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## Influence of social-emotional learning on pro-social behaviour among adolescents

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### Abstract

Social-emotional skills are regarded as requisite tools to navigate the life of adolescents and by fostering social-emotional learning competencies among adolescents, there may be possible chances of improvement in their pro-social behaviour. Thus, the present research aimed to study the association between social-emotional learning and pro-social behaviour among adolescents belonging to joint and nuclear families. The study was conducted on 500 adolescents in the age group of 13-14 years. The sample was randomly selected from eight government schools of Ludhiana city of Punjab and drawn purposively as per their family structure. The research instruments used were Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ) by Zhou and Ee (2012) and Pro-social Tendencies Measures-Revised by Carlo *et al.* (2003). The results of the study indicated that significantly more number of adolescents from nuclear families were found at low level of overall social-emotional learning. Further, adolescents from nuclear families significantly displayed more pro-social behaviour as compared to adolescents from joint families. Furthermore, in joint families, overall social-emotional learning had non-significant correlation with overall pro-social behaviour and in nuclear families, overall social-emotional learning was found to be significantly positively correlated with overall pro-social behaviour.

**Keywords:** Social-emotional learning, pro-social behaviour, adolescents, joint families, nuclear families

### 1. Introduction

Adolescence is derived from a Latin word '*Adolescere*' which means to '*grow up*'. It is a period marked by transitions in physical and psychological development from childhood to adulthood. According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) <sup>[10]</sup>, an adolescent is any person between the ages of 10 to 19 years. Adolescence is generally associated with changes in physical, social and cognitive domains of development. The rapid transitional phase builds up anxiety and stress and lacking proper family support may negatively affect social-emotional development of adolescents.

Social-emotional skills are considered to be essential tools to navigate life of students (Larson & Tran 2014) <sup>[6]</sup>. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) involves the processes of developing social-emotional competencies in children. It is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that can enhance personal development, establish satisfying interpersonal relationship, and lead to effective work and productivity.

Adolescents' often reflect pro-social behaviours as concern for others in behavioural developmental process (American Psychological Association 2008) <sup>[2]</sup>. Pro-social behaviour is defined as actions by individuals that benefit other people or society as a whole, with no immediate benefit to the helper (Twenge *et al.* 2007) <sup>[9]</sup>. Nowadays, there is an acknowledgement of an emerging body of research showing an association between pro-social behaviour and social-emotional learning characteristics (Bradshaw *et al.* 2012) <sup>[3]</sup>. Similarly, studies have found that social-emotional learning programmes are mainly correlated with enhanced pro-social behaviour (Durlak *et al.* 2011) <sup>[5]</sup>.

A meta-analytical study was undertaken by Taylor *et al.* (2017) <sup>[8]</sup> to determine the outcome of 82 school-based, universal social-emotional learning interventions. The study illustrated various positive impacts of those interventions on participants. The study depicted that by fostering social-emotional learning competencies in students, there was a significant improvement in pro-social behaviour among students. Sklad *et al.* (2012) <sup>[7]</sup> carried out a meta-analytical review of 75 studies which were recently published. The review studies included studies which reported the effects of universal, school-based social, emotional, and behavioural programmes to find out whether teaching social-emotional learning skills can help

schools extend their role beyond the transfer of knowledge. The outcomes of various interventions highlighted that school-based SEL interventions have indirect effects on promoting positive pro-social behaviour. Based on these understanding, the present study was planned with the following objectives:

## 2. Objectives of the study

1. To examine social-emotional learning and pro-social behaviour among adolescents belonging to joint and nuclear families.
2. To study the association between social-emotional learning and pro-social behaviour among adolescents belonging to joint and nuclear families.

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Sample size

The sample for the present study comprised of 500 adolescents in the age range of 13-14 years from eight government schools of Ludhiana city of Punjab. An effort was made to distribute the sample equally across their family structure. Thus, the sample for the present study constituted 250 adolescents belonging to joint families and 250 adolescents belonging to nuclear families.

### 3.2 Sample selection

Keeping in view the design of this research, a list of all the government schools of Ludhiana city was procured from the official website of the District Education Office. From the organized list, the required number of schools were randomly selected to complete the sample. The Principals of the selected schools were contacted with a recommendation letter to seek permission to collect information from their respective schools.

### 3.3 Procedure of data collection

Prior to administration of various scales, objectives and significance of the present research were outlined to the respondents. The respondents were assured that the information provided by them is merely needed for research purpose and their identities would be kept confidential. The respondents participated voluntarily in the study and were informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the research process. After obtaining their expression of interest in the study and willingness to participate in the study, the questionnaires were administered to respondents in small groups under normal classroom settings.

### 3.4 Research instruments

1. **Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ):** Social-emotional learning among adolescents was assessed by administering Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ) developed by Zhou and Ee (2012)<sup>[11]</sup>. This scale was adapted and translated in the Punjabi vernacular for ease of understanding for the selected respondents. This scale covered five dimensions *viz.* self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision making.
2. **Pro-social Tendencies Measures- Revised:** Pro-social Tendencies Measures- Revised constructed and standardized by Carlo *et al.* (2003)<sup>[4]</sup> was used to measure the pro-social behaviour among adolescents. The six sub-scales of the measure are public, anonymous,

compliant, altruism, emotional and dire.

## 3.5 Statistical analysis of data

The analysis of data was done using appropriate statistical techniques. The data was analyzed using frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Z-test, student's t-test, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Assessment of social-emotional learning of adolescents as per their family structure

Data presented in table 1 highlights the frequency distribution of adolescents across various dimensions of social-emotional learning with respect to family structure. The data as per family structure demonstrated significant differences at low and high level of self-awareness. It was observed that significantly higher proportion of adolescents from nuclear families (2.05;  $p < 0.05$ ) were at low level and significantly more number of adolescents from joint families (3.58;  $p < 0.01$ ) were observed at high level when compared with their counterparts. Further, at medium level, non-significant difference was noticed wherein adolescents from nuclear families (38.80%) outnumbered adolescents from joint families.

On the social awareness dimension, the distribution of data with reference to family type pointed out that there were significant differences at low and medium level of social awareness wherein significantly higher proportion of adolescents from nuclear families (4.69;  $p < 0.01$ ) signified low level, whereas at medium level, significantly major proportion of adolescents from joint families (4.05;  $p < 0.01$ ) represented this level. Further, at high level, non-significant difference was seen wherein adolescents from joint families (8.80%) outnumbered adolescents from nuclear families.

The data on self-management dimension with regards to family structure underlined significant difference at low level of self-management wherein major proportion of adolescents from nuclear families (1.97;  $p < 0.05$ ) than those from joint families represented this level. The data further indicated non-significant differences at medium and high level wherein joint families had higher proportion of adolescents (28.40%) at medium and high level (22.00%) in comparison to their counterparts.

Further investigation of data on relationship management with regards to family structure reflected significant differences at low and medium level of relationship management wherein at low level, higher percentage of adolescents from nuclear families (2.68;  $p < 0.01$ ) and at medium level, higher proportion of adolescents from joint families (2.51;  $p < 0.05$ ) represented these levels as compared to their counterparts. It was further noted that at high level, non-significant difference was found wherein adolescents from joint families (25.60%) outweighed adolescents belonging to nuclear families.

Further probe into data regarding responsible decision making dimension revealed that significantly higher percentage of adolescents from nuclear families (2.24;  $p < 0.05$ ) were noted to be at low level of responsible decision making, while at medium level, adolescents living in joint families (2.19;  $p < 0.05$ ) were significantly more in number when compared with their counterparts. Furthermore, non-significant difference was observed at high level wherein adolescents from joint families (22.40%) outnumbered adolescents from nuclear families.

In overall social-emotional learning, the data portrayed

significant differences with regards to family structure in the distribution of adolescents at low and medium level of overall social-emotional learning wherein higher proportion of adolescents from nuclear families (2.77;  $p < 0.01$ ) were at low level, whereas more than half of the adolescents from joint families (1.96;  $p < 0.05$ ) represented medium level as

compared to their counterparts. Furthermore, more number of adolescents from joint families (15.60%) reported high level of overall social-emotional learning as compared to adolescents from nuclear families (12.40%) but the result was found to be non-significant.

**Table 1:** Per cent distribution of the adolescents as per their family structure across different dimensions of social-emotional learning

Dimensions of Social-Emotional Learning	Levels	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)		Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)		Z-value
		f	%	f	%	
Self-Awareness	Low	79	31.60	101	40.40	2.05*
	Medium	83	33.20	97	38.80	1.30
	High	88	35.20	52	20.80	3.58**
Social Awareness	Low	42	16.80	88	35.20	4.69**
	Medium	186	74.40	143	57.20	4.05**
	High	22	8.80	19	7.60	0.48
Self-Management	Low	124	49.60	146	58.40	1.97*
	Medium	71	28.40	63	25.20	0.80
	High	55	22.00	41	16.40	1.59
Relationship Management	Low	114	45.60	144	57.60	2.68**
	Medium	72	28.80	48	19.20	2.51*
	High	64	25.60	58	23.20	0.62
Responsible Decision Making	Low	123	49.20	148	59.20	2.24*
	Medium	71	28.40	50	20.00	2.19*
	High	56	22.40	52	20.80	0.43
Overall Social-Emotional Learning	Low	79	31.60	109	43.60	2.77**
	Medium	132	52.80	110	44.00	1.96*
	High	39	15.60	31	12.40	1.03

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level

#### 4.2 Assessment of pro-social behaviour of adolescents as per their family structure

The interpretation of data in the table 2 highlights frequency distribution of adolescents across various dimensions of pro-social behaviour with regards to family composition. It was demonstrated on public dimension of pro-social behaviour that there were significant differences with respect to family structure at low level wherein more number of adolescents from joint families (2.11;  $p < 0.05$ ) signified this level. Furthermore, non-significant differences were observed at medium and high level wherein at medium level, adolescents from joint families (41.20%) and at high level, adolescents from nuclear families (49.20%) outnumbered their counterparts.

It was ascertained from the data that in emotional dimension of pro-social behaviour, significant differences were found at low and medium level of emotional dimension wherein at low level, more number of adolescents from nuclear families (3.20;  $p < 0.01$ ) and at medium level, higher proportion of adolescents from joint families (2.38;  $p < 0.05$ ) signified these cited levels when compared with their counterparts. Conversely, at high level, non-significant difference was observed wherein adolescents living in joint families (20.80%) outnumbered adolescents from nuclear families.

On the altruism dimension of pro-social behaviour, significantly more percentage of adolescents from nuclear families (2.27;  $p < 0.05$ ) as compared to adolescents from joint families were found to be at low level of altruism. In contrast to this result, non-significant differences were noted at medium level (56.80%) and high level (6.80%) wherein adolescents living in joint families outnumbered adolescents residing in nuclear families.

The dimensions of direct and anonymous pro-social behaviour with reference to family structure revealed that there were significant differences at low and high level. It was indicated that significantly higher proportion of adolescents from joint families in both direct dimension (6.60;  $p < 0.01$ ) and anonymous dimension (2.81;  $p < 0.01$ ) represented low level as compared to their counterparts. Further, at high level, more number of adolescents from nuclear families differ significantly in both direct (5.19;  $p < 0.01$ ) and anonymous (4.34;  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of pro-social behaviour in comparison to adolescents from joint families. Contrarily, it was noticed that adolescents from joint families were more in number at medium level in both direct (36.40%) and anonymous (57.60%) but the difference was found to be non-significant.

The distribution of data pertaining to the compliant dimension of pro-social behaviour and overall pro-social behaviour indicated that there were significant differences as per family structure at medium and high level. It was illustrated that significantly higher percentage of adolescents from joint families as compared to adolescents from nuclear families were found to be at medium level of compliant dimension (2.30;  $p < 0.05$ ) and overall pro-social behaviour (3.57;  $p < 0.01$ ). Further, at high level, more proportion of adolescents from nuclear families were noted to have significant difference in both compliant dimension (2.95;  $p < 0.01$ ) and overall pro-social behaviour (4.00;  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, non-significant difference was observed at low level of both compliant dimension and overall pro-social behaviour wherein adolescents from joint families outnumbered their counterparts in both compliant dimension (14.00%) and overall pro-social behaviour (6.00%).

**Table 2:** Per cent distribution of the adolescents as per their family structure across different dimensions of pro-social behaviour

Dimensions of Pro-social behaviour	Levels	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)		Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)		Z-value
		f	%	f	%	
Public	Low	41	16.40	25	10.00	2.11*
	Medium	103	41.20	102	40.80	0.09
	High	106	42.40	123	49.20	1.52
Emotional	Low	33	13.20	61	24.40	3.20**
	Medium	165	66.00	139	55.60	2.38*
	High	52	20.80	50	20.00	0.22
Altruism	Low	91	36.40	116	46.40	2.27*
	Medium	142	56.80	122	48.80	1.79
	High	17	6.80	12	4.80	0.95
Dire	Low	58	23.20	8	3.20	6.60**
	Medium	91	36.40	83	33.20	0.75
	High	101	40.40	159	63.60	5.19**
Compliant	Low	35	14.00	27	10.80	1.08
	Medium	108	43.20	83	33.20	2.30*
	High	107	42.80	140	56.00	2.95**
Anonymous	Low	56	22.40	32	12.80	2.81**
	Medium	144	57.60	124	49.60	1.79
	High	50	20.00	94	37.60	4.34**
Overall Pro-social behaviour	Low	15	6.00	13	5.20	0.38
	Medium	191	76.40	154	61.60	3.57**
	High	44	17.60	83	33.20	4.00**

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level

#### 4.3 Comparison of pro-social behaviour of adolescents as per their family structure

The depiction of data in table 3 elucidates the difference in the mean scores of adolescents across various dimensions of pro-social behaviour in relation to family structure. The data unveiled significant differences in altruism (3.50;  $p < 0.01$ ), dire (6.97;  $p < 0.01$ ), compliant (2.45;  $p < 0.05$ ) and anonymous (3.51;  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of pro-social behaviour wherein adolescents belonging to nuclear families had better mean scores than adolescents from joint families except for altruism which had better mean score for adolescents from joint families (mean= 11.08). Thus, this implies that adolescents from nuclear families helped people more in emergency situations anonymously but on request. Contrastingly, adolescents living in joint families helped others without any immediate reward for oneself. This finding of the present study is in line with the study conducted by Ahangar and Khan (2017) [1] who also found the similar pattern in mean scores where adolescents from joint families exhibit more altruistic type of pro-social behaviour as compared to adolescents from nuclear families.

On the public and emotional dimensions of pro-social behaviour, statistically non-significant differences were

determined, but while comparing the mean scores, it was pointed out that adolescents from nuclear families had better mean score in public dimension (mean= 10.21) whereas in emotional dimension, adolescents from joint families had better mean score (mean= 16.26) as compared to their counterparts. So, this suggests that adolescents from nuclear families helped people in public whereas adolescents from joint families helped people in emotional circumstances.

Further investigation of data reflected that adolescents belonging to nuclear families had significant better mean scores for overall pro-social behaviour (2.51;  $p < 0.05$ ) than adolescents belonging to joint families. Thus, it could be inferred that adolescents from nuclear families displayed more pro-social behaviour in comparison to adolescents from joint families. This finding might have surfaced because nuclear families provide consistency in taking care of adolescents and formulates agreements on conducting good discipline and modeling suitable behaviour. Thus, adolescents witness supportive relations and receive constant messages about behavioural expectations which facilitate adolescents to learn how to appropriately act with other people, become independent and build up a higher level of confidence to help others and exhibit positive behaviour.

**Table 3:** Comparative mean scores ( $\pm$ SD) of the adolescents as per their family structure across different dimensions of pro-social behaviour

Dimensions of Pro-social behaviour	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)		Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)		t-value
	Mean	$\pm$ SD	Mean	$\pm$ SD	
Public	9.68	3.12	10.21	2.96	1.94
Emotional	16.26	4.15	15.99	4.71	0.68
Altruism	11.08	3.64	9.99	3.31	3.50**
Dire	9.50	3.33	11.38	2.66	6.97**
Compliant	7.11	2.16	7.59	2.21	2.45*
Anonymous	12.50	3.42	13.67	4.01	3.51**
Overall Pro-social behaviour	66.01	10.62	68.45	11.11	2.51*

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level

#### 4.4 Correlation between different dimensions of social-emotional learning and pro-social behaviour among adolescents as per their family structure

The illustration of data in the table 4 highlights the correlation analysis between different dimensions of social-emotional learning and various dimensions of pro-social behaviour among adolescents with reference to their family structure. The data of adolescents from joint families depicted that social awareness dimension had significant positive correlation with public dimension ( $r= 0.12$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and significant negative association with altruism ( $r= -0.15$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) dimension of pro-social behaviour. Thus, these results indicate that adolescents living in joint families, who were socially aware, used to help people in public, but with the expectation of some reward. Also, overall social-emotional learning and its other dimensions had non-significant relation with overall pro-social behaviour and its dimensions.

Further probe into data among adolescents from nuclear families revealed that all the dimensions of social-emotional learning *viz.* self-awareness ( $r= 0.20$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), social awareness ( $r= 0.15$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), self-management ( $r= 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), relationship management ( $r= 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and responsible decision making ( $r= 0.16$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as

overall social-emotional learning ( $r= 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) were significantly positively associated with anonymous dimension of pro-social behaviour. Therefore, it could be deduced that adolescents from nuclear families, who had a fine awareness about themselves, societies, relations, decisions and good social-emotional learning competencies, tended to help people anonymously.

Further, significant positive association of social awareness dimension was observed with dire dimension ( $r= 0.18$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, this implies that adolescents living in nuclear families, who understand and consider others' perspective and feelings, were observed to help people more in emergency circumstances. Also, correlation of overall social-emotional learning ( $r= 0.12$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and its two dimensions *i.e.* self-management ( $r= 0.13$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and relationship management ( $r= 0.13$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) with overall pro-social behaviour were found to be significantly positively associated. So, the findings suggest that adolescents from nuclear families, who were capable in managing their emotions and thoughts, establishing and maintaining healthy relationship with people as well as possessing good social-emotional learning competencies, were likely to help people aiming to benefit the other person.

**Table 4:** Correlation between different dimensions of social-emotional learning and pro-social behaviour among adolescents as per their family structure

Dimensions of Pro-Social Behaviour	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)						Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)					
	SA (r)	SoA (r)	SM (r)	RM (r)	RDM (r)	Overall SEL (r)	SA (r)	SoA (r)	SM (r)	RM (r)	RDM (r)	Overall SEL (r)
Public	0.01	0.12*	0.09	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.002	0.02	0.02
Emotional	0.02	0.04	-0.02	-0.05	-0.06	-0.02	0.09	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.09
Altruism	0.05	-0.15*	-0.08	-0.04	-0.08	-0.05	-0.03	-0.05	-0.03	-0.004	-0.05	-0.03
Dire	-0.004	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.07	0.18**	0.12	0.04	0.02	0.10
Compliant	-0.08	-0.004	-0.08	-0.11	-0.10	-0.09	-0.04	-0.10	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.04
Anonymous	-0.05	0.05	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.007	0.20**	0.15*	0.21**	0.22**	0.16**	0.22**
Overall Pro-Social Behaviour	0.03	0.04	0.01	-0.002	-0.006	0.01	0.10	0.07	0.13*	0.13*	0.10	0.12*

**Note:** \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level;  $r$ = correlation coefficient; SA= Self-Awareness; SoA= Social Awareness; SM= Self-Management; RM= Relationship Management; RDM= Responsible Decision Making; SEL= Social-Emotional Learning

#### 5. Conclusion

It is evident from the study that more number of adolescents from nuclear families were significantly found to be at low level of overall social-emotional learning as compared to adolescents from joint families. Further, it was observed that significantly more number of adolescents from nuclear families were at high level of overall pro-social behaviour which indicated that adolescents from nuclear families significantly displayed more pro-social behaviour as compared to adolescents from joint families. Furthermore, in joint families, overall social-emotional learning had non-significant positive correlation with overall pro-social behaviour and in nuclear families, overall social-emotional learning was found to be significantly positively correlated with overall pro-social behaviour. Hence, it could be deduced that when adolescents living in both joint and nuclear families possessed good social-emotional learning competencies then, they have increased tendency to help people. So, the tradition of living in joint families in India is imperative for an individual to develop socially and emotionally and to achieve success in life. Thus, parents in order for their adolescent's to develop holistically in all the domains and pass through transitional phase of adolescence should focus on raising adolescents in joint families where all the family members take care of adolescents even in absence of parents.

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