

ABSTRACT

This study examined the infants' development of altruism from 12-month-old to 18-month-old. Twenty-nine 12-month-old infants ($M = 12.08$, range = 11.48 – 12.55, 21 boys and 8 girls) and fifty-three 18-month-old infants ($M = 17.85$, range = 17.48 – 18.32, 26 boys and 27 girls) participated in the study. Experimental findings indicated a significant increment in mastery of instrumental and empathic helping from 12-month-old to 18-month-old, which stayed consistent with previous research findings. The selectivity of empathic helping over emotion authenticity was observed at 18-month-old that infants helped people with justified negative affect faster and at fewer and less explicitly communicative cues. The finding was consistent with previous findings that 18-month-old infants selectively help people with justified sadness and 15-month-old could identify emotion authenticity. The contributed cognitive capacity was suggested to be cognitive empathy and behavioral empathy.

Keywords: Altruism, prosocial behaviour, helping behaviour, infants' development, empathy, selectivity of altruistic behaviour, emotion authenticity, cognitive empathy, behaviour empathy