31	5.90

Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$. alpha Cronbach's coefficients are shown on the diagonal

Empathy and fairness moral foundation as mediators in the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour

The PROCESS 3.5 custom dialog for IBM SPSS version 24 for Windows was used to test the hypothesised double mediation model (Hayes, 2013). This

solution allows simultaneous testing of multiple mediators and provides bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) for the indirect effects (Hayes, 2013). In addition, this procedure allows building bootstrap-based confidence intervals to test the statistical significance of mediation effects in a nonparametric and reduced biased manner (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In the present study, multiple mediation analyses were conducted using regression analysis and 5,000 resamples (to estimate 95% confidence intervals) in order to examine whether the effect of critical motivation on prosocial behaviour was mediated by empathy and fairness.

Empathy and fairness scores were entered simultaneously as mediator variables of the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour. Testing a single multiple mediation model is preferred to separate simple mediation models (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The analysis confirmed a significant total effect of critical motivation on prosocial behaviour (c), and this relationship remained significant when the effects of empathy and fairness moral foundation were taken into account (c'). This analysis revealed that critical motivation was significantly positively related to empathy (a_1) and significantly positively related to fairness (a_2). Empathy was significantly positively related to prosocial behaviour (b_1) and fairness was significantly negatively related to prosocial behaviour when controlling for critical motivation (b_2). The 95% confidence interval did not include the value zero, indicating the significance of the mediating effects. Figure 2 illustrates the mediating effects.

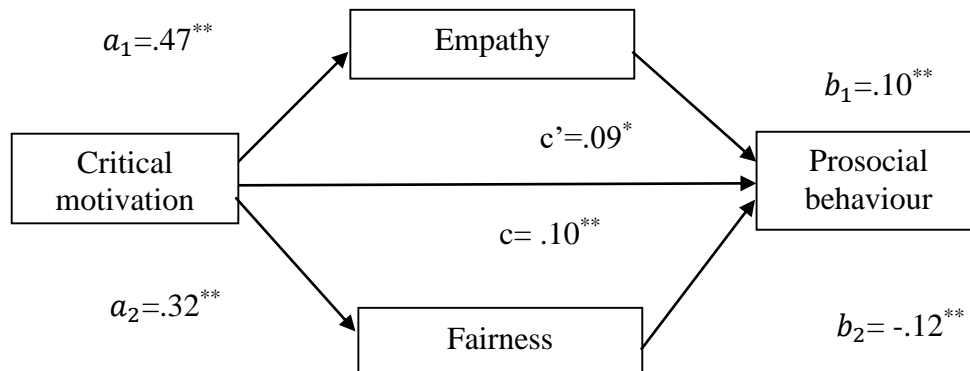


Figure 2. Multiple mediation model depicting the mediating effect, effects of deep approach and surface approach on the relation between effort and performance. Unstandardized coefficients are presented. Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

As hypothesised, empathy and fairness moral foundation mediated the effect of critical motivation on prosocial behaviour as indicated by significant indirect effects (for indirect effect through empathy, $B=.074$, $SE=.024$, 95% BCa CI: .032, .126 and for indirect effect through fairness, $B=-.058$, $SE=.022$, 95% BCa CI: -.108, -.018). Moreover, the indirect effect was negative and the effect of critical motivation on prosocial behaviour controlling for fairness was positive, in contrast with the low correlations between critical motivation and fairness. These findings indicate that mediational suppression is present (Shrout & Bolger, 2002; MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000). From a mathematical perspective, the positive relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour (when controlling for fairness) includes the variation in critical motivation that is unrelated to fairness. The suppression effect present in the data indicates a rather complicated causal mechanism. Regardless, these complications have great potential of enriching theory and practice (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Conclusions

Young people's views, beliefs and attitudes provide a vantage point to observe social change processes as these will reflect in their future behaviour (Shildrick et al., 2009). Acknowledging young people as valuable resources influencing several domains of society will impact their willingness to participate in the decision-making processes that impact their everyday reality. Youth represent key factors in addressing social injustice and by developing specific skills, such as critical consciousness, critical inquiry and leadership, their role in the community can actively be put to work (Hancock, 1994). Critical consciousness was previously linked with prosocial activity and civic engagement (Flanagan & Christens, 2011; Diemer & Li, 2011). One of the most important functions of critical consciousness is its impact on social behaviour and action (Vaughan, 2011), but these aspects have not been so far investigated in qualitative studies. Even though these aspects are emphasised in the literature so far, the dynamic of this relationship is far from being clarified. Previously, research has not put investigated which specific component of critical consciousness impacts social actions the most and also the study of these aspects in privileged populations were mostly dismissed. Recent research states that critical consciousness in

privileged groups is extremely valuable because in this way privileged individuals will be able to identify social inequalities and also recognise the mechanism through which their privilege is preserved through the marginalization of others (Patterson et al., 2021; Jemal, 2017; Diemer et al., 2016).

Considering the association between critical consciousness and prosocial behaviour as part of civic engagement, the present study tested a multiple mediation model of the relationships between critical motivation, empathy, fairness and prosocial behaviour. Specifically, we investigated the mediating role of empathy and fairness in the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour. Our study provides evidence of a complex pattern of influences, with empathy and fairness significantly mediating the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour.

First, our results demonstrated that empathy acted as a mediator of the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour. This suggests that when young people manifest critical motivation they are likely to manifest empathy towards others; in turn, this has a positive influence on prosocial behaviour. Previous research showed that empathy is linked with engaging in various types of prosocial behaviour and the extent of its presence in youth represents a good predictor for future adult behaviour (Lai et al., 2015). However, empirical evidence on critical motivation and empathy was still missing. These findings are consistent with previous assumptions from the social field indicating that critical consciousness, in our case critical motivation, leads to action and behaviour. While suggesting a direct line from critical consciousness to action, Freire (1973) also mentioned the impact of emotional involvement in any subsequent process of social action.

Second, fairness as a moral foundation also mediated the relationship between critical motivations and prosocial behaviour; due to its nature, this result is discussed separately. These results are in line with previous research that shows critical consciousness is related to various aspects of the emotional and moral life of the individual, among which we can include empathy and fairness (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004). Earlier studies reveal fairness is less strongly related to positive emotions than prosociality; in this case, positive emotions are less likely to be an incentive for acting fairly (Krettenauer, Bauer, & Sengsavang, 2019). Based on this assumption, we can explain the statistical suppression indicated by the negative and indirect effect of critical motivation on prosocial behaviour via fairness. Our findings, nevertheless, indicate that fairness by itself is an important

factor and negatively associated with prosocial behaviour. Specifically, when fairness was held constant in the mediation model, the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour was positive and significant. This suppression effect suggests that the indirect effect occurs as a positive relationship between critical motivation and fairness, and a negative relationship between fairness and prosocial behaviour. The primary characteristic of fairness moral foundation is sensitivity to issues related to equality, justice and rights as it is focused on the protection of individuals' rights and freedom (Graham et al., 2011). A possible explanation may be that when this rationale is put to action, it inhibits the display of prosocial behaviour that is more augmented by positive emotion and less by a cognitive rationalisation process.

The present study presents several limitations that should be noted. This research did not investigate a broad spectrum of social behaviours and was limited to prosocial behaviour. Therefore, future studies should investigate the mediating role of empathy and fairness having as an outcome a wide range of civic engagement and social behaviours. Further, the variables that could act as moderators of empathy and fairness, such as personality traits, should also be considered to fully understand the mechanism through which critical consciousness, empathy and fairness interact in predicting social behaviour. Another limitation refers to the research sample that mainly consists of women participants. This aspect limits greatly the generalisation of the present results. Therefore, future research should consider larger samples that include both men and women. Finally, the cross-sectional design of our study does not allow for the formulation of causal relationships.

Nonetheless, our results are in line with previous assumptions that focus on the path from critical consciousness to social action, including the impact of emotional involvement and moral values in the process of social action. Our study investigated the mediating role of empathy and fairness in the relationship between critical motivation and prosocial behaviour. These relationships were not the subject of investigation in previous research. This study adds to the existing literature by providing some insights regarding the relationship between critical consciousness and prosocial behaviour in youth.

Ethics statement

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of Code of Ethics of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași. The protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee for Research of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (No. 1997bis/03.03.2021). In accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, all 308 participants gave written informed consent for their participation in the study.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Both authors have made an equal, substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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