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CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS FRIENDSHIP RELATIONS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE QUALITY, LENGTH, STABILITY AND RECIPROCITY

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Abstract. *This paper is concerned with the characteristics of friendships. The main focus is on these characteristics: quality, length, stability and reciprocity. The study took place repeatedly within a period of four months. The sample consisted of 425 adolescent participants in first and 358 in the second part of the study. The adolescents were of both sexes, aged between 14 and 15. The quality of their friendships was assessed by a new self-report scale Friendship Quality Questionnaire, constructed in this research. This questionnaire is used to measure thoughts, feelings and specific behaviors about and towards a friend. Besides, two general questionnaires were used for collecting information about the participants and their friendships. The results show certain characteristics of friendships in adolescence. The dimensions of relationship quality (affection, intimacy, conflict and interaction) are evenly distributed. The connection between quality of friendship and duration was determined. In shorter friendships, the level of intimacy and conflict is higher. Also, friendships are very stable and the participants that keep their friendships have a higher level of intimacy and interaction. Those with shorter friendship change friends more. Girls have a higher level of all qualitative characteristic of friendships – affection, interaction, intimacy and conflict.*

Key words: *adolescence, friendship, Friendship Quality Questionnaire.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Significance of friendship relations

Human life is unimaginable without friendship. Its significance is something that we are taught since childhood. First our parents, then our educators and teachers were very motivated to teach us about the importance of friendships. They constantly encouraged us and trained us to acquire and manage friendships. Because of this, it is not surprising that many authors were and still are interested in studying this phenomenon. The literature abounds with papers on different aspects of friendships. Although faced with a number of ideas and empirical data, it is evident that there is no generally accepted theory of friendship, as there is no generally accepted definition of this type of close relationship.

The paper is based on the interpretation that a friendship is a specific type of a close and relatively lasting relationship whose quality varies from pairs to pairs of friends, which is based on the principles of equality, reciprocity and voluntariness. Although friendship has been analyzed and written about since ancient times, the first professional texts on this subject within developmental psychology appeared in the seventies.

Empirical research in the field of children's friendships began in the early 1990s (Berndt 1996). The work of two authors, Jean Piaget and Harry Sullivan served as the basis for the initial theoretical and empirical study of children's friendships. Today, most of the studies in this field start with quotes from the mentioned scientists, especially those of Sullivan. In recent years, many researchers of children's friendships refer to James Youniss, as well as the theory of attachment.

In studying friendly relations, authors should pay attention to several important aspects. Among other things, account should be taken of the changes through which they pass. Changes in friendly relations have been mixed. The changes in friendships are due to the dynamic process of the development of relations and due to the individual growing up, maturing in terms of his social, emotional and cognitive abilities, which is especially related to adolescence. The length of a friendship points to its dynamic aspect. Besides the duration, account should be taken of the stage in the development of friendship. Every interpersonal relationship, including friendship, is dynamic, not static and fixed (Hinde 1995). The dynamics of friendships points to a continuous process of development of friendship starting from the initial stages of attraction towards the consolidation phase and maintaining friendships or for a possible deterioration (Duck 1975; Berndt 1986; Furman, 1993; Burleson 1994; Hinde 1995; Aboud 1996; Parker 1996; Honeycutt 1997; Lamm 1998; Oswald 2004; Gore 2006).

Therefore, when comparing the quality of certain friendships we have to pay attention to their duration, whether it is a few months or few years. The development of friendship implies the emergence and development, but also the weakening and disappearance of certain characteristics of friendship. If you do not take into account the length of friendship, it is possible that the interpretation of research results ignore an important fact regarding the process of developing friendship, which says that the different characteristics of friendship appear in various stages of development and that their intensity changes during these stages.

Friendship age is an important factor in consideration of the characteristics of the phenomenon of friendship. People of different ages describe friendship in different ways,

differ in their expectations and behave differently toward their friends (Aboud 1996). In accordance with the normative changes of the nature of friendship, certain characteristics of friendship become more important in certain periods of development (Cairns 1996). Friends at a preschool age are used to fulfill personal desires and needs (Aboud 1996). Friendship is concentrated around common activities.

The onset of school age increases the importance of sharing among friends. In this age, the emphasis is on having fun, and friends are seen as cooperative partners in the activities. Conflicts are poorly tolerated, which jeopardizes the stability of friendship. In addition, children are more focused on the similarities they share with friends and it is more important for them to be accepted by their peers (Bukowski 1993). Sullivan (1953) stated that "real" friendships begin to develop during preadolescent years. It is specifically during this period that the characteristics of adult friendships are obtained. Some of the basic features of friendly relations in preadolescence and adolescence are: frequent interaction, stronger emotional intensity, intimacy, trust and commitment (Buhrmester 1987; Zimmermann 2004).

Increasingly, the question is what contributes to the stability of friendship. Authors are trying to determine the factors that affect the duration of friendship. In relation to school age, adolescence leads to greater stability of friendship (Berndt 1986; Hartup 1993; Aboud 1996). It was found that during adolescence, about 70% of friendship are preserved during one school year (Berndt 1986). Bukowski (1996) argues that the stability is associated with the characteristics of friendship and characteristics of a friend. High quality friendships in terms of intimacy, trust, support and other features contributes to the preservation of friendship over time. Disagreement with a friend during adolescence leads less to negative assessment of his personality and the personality of others, and overcoming it is approached with more care and a willingness to deal and compromise (Aboud 1996). Increased selectivity in choosing friends helps preserve the friendship. Adolescents more efficiently find friends who suit them according to set criteria, thus ensuring greater satisfaction and the duration of the friendship. It is easier to gather information about a potential friend, his personality characteristics, attitudes and expectations. In addition, adolescents are more developed when it comes to image of themselves and their needs, which also helps in the selection of potential friends (Aboud 1996).

Interruption of friendship is caused by a variety of causes, one of them the declining quality of friendship due to the weakening of trust, lack of help, betrayal or frequent conflict (Kurdek 1996; Lamm 1998; Azmitia 1999). Dropouts in friendships may also occur due to external factors such as relocation, changing grades or schools, or due to changes in life circumstances, such as emotional difficulties due to parents' divorce, death of family members, a decrease in living standards, etc.

Another important dimension of friendship is reciprocity, which occupies more attention of researchers. The definition of friendship as a dyadic relationship points to the necessity of mutual nominations. The relationship between two individuals can be considered friendly only if these two individuals choose each other as best friends (Furman 1996). That is, we can see the difference between one-way and two-way friendships. If you do not respect the rule of mutual nominations, you introduce a new aspect of friendship, for example, one-sided attraction (Newcomb 1996). However, in studies of adolescent friendships participants are often required only to choose a friend who will be the subject of research, which can be considered friendship from the perspective of one of the participants. Maybe we should start from the understanding that

there are different perspectives of friendship that take into account different research questions.

Thus, the following can be studied, for example: the characteristics of friendships within the dyad of friends or understanding of individual respondents about their relationships.

1.2. Quality of friendships

In the beginning, most of the empirical research of friendship was focused on the study of differences between children who have friends and children who do not have friends, considering different aspects of psychosocial development. Eventually it was determined that for the study of the importance of friendship on the development of the child it is not enough to just track whether a person has or does not have a friend, but it is necessary to take account of what the friend is like (personality traits of friends) and what the quality of the friendship is (Bukowski 1996). Regarding the issue of qualitative characteristics it was determined that friendships are not the same (Hartup 1993). Some are more intimate, in some there are frequent conflicts, in other friends are more devoted to helping each other and supporting etc. The study of these qualitative differences could enable further explanation of the influence of friendship on development (Newcomb 1996).

The concept of quality of friendships includes a number of positive and negative characteristics (Berndt 1996). The same author explains that the quality of friendship is more than the sum of these characteristics. It is a concept that is not affectively neutral and which shows the level of excellence (degree of excellence) (Berndt 1996, p. 347). The concept of quality of friendships permits a comparison of friendships according to different dimensions. If a friendship has more positive than negative characteristics, it is considered better. The number of characteristics that determine the quality of friendship varies from author to author, but some dimensions are often mentioned - companionship, intimacy, affection, conflicts, assistance, confidence. The situation is complicated by the fact that the quality of friendship is defined by different characteristics at different ages.

2. THE METHOD

2.1. The goal and hypothesis of the research

The main objective of this research is to examine the specifics of adolescent friendship, such as length, reciprocity and stability. Special emphasis is placed on the aspect of quality of friendships. These dimensions were studied over a period of four months, and special attention was given to their changes. The research was based on several expectations. It was expected that friendships vary in quality. Friendships are different when it comes to dimensions of quality. Also, the expectation was that adolescent friendships are highly stable, and last for a great period of time. When it comes to reciprocity, adolescents are presumed to value mutual friendships.

2.2. The sample

The research sample can be described as appropriate. It consists of first grade students from six high schools (a total of 17 classes) in Novi Sad. During the first measuring a total of 425 children participated, aged 14 to 17. The second measuring was carried out like the first one, in the same schools and classes, and included 358 respondents. It was conducted 4 months after the first measuring.

2.3. Variables and instruments

Length of friendship was determined from the responses given to the questions from the General questionnaire, which defines the basic data about a wider network of friends - how many friends the respondents have, how many best friends, and data on the selected friend for this study (the name of the friend, how long they are friends, how old the friend is, etc.).

Stability of friendship was assessed based on its preservation between the two measurings. Friendship is considered stable if during repeated tests the members of the friendship dyad again chose the same person as a best friend (Parker 1966; Berndt 1986; Degirmencioglu 1993).

Reciprocity of friendship (unidirectional or bidirectional) was estimated based on whether the respondents chose each other as friends, or if the choice only was only one-way. The study was based on a general definition of quality friendships, according to which the quality of friendship is a set of positive (intimacy, affection, assistance, interaction, trust, intimacy, etc.) and negative characteristics (conflicts, rivalry, competition, betrayal and others) which specifies a friendly relationship (Berndt 1996). Friendship is of higher quality if it has more positive characteristics.

The quality of friendship is operationalized in two ways, and both types of operationalization are usually taken into consideration: as processes, for example, a perceptual form of exchange or interaction between friends (conflict resolution, revealing secrets, etc.) and as income / benefit ("provisions") which the person has from the friendship. The result, the product of friendship, for example, is closeness, security and so on (Ladd 1996).

For the purposes of this study, the Friendship Quality Questionnaire was constructed. This new questionnaire of quality of friendships has tried to meet the following criteria: suitability of the instrument for the age of adolescents, satisfying metric characteristics, as well as the possibility of assessing the quality of friendship variables, which were isolated during the pilot study on a local sample. The Friendship Quality Questionnaire contains 32 items and 4 scales of quality: intimacy (including items related to the mutual understanding between friends, as well as items that indicate the communication of their own intimate thoughts and feelings of a friend), affection (consisting of the items which indicate the existence of friendly feelings and their intensity, as well as the manner and frequency of manifestation of such feelings), companionship (including items related to the frequency of meetings), conflicts (including items related to the intensity of the conflict, the impact of conflict on friendship, and the manner of their resolution). Reliability of the mentioned scale measured by Cronbach alpha amounts to: Intimacy .79, Affection .85, Companionship .82, Conflicts .80.

In addition, the quality of friendships was assessed through the direct issues of friendship that are a part of the general questionnaire used during the second measuring.

Direct questions about friendships are formulated as statements concerning the quality of friendship with which the respondents should to agree or disagree, for example "Do you know each other better now, than four months earlier, are you closer, do you trust each other more" and the like. This task is set before the respondents in order to determine how they assess the possible changes in their friendly relations, and the quality of their friendship in the space of four months.

2.4. The procedure

The study took place over a period of four months in Novi Sad. In the first phase adolescent were interviewed about their friendship relations. Upon obtaining this information, the Friendship Quality Questionnaire was designed and checked in several pilot studies. In the second phase the main research was conducted repeatedly within a period of four months. In the last phase, the data were statistically analyzed.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Length of friendship

The duration of the selected friendships extends from 2.5 months to 15 years. Most respondents (26.4%) said that their friendship lasts longer than 10 years. Most respondents (75%) described a friendship that lasts no longer than 10 years. "Newer" friends (from 2.5 months to 1 year) were observed in 23.5% of the respondents. To facilitate the comparison in terms of length, the respondents were clustered. The best results were obtained by grouping subjects into four groups as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequency for the duration of friendships

Duration	Percen.
2,5 mon - 1 y.	23,5
2 - 7 y.	24,7
8 - 9 y.	25,4
10 - 15 y.	26,4
Total	100

3.2. Stability of friendship

Of the total 353 respondents who participated in both measurements, 110 (31.2%) in the second measuring changed friends, while 243 of them (68.8%) did not change friends. This indicates a high stability of friendly relations in this sample of adolescents.

3.3. Reciprocity of friendship

With regard to reciprocity or the direction of friendship, on the one hand, we had a group called "unidirectional friendships", which was a total of 321, or 75.5%. On the other hand there was a group of so-called "two-way friendships", which was a total of 104 or 24.5%.

3.4. Quality of friendship

The mean values of the respondents provided by the scales of Friendship Quality Questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean values on Friendship Quality Questionnaire

Quality	Mean
Affection	31.15
Intimacy	26.90
Companionship	29.32
Conflict	33.67

3.5. Quality of friendship and length of friendship

Data on the mean values of the respondents with different lengths of friendships on the scales: affection, companionship, intimacy and conflict of Friendship Quality Questionnaire are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Mean values on quality scales for different friendship duration

Duration	Affection	Intimacy	Companion.	Conflict
2,5 mon-1y.	31.58	25.26	29.54	33.12
2-7 y.	33.05	28,88	30.37	34.57
8-9 y.	31.15	27,49	29.46	34.55
10-15 y.	31.65	27,75	29.88	33.21

The results of further analyses showed that the respondents with different lengths of friendship differ significantly on the dimension of intimacy ($F(3, 421) = 8.95, p < 0.01$) and the dimension of conflicts ($F(3, 421) = 3.20, p < 0.05$). On the dimensions of quality of friendships – affection and interaction – there were no statistically significant differences between respondents who have friendships of different lengths. A post hoc analysis (Scheffe, Duncan) sheds light on the direction of the existing differences. On the dimension of intimacy, significant differences between respondents and groups (length of friendship from 2.5 months to 1 year) and any other group II ($p < 0.01$), III ($p < 0.05$) and IV ($p < 0.01$) were revealed, in the sense that respondents whose friendships lasts up to 1 year have lower scores on the specified dimension. On the dimension of conflicts (Duncan), a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between groups I and IV of the respondents on the one hand, and respondents of groups II and III on the other was determined, in the direction of lower scores on this scale for respondents who are friends up to 1 y. and those who are friends of 10 years onwards.

3.6. Quality of friendship and stability friendship

An analysis of variance indicated that the respondents who did not change friends in the time interval of four months and those who did, differ significantly on scales intimacy ($F(1, 351) = 16.61, p < 0, 01$) and companionship ($F(1, 351) = 4.42, p < 0.05$) of quality of friendship. The respondents who maintained friendships between the two measurements, have a higher level of intimacy and companionship in the second measuring.

3.7. Changes in the quality of friendship

First, using a multivariate analysis of variance (repeated measures), differences on the scales of quality of friendships (affection, companionship, intimacy and conflict) were compared between the two measurements based on the duration of friendship. The analysis indicates that there was no change in the quality of friendship between the two measurements, from the aspect of their duration.

The analysis of frequencies of answers on allegations of changes in the friendship between two measurements, measured by the General Questionnaire, is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Frequency of changes in friendships

Changes	Yes	No
General change	106	137
Knowledge of friend	93	150
Trust	88	155
Companionship	94	149
Affection	79	164
Intimacy	77	166
Closeness	82	161
Conflict	39	204

By analyzing the data in Table 4, it can be seen that most respondents answered negatively to the set of claims about changing friendships. What stands out is the frequency of affirmative answers to the first question about the general change, which reads: "Is your friendship has changed in the last four months", which amounts to 56.4% and the frequency of affirmative answers to the statement of the Conflicts "We fight less," which is 84%. More of those questioned said that friendship changed in general, rather than by individual variables of changes of friendship.

3.8. Quality friendship and gender differences

An analysis of the differences between girls and boys on the dimensions of quality of friendships was carried out in the sample included in the first measuring. Of the total 425 respondents who participated during the first measuring, 257 were girls (60.5%) and 168 were boys (39.5%). Table 5 contains data on the mean values of the dimensions of quality of friendships for boys and girls.

Table 5 Mean values for boys and girls on quality scales

Quality	Boys	Girls
Affection	27,80	34,50
Companionship	26,98	31,67
Intimacy	24,64	29,17
Conflict	32,75	34,59

Gender differences were tested by an analysis of variance, which establishes that the girls and boys differ significantly in all dimensions of quality of friendships. Girls have a higher level of affection ($F(1, 423) = 124.30, p < 0.01$), companionship ($F(1, 423) = 91.40, p < 0.01$), intimacy ($F(1, 423) = 91.77, p < 0.01$) and the conflicts ($F(1, 423) = 16.32, p < 0.01$) than boys.

4. DISCUSSION

The research was carried out to investigate the specificity of friendly relations at the age of adolescence, with respect to length, stability, reciprocity and quality. Data on the length and stability of friendship from this study are consistent with theoretical interpretations that indicate an increase in stability during adolescence. Most respondents, 68.8%, did not change friends between the two measurings. In addition, most respondents (51.8%) during the study describe a friendship that lasts for a longer period of time (over 8 years). Bukowski (1996) argues that the increase in stability during adolescence is associated with the characteristics of friendship and characteristics of a friend. Some of these crucial characteristics are the following: increased selectivity and efficiency of selection, the developed image of oneself and one's own needs, an increase in the qualitative characteristics of friendship, more effective conflict resolution and others.

The relative uniformity of various qualitative dimensions of friendly relations (affection, intimacy, friendship and conflicts) indicates that adolescents in friendship equally valued the existence of friendly feelings and their expression, and trusting each other and socializing, but a higher level of conflict was also determined.

This is consistent with the theoretical descriptions of friendly relations in adolescence. Some of the basic features of friendly relations in preadolescence and adolescence are

more frequent interaction, stronger emotional intensity, intimacy, trust and commitment (Buhrmester 1987; Zimmermann 2004). Socializing is frequent in this period. More and more time is spent socializing outside of school. In addition to joint activities, time is increasingly filled by exchanging intimate thoughts and feelings, talking about a variety of topics and confrontation reviews (Hartup 1993; Seiffge-Kroenke 1993). Intensification of intimacy and closeness in friendly relations in this period is associated with changes that adolescents go through.

Changes in relationships with parents, the transition to a new school environment and significant physical, psychological and social changes lead to the necessity of creating friendships that will be a source of intimacy and closeness. The mutual discovery of feelings and thoughts as well as providing emotional support and giving advice helps adolescents in the process of identity formation. Teenagers have a strong need for self-understanding and self-definition, which in part may be satisfied during intimate conversations with friends. They start to appreciate loyalty and keeping secrets.

The largest number of adolescents say that the causes of deterioration of friendships are divulging secrets, violation of trust and lack of assistance (Neimeyer 1986). Disagreements and conflicts are common among friends during adolescence. Conflicts during this period usually occur because of the change in relationships, for example a compromise of important "obligations" of friendship such as help, trust, loyalty and intimacy (Laursen 1996). However, a few changes in this regard in relation to the previous period were noted. Adolescents are aware of the fact that friendly relations are voluntary and there is no guarantee of survival (Laursen 1993). In addition, they are aware that fostering friendly relations actually applies equally and that both sides have equal rights. Conflicts are seen as a potential threat to the friendship and they approach their solutions with much more attention and effort.

As for the quality of relations of friendship and length, the research results only partially confirm the initial assumptions indicating that respondents with shorter friendships (2.5 months to 1 year) had significantly lower scores on the quality scales of intimacy and conflict in compared to respondents whose friendships last longer (2-15 year). The exception is the fact that respondents who have the longest friendships (10 year onwards) have lower scores, similar to respondents with the shortest friendships, on the conflict scale. Thus, participants with shorter friendships declare that they are to a lesser extent familiar with their friend, that they communicated to a lesser extent, share intimate thoughts and feelings, but also indicated they were fighting more, arguing and that their conflicts influence the friendship more, decreasing the chances of their being resolved through discussion and agreement. Similarly, respondents with the longest friendships indicated more fighting, arguing that influenced the friendship more, as well as to making it difficult to resolve problems through discussion and agreement. On the scales of affection and companionship, presumed differences were not established.

The results of the research encouraged a series of questions on development dynamics of friendly relations regarding factors that operate in different stages of development of friendship. Developing friendships is perhaps easier to describe by using a generalized phase (formation, maintenance and termination date), than it is to try to establish their time limits and the factors that operate in certain stages. The quality of friendships and their length are connected, but maybe this relationship could be better explained by the interpretation that the development of friendship is sensitive to the evolution of the

individuals and by the fact that development of friendship is influenced by various factors at different ages. This conclusion is determined by the difference between friendships of different lengths and the dimension of intimacy, which is considered the basic feature of preadolescent and adolescent friendships.

The results of the research on relationship quality and stability of friendship indicated that only the scales intimacy and companionship determined statistically significant differences between respondents who changed and those who did not change friends. Respondents who changed friendship report to a greater extent that they are familiar with their friend, they communicated more about intimate thoughts and feelings, and that they hang out with friends more. In addition, adolescent friendships are highly stable (68.8%) over a period of four months. Also, respondents with shorter friendships to a greater extent change friends than those with longer friendships. The results indicate that there is a relationship between quality and stability of friendly relations. Stable friendships have a higher level of intimacy and companionship. As in the previous case, we can say that the dimension of intimacy is revealed as a significant factor in the dynamics of development of friendly relations. The dimension of intimacy has proven to be the most important not only in distinguishing shorter and longer friends, but also in maintaining friendships over a period of 4 months. The significance of the dimension of intimacy as the most important characteristics of adolescent friendships suggests that the explanation for these results may be attributed to the importance of developing changes in friendship, not interpretations concerning the stages and factors of the development of friendship.

Regarding the change in the quality of friendship between the two measurements there is no difference in the dimensions of the quality of friendships examined by the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, but respondents differ according to the variables of changes in friendship examined by the General Questionnaire. Respondents stated that their friendships changed over a period of 4 months as follows: change in general, now they know each other better, have more trust in a friend, more often socialize, mean more to each other, the trust each other more the closer they are. Different results in terms of changing friendships may also indicate differences in the assessment of these changes. The Friendship Quality Questionnaire assesses the quality of friendships by assessments of concrete experience and behavior in friendly relations, while the variables of change in the General Questionnaire are concerned with the general assessment of friendship quality.

This raises the question of the method of measuring changes in the quality of friendship. The question is whether the Friendship Quality Questionnaire is sensitive enough to "catch" fine changes in friendly terms. Another question is whether the general assessment of changes in friendships is reliable enough. With great caution it can be concluded that the friendships that last for a long time change over time. How they change, remains to be seen. The topic of dynamic development of friendly relations requires additional research that would allow the selection of adequate ways of studying the changes of friendly relations.

The research results indicate that girls have significantly higher scores on all scales of quality of friendships - affection, companionship, intimacy and conflict. Girls to a significantly greater extent declare to feel and express friendly feelings for a friend; to socialize with a friend; to know friends and to communicate their intimate thoughts and feelings; that they have no conflicts with friends, that conflicts do not influence their friendship, that they solve them through agreement and talk. The research results indicate that there are gender differences in the quality of friendships in adolescence. It also shows

that these differences were determined most one the scale of affection, and least on the scale of conflicts, which can indicate that young men avoid the topic of emotions when talking about their friendships, and that the topic of conflict is important for both sexes at this age regardless of the girls' higher scores on this scale.

These results are consistent with the theoretical interpretations and empirical results with respect to gender differences in the quality of friendships. According to theoretical interpretations the normative gender differences in peer interaction are starting to emerge more in the preschool age (Parker 1995). These differences are explained by differences in the socialization of boys and girls (Douvan and Adelson, according to Berndt 1982) and differences in interpersonal needs (Buhrmester 1996). The survey results indicate many differences between men and women in various aspects of friendly relations. Some of them confirm that girls have a higher level of intimacy in friendships, they are more responsive (Grabill 2000), they hang out more, they help a friend more (Saferstein 2005), they to a greater extent, seek and provide advice and support (Black 2000), they are more sensitive to the impact of conflict on friendship, and they resolved it more through talk (Laursen 1996).

5. CONCLUSION

The research presented in this paper suggests a number of characteristics of the friendships of adolescents, giving its contribution to their better understanding. Given the significance of these relations in adolescence, getting acquainted in detail with their characteristics is considered essential. The study found that in our sample of adolescents during repeated measurements in the space of four months, friendships are mostly long-termed and stable. The majority of respondents on the one hand describe a friendship that lasts for more than 8 years, and on the other hand do not change friends between two measurements. The respondents with shorter friendships changed friends more between two measurements which points to important aspects of the process of formation and maintenance. In the initial stages of development, friendship is more fragile when it comes to quality, and therefore more susceptible to disintegration. As for reciprocity in friendship, it was found that a smaller part of the respondents (24.5%) described the so-called two-way friendship. Quality measured in friendships is high, with tie scores on all scales of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire. This highlights the important socio-emotional functions that friendship has in adolescence. Friends in this period are an important source of security, support, emotional exchange, but they also give a chance for confronting opinions and validation of values. The quality of friendship is associated with temporal characteristics of friendship. It was found that participants with shorter friendships have lower levels of intimacy and conflict in friendships. Moreover, it was found that the respondents with stable friendships have a higher level of intimacy and companionship. As for changes in friendships and qualitative differences, mixed results were obtained. A connection between quality and changes in the friendship has not been determined by the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, but it is by general quality assessment. This indicates a difference in measurement between the Friendship Quality Questionnaire and general assessment. While the first estimates quality more in detail, the second provides a general assessment of the quality of friendship. Therefore it is

necessary to further investigate this issue. Traditionally the female population of adolescents has higher scores on all scales of quality of friendships.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the question of temporal characteristics is an important aspect of friendly relations. Friendship is like any other close relationship, a dynamic and lively process, with its principles concerning development specifics of the persons in the relationship, but also the dynamics of the relationship itself. Therefore it is considered that any research of friendship should take an account of these two aspects. Knowledge of development specifics of the individuals involved in the relationship, and the consequent development specifics of the friendly relations at a particular age throws a completely new light to this relationship. On the other hand if we are aware of the stage of development of relations, we can better consider the fine qualitative differences that determine it. What should also be in the focus of attention is the fact that the friendship is a dyadic relationship. Therefore research should shift focus from the individual to the dyadic level of estimation for even better insight into the dynamics of friendship. Due to the significance of friendships for socio-emotional development of adolescents, their better understanding provides data for practical implications in the form of therapeutic work, and possible interventions within the educational work, to name just a few possibilities of using the friendly relations in adolescent life. As for therapeutic work, taking into account the network of friends could improve acquiring greater social and emotional support for adolescent in times of crisis. Moreover, working on the development of social networks can have a positive effect on the social and emotional development of adolescents. The education system can take advantage of information about the social life of adolescents in the form of improving the process of learning. Friends often support each other in learning and in general when it comes to difficulties in the education process.

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KARAKTERISTIKE ADOLESCENTSKIH PRIJATELJSKIH ODNOSA: LONGITUDINALNA STUDIJA KVALITETA, TRAJNOSTI, STABILNOSTI I UZAJAMNOSTI

U ovom radu se obrađuje tema karakteristika prijateljskih odnosa. Naglasak je stavljen na sledeće karakteristike: kvalitet, dužina, stabilnost i uzajamnost prijateljstava. Istraživanje je realizovano u dva vremenska perioda, sa razmakom od 4 meseca na istom uzorku adolescenata oba pola uzrasta od 14 do 15 godina. U prvom merenju učestvovalo je ukupno 425 ispitanika, a u drugom 358 ispitanika. Korišteni su sledeći merni instrumenti: Upitnik kvaliteta prijateljstva, koji je kreiran za potrebe ovog istraživanja, Opšti upitnik I i II za prikupljanje opštih podataka o ispitanicima i njihovim prijateljskim odnosima. Rezultati ukazuju na nekoliko specifičnosti kvaliteta prijateljstva u periodu adolescencije. Utvrđena je povezanost kvaliteta i dužine prijateljstva. Kraća prijateljstva u odnosu na duža imaju niži nivo intime i konflikata. Pored toga, utvrđena je visoka stabilnost prijateljskih odnosa između dva merenja, kao i to da ispitanici koji su održali prijateljstvo imaju viši nivo intime i druženja u prijateljstvu. Ispitanici sa kraćim prijateljstvima u većoj meri menjaju prijatelja od ispitanika koji imaju duža prijateljstva. Devojke izveštavaju o višem nivou svih dimenzija kvaliteta prijateljstva- afekcija, druženje, intima i konflikti. Opšti zaključak je da su adolescentska prijateljstva na ovom uzorku u podjednako meri afektivna, intimna, sa izrazitim stepenom interakcije, ali i konfliktnih situacija; trajna i stabilna.

Ključne reči: *adolescencija, prijateljski odnosi, Upitnik kvaliteta prijateljstva.*