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INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON PROSOCIAL ATTITUDE OF  
STUDENT TEACHERS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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## ABSTRACT

The present era is a period of knowledge explosion and high-tech life. But it does not mean that the quality of life has been improved. Selfishness and individualism pervades all walks of life. In this scenario it is imperative for secondary school teachers to demonstrate prosocial tendencies as they have to deal with students of adolescent period and in turn to lead the society through the desirable path and direction. The present study attempts to explore the relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers through a normative survey. Two hundred student teachers were assessed for their family environment and prosocial attitude respectively by using a family environment scale (Bhatia & Chadha, 2004) and a prosocial attitude scale prepared by the investigator. The inferential statistical analysis shows that there exists significant, positive, and substantial relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers. The study reveals the worth of family environment in developing prosocial attitude and tendencies among student teachers.

### 1. Introduction

Today man faces inexorable changes in his physical and psychological milieu and new perspectives substitute the traditional patterns of human life.

Development of science and innovations in technology taught human beings to deal his daily routines in an efficient but effortless manner. However the repercussions of these advancements intrude the non-material dimensions too. The new age of modernization has its own impact on the social life and social and familial relations of people. Commercialization and individual freedom became today's motto. Extreme competition in all walks of life characterizes this era. People set highest goals in their life and strive to achieve them. In this busy schedule they forget their fellow beings. This is obvious in various forms such as low level of tolerance and violence in family life, corruption, atrocities towards women and children, socio-cultural discriminations, and various kinds of exploitations.

Family is considered as the most important agent of socialization of children because they learn the basics of social life initially from their families. It is the first place from which the child inculcates the preliminaries of good and bad. Conducive environment in the family is essential for the optimum development of personality of an individual. The family environment influences one's value patterns, attitudes, and behaviour. It involves the circumstances and social situations within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in different settings, each family environment is unique. Family environments can differ in many aspects such as social and educational status, wealth, interpersonal relationships, interdependency, communication, sociability, parental attitudes and care, love and affection, values and morality, family types (nuclear family, joint family, single-parent family, reconstituted family, blended family, and step family, etc.). The interdependency of family systems and each of its members influence overall development and multidimensional growth of individuals.

Family environment is generally believed to be a system in which the behaviour as well as relationship among all family members is interdependent. A motivating environment, climate of affection, care, and love are linked to better performance and behaviour of children. Adolescents who show more success in life generally belong to families in which parents are both supportive and are accepting the child's needs for more psychological independence (Madhu & Matla, 2004; Powell, 2006; Deepshikha & Bhanot, 2011).

Prosocial attitude refers to a person's tendency and inclination to involve in voluntary actions for the benefit and advantage of others, such as sharing, caring, donating, comforting, and helping (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder 2005). The manifestation of prosocial attitude can improve the quality of social interactions and social life in different ways. On one hand, individuals who are the beneficiaries of prosocial actions undoubtedly benefit from being taken care of and facilitated by others. On the other hand,

manifestation of prosocial attitude can be self-rewarding and may have valuable effects like social approval. Prosocial attitude and behaviour are positively correlated with psychological adjustment in adolescents and children. Early prosocial behaviour contributes to children's accomplishments in social and academic spheres, in warding off depression and aggressive behaviour, and in promoting academic achievement (Capara, Barbaraneli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000). Constructive family interactions as well as warm and supportive parenting affect children's morality and prosocial tendencies positively (Dunn, 2014). Mallick and Cour (2015) found positive relationship between prosocial behavior and home environment dimensions like control, nurturance and permissiveness among senior secondary school students. In an explanatory sequential study Lisinskiene and Lochbaum (2018) concluded that adolescents' relationships with parents are a critical factor and likely reflect the nature of the internal working models that may function as a psychological template in the development of prosocial behaviour during adolescence. Thus the relationship of family environment and prosocial tendencies is evident in the previous researches.

## **2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Attitudes originate from an individual's perspectives; such perspectives and outlook are developed through experience from immediate environment including family. One's family environment is therefore a crucial factor in imbibing socio-cultural norms and customs and to develop socially acceptable behavioural patterns. Good and conducive family environment creates goodness and integrity in the members of that family. Warm interpersonal relations, mutual concern, and helping and unselfish attitude of family members will reflect in the behaviour of the individuals who brought about from such environment. Student teachers from such family environment may have an inclination and willingness to provide service to others. Thus they may develop prosocial tendencies and attitude. Thus it can be assumed that there will be a close relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude. Various studies conducted among adolescent learners confirm this notion (Dunn, 2014; Mallick & Cour, 2015; Lisinskiene & Lochbaum, 2018).

The study of literature shows that there is little work done related to family environment and prosocial attitude especially among student teachers. Secondary level teacher education is meant for preparing teachers, who have to deal with adolescent boys and girls, and such teachers are to be highly committed and so that they can extend help and guidance to students at crucial stage of their life. Possession of prosocial attitude may be beneficial for them in their future endeavors. In this context the investigator found it necessary to

analyse the nature of the relationship among the variables – family environment and prosocial attitude – among student teachers at secondary level.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess the family environment of student teachers at secondary level
2. To compare the family environment of student teachers based on locale
3. To assess the prosocial attitude of student teachers at secondary level
4. To compare the prosocial attitude of student teachers based on locale
5. To find out whether there exists any significant relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers

### **4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. Student teachers at secondary level possess moderate family environment.
2. There will be significant difference in the family environment of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers.
3. Student teachers at secondary level possess moderate prosocial attitude.
4. There will be significant difference in the prosocial attitude of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers.
5. There is significant positive relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers at secondary level.
- 6.

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

Normative survey method was adopted for the conduct of the present study. The sample consisted of 200 student teachers randomly selected from five secondary teacher education institutions from Thiruvananthapuram and Kottayam districts of Kerala. In order to quantify the family environment the Family Environment Scale prepared and standardised by Bhatia and Chadha (2004) was used. The prosocial attitude of student teachers was assessed by using a Prosocial Attitude Scale prepared and standardized by the investigator. The scales were administered to the selected sample and the scores obtained by the respondents for the two scales were consolidated and analysed to verify the hypotheses formulated in the study. The analysis of data was carried out employing various descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Family environment of student teachers

The family environment scale consisted of 69 items. The maximum score that can be obtained by a respondent for the scale is 345 ( $69 \times 5$ ), minimum score is 69 ( $69 \times 1$ ), and the middle score is 207 ( $69 \times 3$ ). A high score in the family environment scale refers to a favourable situation of home with warm relationship and mutual respect among family members – desirable and acceptable family environment. A low score in the family environment scale refers to the degradation of family relationships. The results of the analysis of the distribution of family environment scores are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Statistical constants for the distribution of scores of family environment among student teachers (N= 200)**

Sl. No.	Statistic	Value
1	Arithmetic Mean	285.61
2	Median	286.02
3	Mode	286.84
4	Standard Deviation	11.78
5	Skewness	-0.104
6	Kurtosis	0.253

Since the mean scores exceed the middle score of the scale (207) it can be interpreted that the student teachers possess a moderate level of family environment. Hence the first hypothesis of the study may be accepted.

### 2. Comparison of family environment of student teachers based on locale

In order to find out whether there exist any significant difference between the family environment of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers the mean scores were subjected to the test of significance of difference. The details are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Data and result of the test of significance of the difference between mean score of family environment of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers**

Category	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
Rural	118	285.98	13.27	0.573
Urban	82	285.08	8.94	( $p > .05$ )

From table 2 it is seen that the critical ratio (0.573) does not reach the table value, 1.96 at .05 level and it indicates that there is no significant difference between family environment of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers. The results do not support the second hypothesis and it cannot be accepted.

### 3. Prosocial attitude of student teachers

The prosocial attitude scale consisted of 36 items. The maximum score that can be obtained by a respondent for the scale is 180 ( $36 \times 5$ ), minimum score is 36 ( $36 \times 1$ ), and the middle score is 108 ( $36 \times 3$ ). A high score in scale indicates the respondent's favourable prosocial attitude while a low score indicates dearth of prosocial tendencies. The results of the analysis of the distribution of prosocial attitude scores are presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Statistical constants for the distribution of scores of prosocial attitude among student teachers (N= 200)**

Sl. No.	Statistic	Value
1	Arithmetic Mean	122.03
2	Median	121.82
3	Mode	121.40
4	Standard Deviation	14.25
5	Skewness	+0.044
6	Kurtosis	0.259

Since the mean scores exceed the middle score of the scale (108) it may be interpreted that the student teachers possess a moderate level of prosocial attitude. Hence the third hypothesis of the study may be accepted.

#### **4. Comparison of prosocial attitude of student teachers based on locale**

To find out whether there exist any significant difference between the prosocial attitude of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers the mean scores were subjected to the test of significance of difference. The details are presented in table 4.

**Table 4: Data and result of the test of significance of the difference between mean score of prosocial attitude of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers**

Category	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
Rural	118	123.87	12.65	2.433
Urban	82	119.38	12.96	( $p < .05$ )

From table 4 it is obvious that the critical ratio (2.433) is greater than the table value, 1.96 at .05 level and it indicates that there exists significant difference between prosocial attitude of rural student teachers and that of urban student teachers. The results support the fourth hypothesis and it may be accepted. Since the rural respondents' prosocial attitude score (123.87) is greater than that of urban respondents (119.38) and the difference is statistically significant, it can be interpreted that the rural student teachers possess more prosocial attitude when compared to their urban counterparts.

### 5. Relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers

To find out the extent of relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers at secondary level, the scores of family environment and the scores of prosocial attitude were subjected to Pearson's product-moment correlation test. The details are presented in the table 5.

**Table 5: Data showing the relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers at secondary level**

Sample	r	t	SEr	Confidence Interval (99%)		Verbal interpretation
				Lower	Upper	
Total (N = 200)	.576	9.92	.0472	.454	.697	Substantial Relationship

From the table 5 it is seen that the coefficient of correlation between family environment and prosocial attitude is .576; this value is higher than the table value (.181) required for rejecting the null hypothesis of zero correlation between the variables at .01 level. Also the 't' value (9.92) is greater than the table value, 2.58 needed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore the obtained correlation is significant at .01 level. The standard error of coefficient of correlation obtained is .0472 and the confidence interval of 'r' ranges from .454 to .697. This indicates that the probability of the population 'r' being in between .454 and .697 is .99. The results indicate that there is a significant, positive, and substantial relationship exists between family environment and prosocial attitude. The fifth hypothesis of the study "there is significant positive relationship between family environment and prosocial attitude of student teachers at secondary level" is thus substantiated.

The present study establishes the association between family environment and prosocial attitude. The findings of the present study are in agreement with that reported in studies such as Dunn (2014), Mallick and Cour (2015), Lisinskiene and Lochbaum (2018) which ascertain the relationship between family circumstances and prosocial tendencies. Similar conclusions were arrived at by other researchers also (Madhu & Matla, 2004; Powell, 2006; Deepshikha & Bhanot, 2011).

### 7. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that the family environment of student teachers at secondary level is conducive for developing desirable behaviour in the members. Also it is evident that the student teachers possess moderate level of prosocial attitude. However the rural student teachers are superior to urban counterparts in the possession of prosocial attitude indicating the need for

providing programmes and activities for the urban student teachers to enhance their prosocial tendencies. The result of the study asserts that there is significant positive and substantial relationship between family environment of student teachers and their prosocial attitude. The study clearly emphasizes the significance of family environment in developing prosocial attitude and behaviour among student teachers.

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