

Assessment of Prosocial Behaviour of School-Going Adolescents: A Cross-Sectional Survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Prosocial behaviour is one of the key features of the development of school-going adolescents. Therefore, the current paper focuses on the prosocial behaviour of school-going adolescents in Kollam District, Kerala. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional descriptive study where 600 school-going adolescents, their parents and 60 class teachers were selected through cluster sampling method. English and Malayalam version of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was administered among respondents. Chi-square and multiple linear regression models were used for analysing the data. **Results:** Self-report of prosocial behaviour predictors were significantly associated with gender ($P < 0.01$), urban-rural settings ($P < 0.001$) and government-private schools ($P < 0.001$). Parents' report shows highly significant relationship with gender ($P < 0.001$) whereas teachers' report is significantly related to urban-rural settings ($P < 0.01$). **Conclusion:** The current study found that one-fifth of school-going adolescents had borderline to abnormal (self – 17.4%; parents' – 16.9%; teachers' report – 20.8%) prosocial behaviour. School-going adolescents should involve in volunteer activities and campaigns for better development in society.

Keywords: Assessment, prosocial behaviour, school-going adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Volunteering for social services, physically and financially supporting others and those in need are distinctive forms of prosocial behaviour.^[1,2] The theoretical perspective of prosocial behaviours is social learning theory,^[3] social identity theory and self-categorisation theory.^[4] These theories state that prosocial behaviour influences every individual. Adolescents prosocial behaviours are altruism, sharing and cooperation, spiritual and religious activities, volunteerism, positive interaction among individuals as well as whole group, involvement in social activities.^[5]

Recent existing research articles on the prosocial behaviour of adolescents are cited in the succeeding appearance. Studies found that 7% to 22.4% of adolescents had borderline to abnormal prosocial behaviour in India.^[6-10] The majority of the studies are focused on the self-reported prosocial behaviour of adolescence. Therefore, the current study includes three different perceptions (self, parents and teachers) on prosocial behaviour of school-going adolescents. The objectives of the current study are (a) perception on prosocial behaviour across gender-based on self, parents' and teachers' reports, (b) to find

out the association between socio-demographic details with self, parents' and teachers' perception on prosocial behaviour.

SUBJECT AND METHODS

A cross-sectional descriptive design and multi-stage cluster sampling method were used in the current study. This study was carried out in the rural, urban, tribal and coastal areas of Kollam District, Kerala. Kollam District is one of the best educational pivots in the state of Kerala. The school-going adolescents were randomly selected from 60 classes of 19 schools and divided into two strata. The selection of schools was based on their written permission to conduct the current study.

The strata one consisted of 36 classes from class eight to tenth and strata two had 24 classes from class eleven to twelfth. The

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cluster size (each class) was ten and the total sample size was six hundred school-going adolescents and their parents. Sixty class teachers were also included in the study. The sample size was calculated using the following formula which has been used in most cross-sectional descriptive studies (Jayasinghe, 2010).

The Questionnaire for socio-demographic details of school-going adolescents, their parents and teachers; and the English or Malayalam version of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire^[13] were administered for the study. The self, parents' and teachers' SDQ report and five questions of prosocial behaviour domain were taken for the current study. If the original three band categorisation of SDQ and each item prosocial behaviour score was zero suggested "not true", one meant "somewhat true" and two suggested "certainly true". The total score of prosocial behaviour is the sum of five items and the score between the ranges of 6–10 is normal, (5) borderline and (0–4) abnormal in all three reports.

The study got approval from the Institution school board and academic committee. The written permission was taken from school authorities and informed consent from school-going adolescents, their parents and class teachers was obtained. The study was conducted from July to October 2019. An independent t-test was used for comparing gender and multiple linear regression analysis was done for the predictors of prosocial behaviour.

RESULTS

The socio-demographic details indicate that the majority of school-going adolescents, parents and teachers are females.

Table 1: Self, parents and teachers reports of pro-social behaviour across gender

Pro-social behaviour	Gender		DF	t	P
	Male	Female			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
Self-report	7.22 (2.08)	7.69 (1.97)	598	-2.86	0.004**
Parents report	7.14 (2.18)	7.81 (2.07)	598	-3.88	0.000***
Teachers report	7.63 (2.32)	7.62 (2.26)	598	0.05	0.95

SD - Standard Deviation; DF - Degree of Freedom; P<0.01**, P<0.001***

The mean age of school-going adolescents, parents and teachers was 14.98, 42.86 and 42.30 years, respectively. Results revealed that prevalence rate of prosocial behaviour of school-going adolescents was 7.2% abnormality in self-report, 7.7% from parents report and 12% from teachers report.

Self and parents reports showed that females had more prosocial behaviour than male school-going adolescents [Table 1]. Multiple linear regression analysis found a highly significant association in self-reported prosocial behaviour with gender, urban-rural settings and type of schools. Parents report found a highly significant association with gender whereas teachers' report showed a highly significant association with urban-rural settings [Table 2].

DISCUSSION

This current study shows 7.2% of school-going adolescents had an abnormality in prosocial behaviour and previous studies also found similar findings.^[6-10] Females had high prosocial behaviour and the same results were found in self-reported studies.^[8,10,14]

The self-report findings found that there is a significant association with gender, urban-rural settings and type of schools. A study found that urban school children had more prosocial behaviour than rural children.^[10] In the self-report, R square model was poor as it does not explain much of the variability in the dependent variable. Reports of both parents' and teachers' found showed a good R square model indicating a good proportion of the variability in the dependent variable.

The strength of the study was the use of self, parents and teachers reports for assessing the prosocial behaviour of school-going adolescents. The limitations of the study are that assessment has been made based on a few questions from SDQ; lack of causation factors and there is a need to carry out longitudinal studies.

CONCLUSION

Poor prosocial behaviour may lean towards antisocial behaviour and societal deterioration. The findings of the study imply the need for motivational programs for the promotion of social service activities. Prosocial activities need to be strengthened and promoted at the home, school and community level.

Table 2: Multiple linear regression analysis - pro-social behaviour total score of self, parents' and teachers' reports

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	P	95.0% CI	Model Summary
Self-report	Gender	0.516	0.002**	(.19, 0.83)	R=0.25
	Urban-rural settings	0.572	0.000***	(.25, 0.89)	R ² =0.06
	Govt-private school	0.722	0.000***	(.40, 1.03)	F=13.70
Parents report	Gender	0.69	0.000***	(.35, 1.03)	R=0.18
	Urban-rural settings	0.27	0.10	(-.06, 0.61)	R ² =0.03
	Govt-private school	0.35	0.04	(.01, 0.69)	F=7.32
Teachers report	Gender	0.02	0.91	(-.34, 0.38)	R=0.12
	Urban-rural settings	0.50	0.007**	(.14, 0.87)	R ² =0.01
	Govt-private school	0.30	0.10	(-.06, 0.66)	F=3.34

CI - Confidential Intervals; P<0.01**, P<0.001***

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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