



Prosocial Behaviour of In-School Adolescents: The Perceived Influence of Self-Esteem, Peer Influence and Parental Involvement

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. They designed the study, wrote the protocol and supervised the work. They also carried out all laboratories work and performed the statistical analysis. Author MOO managed the analyses of the study. Author RCA wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author MOO managed the literature searches and edited the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on the prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State. Using the descriptive survey research design, 300 randomly selected in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis reflecting 10% of the population, were participants for the study. Four valid and standardized scales were used to collect data from the participants. Three research hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected in the study were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression analysis. It was found that self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement had significant relationships with prosocial behaviour of the participants. The three predictors contributed significantly to the prediction of prosocial behaviour when

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combined and independent, accounting for a variation of about 45.1% of the criterion measure. However, while peer influence was the most potent predictor it was inversely related to prosocial behaviour. Based on the findings from the study, recommendations were made for significant stakeholders.

Keywords: Self esteem; peer influence; parental involvement; prosocial behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

One fundamentally relevant positive behaviour requisite for positive development of children and youths is prosocial behaviour. By definition, prosocial behaviour occurs when individuals perform actions that are beneficial to others, sometimes at a cost to themselves [1]. Prosocial behaviour is an indication of a well-adjusted and socially adept child. The literature on the subject illustrates prosocial behaviour as being beneficial to society since helping, caring and sharing behaviour enhances the social fabric and provides supportive mechanisms to individuals. Humans have long been considered a prosocial species. Countless examples of people helping unrelated individuals are cited not only anecdotally, but in scholarly literature [2] and demonstrate the behaviour as a component of human nature.

The opportunities for, and diversity of prosocial behaviours increases as children enter adolescence, partly due to new and emerging interpersonal relationships, cognitive and emotive development, and changes in the social context [3]. For example, new and modified relationships with peers and adult figures can impact adolescents' prosocial behaviours by providing new targets of helping and exposure to new values, belief systems, or behaviours. Furthermore, many teachers require students to engage in service learning activities and many adolescents (particularly older adolescents) voluntarily, or with parental encouragement, join service clubs [4]. Adolescents also have greater mobility that affords additional opportunities for engaging in behaviours that benefit others.

However it is no news that aggressive and violent behaviours are increasing among today's students. One study [5] showed that there is a high rate of school complains about students' delinquency. Research also indicates that aggressive behaviour is inevitable and classroom conflicts are common in our schools [6,7]. It is further noted that school violence and the lack of a sense of peace and caring are major issues influencing teaching and learning in schools [8,9].

Students in most cultures are exposed to increasing violent situations through the media, family and society. Aggressive behaviour and conflicts in the classroom not only frustrate the teacher but may also negatively influence the quality and quantity of teaching and learning. This becomes a great problem for teachers. Further, the aphorism that children of today are leaders of tomorrow predicts a bleak future if violence among students are to be reckon with. The importance of solving this problem cannot be over emphasized.

Thus the need to promote prosocial behaviour among in-school adolescent is a major priority. Nevertheless developing potent training programmes may not be efficient without considering salient psycho-social determinants that could be significant in determining prosociality. Factors such as self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement have been considered to be possible determinants of prosocial behaviour. Research on the factors responsible for prosocial actions has a fairly long history in personality and social psychology. However, in developing societies and nations little or nothing has been done to investigate the development of prosocial behaviour particularly among in-school adolescent. Hence, there is dearth in our understanding of how certain determinants such as self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement, could impact on prosocial development of in-school adolescents.

For instance, self esteem which is an imagery of ones belief of worthiness is a construct that is crucial for self assessment and self development. In a special issue focusing on the role of self-esteem in development, the authors noted that the most important advance in self-esteem research has been to establish the complexity and multi-faceted nature of its underlying structure [10]. Judgment of self is first made at home by a child where he/she perceives a positive self-worth or self-esteem due to the conveyance of unconditional love by warm loving parents or a diminished sense of self-worth due to parental rejection. As interaction with parents expands to others outside the family, the

development of self-esteem continues and is determined by the degree of exposure. This subjective appraisal remains fairly constant over a period of several years and may be a determinant of prosocial dispositions. Prosocial individuals have been shown to be related with positive self views [11-13] and high in self efficacy [14]. These findings indicate that self esteem may be related to prosocial behaviour.

Another independent variable to be examined in this study is peer influence. The influences that are present in the peer network are an important part of adolescent prosocial development. Previous research has found evidence for the importance of peer relations in a variety of areas of adolescent functioning. Adolescents who were well-liked by many peers displayed higher levels of ego development and secure attachment, as well as better interactions with their mothers and best friends [15]. When prosocial behaviours are displayed toward peers, they are likely to respond in a prosocial manner and might engage in cycles of prosocial exchanges [16,17]. This cycle is more likely to occur between peers than between adolescents and adults because of the more equal social status between adolescent peers than between adolescents and adults. These findings suggest that peer interactions are unique from adult-adolescent interactions and are important in adolescent development. Thus, peer influences and interactions are likely candidates for factors that are important in adolescents' prosocial behaviours.

The parent-child socialization and adolescent development literatures have long recognized the importance of parenting to adolescent outcomes. Theoretical and empirical work has consistently linked effective parenting practices to adolescent well-being whereas ineffective parenting practices predict unhealthy adolescent functioning. Theory and research have suggested three central components of parenting: Parental psychological control, parental behavioral control or involvement, and parental support [18]. Symbolic interactionism suggests that children attach meanings to the interactions they have with their parents, and if relationships are nurturing and supportive, competence in building relationships with other people and taking initiative in social situations may be encouraged. Parenting styles and practices have been found to influence children and adolescents' prosocial behaviours. Harsh or power-assertive discipline, for example, has consistently been found to be negatively related

to prosocial behaviours [19,20]. Empirical research has also found that parental support is positively associated with prosocial behaviours including academic achievement [21], moral behaviour [22], and social initiative [23]. The frequency and consistency of this association supports the premise of a specialized relationship between parental support and positive adolescent behaviour.

Advancing our knowledge of the development of prosocial behaviours is critical as these behaviours not only have significant implications for others, but also on our understanding of morality and the self. Given that prosocial behaviours are defined as any behaviours that are intended to help or benefit others in need [24], society as a whole should take an interest in behaviours that positively impact its members. Scholars have moreover identified the need to study this beneficent centred morality in addition to the justice-centred approach, which emphasizes maintaining the law and order of society, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of morality.

The in-school adolescents describe individuals within the period of adolescent age group and currently registered in a certified institution of learning. This group was selected base on the premise that since they are in school, they become easy targets to assess and are available for change. Further the educational cycle and academic serene provide suitable tool for effectiveness in the study since there is increased interaction among their peers. It is often noted that children of today are leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, a focus on investigating possible predictors of prosocial behaviour ranks among variety of positive measures that are beneficial for successful nurturing of children and salvaging a better future.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on the prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents. Hence, to achieve this, the study would seek to determine the relationship among self esteem, peer influence, parental involvement and prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents. The combined and relative effects of self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on prosocial behaviour of in-school will also be investigated.

2.1 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were answered in the study

1. There would be no significant relationship among self esteem, peer influence, parental involvement and prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.
2. There would be no significant combined effects of self-esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.
3. There would be no significant contributions of self-esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.

2.2 Research Design

This study will apply the Descriptive Survey Method. Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way.

2.3 Population

The population of the study consist of all in-school adolescents within Ibadan metropolis, Oyo state, Nigeria. This consists of all currently registered adolescents in a certified and qualified institution of learning who are within the age bracket of 13-19 years. Available records indicate a population of 3,000 students within the expected age bracket.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The technique adopted for selection of the sample was simple random selection technique. A representative of ten randomly selected secondary schools within Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State was randomly selected for the study. The participants were three hundred (300), thirty (30) each from the ten schools randomly selected from the schools in Ibadan metropolitan, Oyo State. The sample was a 10% reflection of the population of study.

3. INSTRUMENTATION

The instruments used for data collection in this study are four standardized and valid scales. Each scale is described below;

3.1 The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale [25] was developed in 1965. The scale can be used to assess global self-esteem and it is one of the most widely used self-esteem tests among psychologists and sociologists. The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. For this study, the scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.76.

3.2 Peer Influence Scale

The Peer Influence Scale is a sub-scale of Learner's Aggressive Questionnaire [26]. It contains 14 items out of the total 83 items of the original scale. The items are structured are structured in a 3-point likert format with responses ranging from 1= No, 2= undecided, and 3= yes. The scale has reported a two week test-re-test reliability co-efficient of 0.62 with an original cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.74.

3.3 Parental Involvement Scale

The scale is a self developed instrument specifically designed to elicit information on adolescent perceived knowledge of parental involvement. The instrument consist of 10-items structured in a 5-point likert format, with responses ranging from 5 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. Typical item in the scale is "My parents tells me that a person must work hard in order to do something well". The reliability of the scale was determined with a two-week test re-test procedure. The scale has reported reliability coefficient alphas of .751 from a two week test re-test reliability method.

3.4 Prosocial Tendencies Measure

The scale used is the prosocial tendencies measures [27], the 23-item version of the PTM composed of 6 sub-scales: Public (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$), anonymous (5 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$), dire (3 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.63$), emotional (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$), compliant (2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$), and altruism (5 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$). The response pattern for the scale is a 5- point scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 5 (describes me greatly).

3.5 Data Collection and Procedure

The researcher personally administered the instruments following the approval granted by

relevant authorities. The questionnaires were administered to the 300 participants in their various schools. The questionnaires were distributed during normal school hours after seeking the consent of the school authority. The students were given orientation adequate timing to ensure thorough completion of all the items. The questionnaires were collected on the spot after administration. Only those who correctly filled questionnaires were used for data analysis. It took the researcher approximately two weeks to complete these procedures.

3.6 Data Analysis

Relationship between the independent variables and the criterion measure were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. The collective and relative contributions of the independent variables to prosocial behaviour were further analyzed with multiple regression statistics.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Research Hypotheses 1

There would be no significant relationship among self esteem, peer influence, parental involvement and prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Each of the three factors of reported significant potent relationship with prosocial behaviour of the participants. However, the strongest relationship was between peer influence and prosocial behaviour which was also negatively significant.

4.2 Research Hypotheses 2

There would be no significant combined effects of self-esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Going by the result presented in Table 2, the independent variables collectively yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions (R) of .681 and an adjusted R squared of .451. This shows that 45.1% of the total variance of prosocial behaviour with the participants is accounted for by the combination of the three predictive variables studied. The table as well indicates that the analysis of variance of multiple regression produced an F- ratio value significant at 0.05 level (F = 31.04; < .05). The findings thus confirm that the three variables are significant predictors of the criterion measure and so form a focus for future research.

4.3 Research Hypotheses 3

There would be no significant contributions of self-esteem, peer influence and parental involvement on prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State.

From the result displayed in Table 2 each of the independent variables made significant individual contributions to the prediction of the criterion measure (prosocial behaviour) in varying weights. The result indicated that the following beta weights which represent the independent variables were observed; self esteem $\beta = .126$, $t = 2.299$, $P < 0.05$, Peer influence $\beta = .151$, $t = 3.178$, $P < 0.05$ and parental involvement $\beta = .115$, $t = 1.813$, $P < 0.05$.

Table 1. Correlation matrix of predictor variables and prosocial behaviour

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Prosocial behaviour	1.			
2. Self esteem	.308**	1		
3. Peer influence	-.312**	.299**	1.	
4. Parental involvement	.289**	.228**	.211**	1.
Mean	79.42	34.35	31.06	28.41
S.D.	13.75	9.77	10.88	11.42

***correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Table 2. Summary of regression analysis on prosocial behaviour

	R	R ²	ADJ R ²	F-ratio	β	T- ratio	Sig
Combined Effect	.681	.464	.451	31.04			
Self-esteem					.126	2.299	.009
Peer influence					.151	3.178	.005
Parental involvement					.115	1.813	.011

5. DISCUSSION

From the result of the correlation matrix, it is observed that self esteem, peer influence, parental involvement is significantly related to the prosocial behaviour of the participants. However, the relationship value of peer influence was negatively significant. This indicates that as peer influence increases among the participants in this study prosocial behaviour declines. Also as peer influence decreases, prosocial behaviour increases. The finding however corroborates prior studies [16,17] indicating significant relationships between socio-psychological factors and prosocial behaviours.

As shown in Table 2, the multiple regression analysis indicates that self-esteem; peer influence and parental involvement reported significant combine effect on prosocial behaviour because the F – ratio value of 31.04 is significant at 0.05 levels. This further affirms to the fact that the predictive capacity of the independent variables are not due to chance factor. The magnitude of this relationship in predicting the classroom management is reflected in the values multiple R² adjusted (0. 451) as shown in Table 2. Thus, it can be said that 45.1% of the total variance in the prosocial behaviour of in-school adolescents is accounted for by the combination of self-esteem, peer influence and parental involvement. This large proportionate determinant underscores the strength of these three factors as important in the understanding of prosocial behaviour among the adolescents.

Peer influence was found to be the most potent contributor to the prediction in this study. This finding is complementary to research showing that peer influences had effects on prosocial tendencies [15-17]. As students transit from childhood to adolescence, they become increasingly dependent on social relationships with peers [28]. It has been reported [15] that adolescents who were well-liked by many peers displayed higher levels of ego development and secure attachment, as well as better interactions with their mothers and best friends. The authors added that popularity was also linked to minor levels of delinquency but less hostile behavior toward peers [15]. One potential explanation of this association over time is that better peers improve prosocial tendencies by making the later more enjoyable and worthwhile. Furthermore, [29] peer pressure and peer conformity has been found to be better than popularity for predicting anti-prosocial tendencies. However, to be

influenced by one's peers does not uniformly predict negative outcomes. Research has shown that the tendency to seek advice from peers over parents had no long-term consequences for early adolescents [30]. It is worth noting that adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure from their close friends may predict future responses to negative peer pressure and decreases in popularity. Adolescents whose best friends display prosocial behaviors also tend to engage in such behaviors themselves [31]. Thus, it is plausible that the presence of these negative or positive peer factors has a negative or positive impact on overall adolescent functioning.

Self esteem is the next predictor in this study. The finding compliments prior studies in this regard [22,12-14]. Self-esteem describes the evaluation of self worth placed on the self. Hence, individuals with high self esteem are expected to have strong evaluation of worth for themselves. Such self worth brings forth straightforwardness which includes being candid with others, dependability, responsibility, and consistency of personality. Those with straightforwardness are turned to for advice and also have insight into their own motives and behaviors. They could give, nurture positive feelings towards others, behave in a giving manner, and be protective of others, in addition to being warm and compassionate in nature. Thus, it is only at the point of having high self worth that these individuals can find worth for others and provide needful helping hands that are prosocial in nature. This provide a plausible explanation of the effect of self-esteem on prosocial behavior.

Parental involvement also had effects on prosocial behavior. Theoretical considerations and new empirical evidence suggest that children's development cannot simply be explained by either biological or contextual factors but that their interaction is important to understanding contributions to child behavior [32]. Exemplary prosocial behaviors include sharing personal resources, providing instrumental help, and supporting others emotionally in times of distress [33]. Parents who model these forms of behaviours have the tendencies of promoting the behaviour with their children. Studies has shown that the positive aspects of parenting, such as induction (a reasoning practice that can increase children's awareness of the consequences of their behavior to others), warmth and support toward children (providing a caring model for children, and

increasing children's willingness to attend to parental messages), and autonomy support (focusing on the child's needs and abilities rather than imposing rules and directives) are related to children's prosocial behavior, whereas the opposite is true for power-assertive and negative discipline [34-36]. However, review of parenting across socialization and parent-child interaction domains, show strong evidence that parents may be successful in one domain of interaction but not in another, because successful parenting in each domain of interaction requires parents to show different abilities and invest different resources in their interaction with children [37,38]. It is therefore important to carry out more studies on parenting in relation to different aspects of prosocial behavior.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the present decadent society inclusive of variety of delinquent behaviours among adolescents, prosocial tendencies may be the tool for eradicating decadences and promoting discipline with the society particularly among the adolescents. The findings in this study illustrate the beneficial effects of self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement in terms of prosocial behaviors and should be considered in relation to broader ramifications for theory and practice. Prosocial behaviour is an influential societal signal, and becomes especially important in adolescence, when the transition to higher education traditionally takes place. The current findings show that the quality and peer attachment in early adolescence are predictive of relative changes in levels of prosocial nature over time.

This finding is significant in drawing up a complete picture of an important aspect of adolescent development. Hence, the present findings suggest that self esteem, peer influence and parental involvement function in promoting interpersonal understanding is what matters for prosocial behavior.

Based on the findings of this study it is therefore recommended that parental involvement and self esteem should be promoted among the adolescents. Training programmes for effective development of the self esteem of the adolescents should be fostered. Parents are obliged to become more concerned and involved in their childrens' peer selection and association.

Parents are also obliged to be models of prosocial behaviours to their wards.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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