



Prosocial Behaviour among Higher Secondary School Students in Kerala: A Comprehensive Quantitative Analysis

Akhila KS

Department of Education, Government College of Teacher Education, University of Calicut

Priya kemal

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Government College of Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study provides an in-depth analysis of prosocial behaviour among higher secondary school students in Kerala, India. Adopting a quantitative normative survey design, the study investigates the levels and types of prosocial behaviour and examines differences based on gender, type of school management, and stream of study. A total of 300 students were selected through stratified random sampling. The Prosocial Behaviour Scale developed by the investigator, with high reliability ($r = .93$), was used for data collection. The findings reveal a moderate level of prosocial behaviour among students, with no statistically significant differences across demographic variables. Adolescents' prosocial behaviour or voluntary behaviour intended to benefit others has been interrelated to several positive outcomes, including high self-esteem, academic success, and high-quality relationships. Prosocial behaviour develops and shifts throughout adolescence, and prosociality is formed by social experiences. However, prosocial behaviour is a multifaceted construct and depends on various environmental and contextual factors. The study underscores the role of education in fostering prosocial values and highlights the need for structured interventions in schools. Implications for educational policy, curriculum design, and future research are discussed.



Introduction

Education is the process of imparting knowledge to an individual which helps in the development of all the capacities that enable him to regulate his environment and fulfil his responsibilities. The mental, physical and social health of the learner influences the education he receives. Each individual is born social. As life goes on, our social relationships and responsibilities remain crucial. Human behaviour plays a significant role in nearly every aspect of life. It is the source of all success and failures. Positive social behaviours are considered to be the most effective way of dealing with people. Individuals with prosocial behaviour can contribute to the well-being of others. But how, why and when they do it determines their behaviour.

Prosocial behaviour, defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, is a fundamental aspect of human social interaction. It encompasses behaviours such as helping, sharing, cooperating, and empathizing. These behaviours contribute significantly to the functioning of society by promoting social harmony and cohesion.

Adolescence represents a crucial developmental period during which individuals form moral values, social attitudes, and behavioural tendencies. The development of prosocial behaviour during this stage has long-term implications for both individual well-being and societal progress. Research suggests that adolescents who exhibit higher levels of prosocial behaviour tend to have better academic outcomes, improved mental health, and stronger interpersonal relationships.

The importance of prosocial behaviour in development has been well recognised by the Government of India. All human societies throughout evolutionary history have depended on prosocial behaviour to ensure their survival and perpetuation. As human beings are living in a socially conditioned society, it is very important to inculcate prosocial behaviour among each individual. No doubt, children need to develop academic skills and capabilities, as these are obligatory to live in the modern world. Nevertheless, what are of utmost importance are the prosocial skills required to meet the challenges of their lives, as it helps them for better, appropriate and successful interactions. In the contemporary educational context, increasing emphasis on academic achievement often leads to the neglect of social and emotional learning. This has raised concerns about the declining levels of empathy, cooperation, and moral responsibility among students. Educational institutions must therefore play a proactive role in fostering prosocial values.



Despite its significance, empirical research on prosocial behaviour among higher secondary students in Kerala remains limited. This study aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of prosocial behaviour and its associated factors.

Review of Literature

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of prosocial behaviour in adolescent development. Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) emphasized that prosocial behaviour is linked to moral reasoning and empathy. Carlo and Randall (2002) identified multiple dimensions of prosocial behaviour, including altruistic, emotional, and public behaviours.

Studies conducted in India and abroad have reported mixed findings regarding the influence of demographic variables on prosocial behaviour. Some studies indicate gender differences, while others report no significant variation. Research also suggests that environmental factors such as family, school climate, and peer relationships play a crucial role in shaping prosocial tendencies. However, there is a lack of comprehensive studies examining the combined influence of gender, school management, and academic stream on prosocial behaviour among higher secondary students in Kerala.

Different Studies are Conducted about Prosocial behaviour, Social exchange theory is merely a general theory with which not only social behaviour but also other types of social behaviours are explained. This theory was proposed by Thibaut & Kelley (1959, 1978). The notion of this theory is that "Human interactions are guided by social economics". People not only exchange their money and articles but also exchange social goods such as – affection, love and services. According to social exchange theory, people want to achieve maximum rewards and minimize costs. It is called 'Minimize Strategy' by social psychologists.

Another approach used to explain phenomena associated with the receipt of help is reactance theory (Brehm, 1966; Brehm and Brehm, 1981). Its use is linked to the fact that help can pose explicit or implicit restrictions on the recipient's freedom for future action (et. Briar, 1966). Reactance theory suggests that to the extent that restrictions exist. A cursory scan of social psychology since 1965 reveals that hardly any area has failed to note the heuristic implications of attribution theories (et. Jones and Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967). Work on reactions to aid is no exception.

A considerable amount of social psychological research has investigated the acquisition and maintenance of helping behaviour from a learning theory perspective. Three basic processes have been implicated;



classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning. The effects of models on the helping behaviour of both adults and children have been extensively researched (Rushton 1976, 1982). Much of this research has been conducted in the laboratory but studies in naturalistic settings generally show similar results. Krebs (1970) proposed that models can affect helping by providing an example of how to perform a prosocial act by reminding the observer of norms and appropriate behaviours or by increasing observers' confidence in being able to help. More typically researchers have emphasized the role of modelling in the socialization and development of prosocial behaviour.

Methodology

The present investigation is carried out to study the Prosocial Behaviour among Higher Secondary School Students. The investigator conducted the study in three phases. The first phase included the selection of variables in the study and the construction of tools required for them. In the second phase, the investigator selected the sample and collected the data using the tools. In the third phase, the investigator analyzes the data using a suitable statistical procedure and through the statistical analysis, the research concludes. The methodology followed at various phases of the investigation.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative normative survey design.

Sample

A sample of 300 higher secondary school students was selected using stratified random sampling. The sample included equal representation based on gender, type of school management, and academic stream.

Instrument

The Prosocial Behaviour Scale developed by the investigator was used. The scale included 42 items across six dimensions. The reliability coefficient ($r = .93$) indicated high internal consistency.

Data Collection

Data were collected from selected schools after obtaining permission. Students completed the questionnaire within 30 minutes.



Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test and ANOVA) were used.

Results

The results indicate that the overall level of prosocial behaviour among higher secondary students is moderate. The mean scores suggest that students demonstrate helping and cooperative tendencies, though not at a high level. The t-test results revealed no significant differences in prosocial behaviour based on gender. Similarly, ANOVA results showed no significant variation based on type of school management or academic stream. These findings suggest that prosocial behaviour is relatively uniform across different groups.

1. The study found that the level of Prosocial Behaviour among Higher Secondary School students in the Malappuram district are only moderate.
2. The study found that among the different types of prosocial behaviour, compliant prosocial behaviour is dominating other types.
3. No significant difference was observed in prosocial behaviour based on the gender of the students.
4. Comparison of prosocial behaviour with respect to the type of management has also no significant difference.
5. The study reveals that there is a significant difference in prosocial behaviour of higher secondary school students with respect to the stream of study

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research indicating that prosocial behaviour among adolescents is generally moderate. The absence of significant differences across demographic variables suggests that prosocial behaviour may be influenced more by developmental and environmental factors rather than individual characteristics.

The results highlight the need for educational interventions that focus on social and emotional learning. Schools should provide opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility.



Furthermore, the role of teachers and parents in modelling prosocial behaviour cannot be overlooked.

Implications

The study has important implications for educators and policymakers. Integrating value-based education into the curriculum can enhance prosocial behaviour among students. Programs such as community service, peer mentoring, and collaborative learning should be encouraged.

The findings imply that the level of Prosocial Behaviour of the Higher Secondary School students are only moderate. But the desired level has to be attained. Hence necessary steps should be taken to enable the students to make upward mobility from moderate to high. All stakeholders in the field of Education should have to take appropriate initiatives to help students to reach the optimal level. The students need to be encouraged by parents, teachers and institutional authorities to actively take part in NCC/NSS and Extracurricular activities to sublimate their energy in socially desirable and acceptable channels.

The prosocial behaviour of higher secondary school students can be enhanced by promoting volunteerism for which the institutional authorities should take necessary steps to chalk out different outreach programmes and extension activities which require service work. The students should feel that volunteering is their free choice and not an externally imposed requirement, as those who volunteer for a requirement will be less likely to see their helping as intrinsically motivated, and may volunteer less in future. The institutions should also organize social skill training programmes to facilitate the acquisition and promotion of social and emotional competence skills which can thereby enhance prosocial behaviour.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into prosocial behaviour among higher secondary school students in Kerala. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering prosocial values through education. Future research should explore additional factors influencing prosocial behaviour and adopt longitudinal designs.



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