

PRO SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENTS: THE ROLE OF PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT

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Abstract: Prosocial behaviour or voluntary actions are rooted in human behaviour. Pro social behaviour includes qualities like sharing, helping, rescuing, cooperation, kindness, removing distress from the life of another person etc. Acting in a prosocial manner not only help an individual to reinforce and maintain their positive self image or personal ideals, it also helps to fulfill their own personal needs However, development of this innate quality largely depends on the relationship of an individual with other members of his family and society. Many researchers have focused on how the children's socialization environment is related to their tendency to help and share. This is the reason which contributes towards individual differences in prosociality. As a child grows and reaches the stage of adolescence, his behaviour is more likely to be influenced by his peer groups also. This paper is an attempt to find out the role of parental encouragement in developing pro social behaviour in their children. For the purpose of the study, 120 students from four schools of Baramula district of Kashmir were taken randomly as sample of the study. The study reveals a significant positive relationship between parental encouragement and prosocial behaviour of adolescent students.

Keywords: Pro social behaviour, parental encouragement, Adolescent students, Human behaviour, Social skills.

Education itself begins with the birth of an individual in the family. Family remains involved in the education of an individual from his cradle to grave. Parents are the first tutor of the child. Family is the oldest and most important active agency of the education. It is the foundation of all social organization. The bringing up of children is a permanent need of all societies, and the particular way in which it is done is a cultural pattern of that society. Child grows up to fit in his society and the society of the child begins with his family, which defines the context in which a child receives his early socialization. If parents want to provide optimal facilitative environment conducive to the cognitive development of the children, they should play an important role in the educational process of their children. It is generally believed that parental care, concern, guidance and influence, or in a word "parental encouragement" has an effect on the overall development of the child.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (1980) Encouragement means the act of encouraging or state of being encouraged. Encouragement is defined as an expression of support or approval, or is words or actions that assist or inspire someone or something. Encouragement is positive feedback that focuses primarily on effort or improvement rather than outcomes. Encouragement is recognizing, accepting, and conveying faith in a child for the mere fact that he or she exists. The child does not have to be "the best" to be a full-fledged human being. With encouragement, a child feels worthwhile and appreciated regardless of the results

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he or she achieves. Praise always contains an element of judgment and evaluation. Whereas praise is given only when one achieves “good” results, encouragement can be given any time, even when things go poorly.

Collectively the term Parental Encouragement implies the treatment provided by the parents to their children. It can be in the form of guidance, concern, care as approved by them which can act as a driving force for the students to take a particular decision in life. Dreikurs (1971) considered encouragement to be the single most important quality in getting along with others, so important that the lack of it could be considered the basic influence for misbehavior. Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined a parental encouragement as the emotional climate in which parents raise their children. Rossi (1965, cited in Asha, 2001) defined parental encouragement as an approval and appreciation of their wards activity when they were satisfied with him in relation to his attainment of education.

A psychological environment in which parent’s child relationship can groom itself is most important for the development of social behaviour and helping attitude in their child. Hence, parental encouragement can play a crucial role in fostering many potentialities and shaping the personality of the child. Children may perceive themselves as rejected if they face lack of parental encouragement. This can, in turn, affect temperamental, motivational and cognitive aspect of their personality. Parental encouragement to the child serves as the most important agent who helps the child to learn who he is and what is expected of him thus assists him in developing his self identity in the society.

Even the practice of prosocial behavior and altruism are very often associated with religious traditions. The world’s major religious traditions-Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism preach that helping the needy and less fortunate is a religious obligation of man. *Zakat* or giving alms is one of the five basic principles of Islam. The Hinduism recognizes the importance of service to mankind by equalizing it with the service to God. There are numerous examples in the Old Testament where the God commands Jews to help the poor. The practice of helping and giving within the Judeo-Christian religions has been regarded as a part of culture in Western society.

Prosociality or voluntary actions that help others are rooted in human behaviour. Examples of prosocial traditions were found in ancient Indian culture where life attitudes such as treating guests as God (*atithi devo bhava*), service to humanity, sympathy, empathy, giving donations (*dana*) to the needy, treating the whole world as one family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*) etc. had been valued with high esteem. Recorded history and prehistory of man also show the examples of humans engaging in prosocial behavior throughout the world. The native peoples of North America had a very strong communal culture associated with the practice of helping and giving others. In the Hopi culture, helpfulness and cooperation have been regarded as good practices for the household and individual (Knickerbocker, 2003).

Prosocial behavior or prosociality is regarded as central to the well being of social groups across a range of scales (Helliwell and Putnam, 2004). It is a social behavior which can be described by actions such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering. The term prosocial behavior, states Kidron and Fleschman (1996), refers to positive actions that benefits others and is prompted by actions such as empathy and moral values associated with a sense of responsibility rather than a desire for any personal gain. These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others. It is behaving in ways or demonstrating activities that help benefit other people in society by sharing, comforting, rescuing and helping. Prosocial behavior is defined as actions that benefit other people or society as a whole (Twenge, Ciarocco, Baumeister, & Bartels, (2007). It refers to “voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefits another individual or group of individuals” (Eisenberg and Mussen 1989). While the recipient is benefited by one’s prosocial actions, these actions may also be costly to the doer (Benabou, 2005). Intension to act prosocially may lead one to help others at the cost of his own self (Simpson, 2008).

Although the term “prosocial behavior” is often associated with developing desirable traits in children, the literature on the topic has grown since the late 1980s to include adult behaviors as well (Eisenberg and Mussen 1989). According to Marion (2003), prosocial behavior can be categorized into three groups-sharing, helping and cooperation. Sharing includes dividing up or bestowing. The act of helping includes kindness, rescuing, removing distress etc. The act of cooperation refers to the act of working tighter to reach a goal. Prosocial behavior, as stated by Kostelink et. al., (1988), can be grouped into two categories: cooperation and helpfulness. They have defined cooperation as an act of working together for a common goal. The act of removing distress from the life of another person is regarded as an act of helpfulness i.e. prosociality.

Significance of the Study

All human beings are born with some empathetic ability. This ability enables them to connect with other human beings in an emotional way (Sagi and Hoffman, 194). As the child grows, he develops a moral understanding of the world around him. His morals are influenced by his family, society, culture etc. unfortunately, due to various socio-cultural factors, many families are disorganized and disoriented. Therefore, they fail to impart morality in their children. Along with his increasing age and cognitive maturity, the child develops an understanding of his obedience to social standards which in turn develops the child’s ability to exhibit prosocial behavior (Parke, 2010; Waxler, 1992; Eisenberg, 2006). However, as they grow up, the development of this innate quality depends on their relationship with other people. The transition of students from childhood to adolescence is more increasingly dependent on their social relationship with peers (Hartup, --1996).

Adolescents, whose friends display pro social behaviours, are also likely to engage themselves in prosocial behaviours (Barry and Wentzel, 2006).

Adolescence is a transitional period in one's life in which one has to overcome the simplicity of his child life and get himself prepared to face the hard realities of adulthood. In fact, adolescents live in two societies-teenage society and adult society. The behaviour, which may satisfy the one, is likely to dissatisfy the other. The society expects of him to behave like an adult, but not too much like an adult. These states of affairs, cause adolescents live in a state of anxiety, tension and insecurity.

Prosocial behavior is crucial to the well being of adolescents. Acting in a prosocial manner not only help individual to reinforce and maintain their positive self image or personal ideals, it also helps to fulfill their own personal needs (Omoto and Snyder, 1995). Prosocial behaviours help in developing positive mood. The positive effects of volunteering and other prosocial behaviors on life satisfaction, self esteem and overall mental health have also been found out by several researchers (Schwartz, et. al., 2003; Rietschlin. 1998; Wilson, 1999). Individuals, who exhibit prosocial behavior, are conferred with advantages by the members within a society, and the benefactors are reciprocated indirectly (Simpson, 2008).

Children also learn functional life skills through their observation of the adults. Therefore, adults must learn to behave in a socially accepted manner. However, they do not develop social values in a vacuum. In recent times, the development of prosocial skills in adolescents has been emphasized by educators, policymakers, and researchers. Explorations in this area can contribute to find out the possible physical and mental benefits of prosocial actions and the ongoing contribution of prosocial behavior to interpersonal and intergroup relations (Penner, 2005).

Based on the above research findings, it is hoped that the outcomes of this study will not only bring to light the supportive role of parental encouragement in the life of adolescents, but will also help in inculcating various social skills in them. It may help the parents to get more involvement in their child's life to equip the latter with social skills to develop harmonious interpersonal and group relations and face the challenges in all spheres of life in an intelligent way.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out pro social behaviour of secondary school students.
2. To find out pro parental encouragement of secondary school students.
3. To explore the pro social behaviour of secondary school students in relation to their parental encouragement.

Hypotheses

1. There exists no significant difference in the parental encouragement of boys and girls secondary school students.

2. There exists no significant difference in the pro social behaviour of secondary students on the basis of their gender.
3. There exists no significant relationship between parental encouragement and pro social behaviour of secondary school students.

Sample of Research

For the purpose of the study, 120 students from four schools of Baramula district, were taken randomly as sample of the study. The sample was further divided into 60 boys and 60 girls.

Tools of Research

1. The Pro Social Personality Battery (PSP) by Penner et. al., (1995) had been used to measure the pro social behaviour of students.
2. Parental Encouragement Scale (APES) by Dr. Kusum Agarwal (1999) was used to ascertain the involvement and encouragement rendered by parents towards their children.

Statistical Techniques

In this study, t-test was used to find out the difference in the pro social behaviour and parental encouragement of secondary school students on the basis of certain background variables i.e gender. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed to find out the relationship between parental encouragement and pro social behaviour of secondary school students.

Result and Discussion

Hypothesis 1 states, "There exists no significant difference in the pro social behaviour of boys and girls secondary school students." The results found from the data collected are shown in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MEAN SCORES OF PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS SECONDARY STUDENTS

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Sub sample</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t value</i>
Parental	Boys	29.45	5.35	
Encouragement	Girls	28.01	6.45	1.376*
Pro-social	Boys	26.55	4.82	
Behaviour	Girls	30.89	5.696	4.553**

*Indicates non significance at 0.05 level.

**Indicates significance at 0.01 level.

The above table indicates that no significant difference exist in the parental encouragement of the secondary students at 5% level of significance. The insignificant t-value indicates that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of parental encouragement of secondary school students with regard to their gender. The t-value found was statistically insignificant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the Hypothesis stating that there exists no significant difference in the parental encouragement of boys and girls secondary school students is accepted. The finding is in agreement with the study of Muneeswari(2013), but in contrast to those of Maheswari(2013), Babu and Kaliamoorthy(2008), and Muthamizhselvan (2012) which showed a significant difference in the parental encouragement of boys and girls.

It is evident from the above t ratio that the two groups differ significantly ($p < 0.01$) in exhibiting pro social behaviour. The girls in comparison to the boys have shown significantly higher scores. Hence the hypothesis 1 is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant difference in the pro social behaviour of secondary students. Girls show more pro social behaviour than boys. However, Sober & Wilson (1998), and Zakriski, Wriyth and Underwood (2005), reported that personality greatly influences the behaviour of girls than those of the boys. They claim that the gender difference in pro-sociality could be due to the evolved origins of altruistic tendencies or social context that extend opportunities to influence pro social behaviour of girls. Moreover, the gender specific differences in pro sociality is due to nature of items in the rating scale which includes more stereotypically feminine characteristics such as nurturing and comfortin than masculine characteristics (Hinde and Groebel, 1991).

TABLE 2: CORRELATION CO-EFFICIENT FOR PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

<i>Category</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>r value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Parental encouragement	120	118	0.199	Positive Correlation
Pro social behaviour				

Positive correlation at 0.01 level.

Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation was calculated to ascertain the relationship between parental encouragement and pro social behaviour of students. Table 3 states that there is a positive correlation between parental encouragement and pro social behaviour. Researches done earlier have found that parents who effectively control their children's emotional functioning are able to develop more empathy, sympathy, helpfulness and kind behaviour in their children (Eisenberg *et. al.*, 1992..., Garner, 2003). Carlo *et. al.*, (2007), reported that parenting practices have significant influence on the pro social behaviour of adolescents. In a similar study conducted by Dunsmore *et. al.*, (2009), it is suggested that mother's

expressive style and emotional responses has a great influence on the children's pro social or antisocial behaviour. The contribution of mothers in developing the pro social behaviour of both their sons and daughters is confirmed by Hastings *et. al.*, (2007).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study reveals that gender difference does not exist for parental encouragement of secondary school students. It may be due to the growing awareness of parents for the development of their child irrespective of son or daughter. Boys and girls differ significantly in their mean pro-social behaviour. Parental encouragement and Pro-social behaviour of higher secondary students are found to be related positively. It indicates that parental encouragement has a significant influence in developing pro-social behaviour in their children. Therefore, parents should be very much cautious while dealing with their children so that their behaviour could be moulded in a socially desirable way.

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