

The impact of parenting styles and gender on prosocial tendencies among senior secondary students in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Despite their educational tasks, students need to develop a sense of moral and social responsibility and demonstrate these obligations in society by engaging in positive behaviors. As a form of positive behavior, prosocial behavior is a healthy way to connect adolescents to their community; however, few previous studies in the Ethiopian context have explored its links to parenting styles and gender compared to antisocial behavior. This research intended to identify the level of prosocial tendencies, the contribution of parenting styles, and students' gender in influencing their prosociality. Three hundred and fifty-three senior secondary school students have completed the Prosocial Tendencies Measure and the Parenting Style Scale. In order to analyze the obtained data, researchers used means, standard deviations, one-way analysis of variance, Pearson's moment-product correlation coefficient, and t-tests, including independent and one-sample. The results revealed that the status/level of prosocial tendencies was above average, indicating non-significant variation by gender. A significant positive relationship resulted between prosocial tendencies and parenting styles. The authoritative and permissive parenting styles showed a statistically significant difference in prosocial behavior among the participants. Gender didn't affect prosocial tendencies, while authoritative and permissive parenting styles positively contributed to students' prosocial functioning. The results suggest that these two parenting styles are crucial in promoting adolescents' prosocial behavior, which requires schools to integrate programs that promote prosocial values and educate parents on effective parenting styles.

Keywords: Parenting styles, authoritative parenting, permissive parenting, prosocial behavior, gender variation

Introduction

In order to discourage disruptive behaviors and maintain social connection in the community, promoting positive behaviors is essential (Walsh, 2019). When properly practiced, prosocial behavior as a form of positive behavior has a tremendous effect in lessening the tendencies of antisocial and aggressive behaviours (Carlo and Padilla-Walker, 2020; Memmott-Elison et al., 2020). It involves activities envisioned to help another individuals or groups by means of volunteering, sharing, donating, cooperating, and these can be carried out on a personal level or group level in providing supports to individuals, groups or institutions such as school, hospital and other public institutions (Manesi et al., 2017; Schmitz et al., 2013). Prosocial behavior enhances the helpers' moral, psychological and social well-beings (Eisenberg et al., 2013). As a form of positive behavior, prosocial action is more prominent in adolescents. It is often seen as an indicator of adolescents' developmental outcomes, including their ability to engage in positive behavior, establish social relationships, develop emotional connection, and cognitive skills (Van der et al., 2018). This is because, during the adolescent period, distinctive physical, cognitive, emotional, and social maturities are established, leading to making rational decisions to engage in prosocial behaviors that benefit to improve social wellbeing (Padilla-Walker et al., 2018; Van der et al., 2018).

Various African societies are described as belonging to collective culture with better social ties and harmony (Baker and Campbell, 2016). In Ethiopian context, prosocial behavior seems a cultural norm. Meaning, people are known for their hospitality, friendship, interdependence and respect that are cultivated in the family system (Poluha, 2007). Enhancing this behavior in such culture is essential to maintain a sense of community connection, and tackling antisocial behavior. However, prior findings from some African countries indicate the other side including components of serious antisocial behavior such as violence, crime, academic malpractice, stealing, rape, cultism and rudeness (Gardner et al., 2015; Ojo, 2015). Particularly, in Ethiopia, as Henok et al., (2019) reported antisocial behavior was found to be prevalent by 31.3% rate, affecting students' academic performance. Moreover, based on the literature reviewed so far, only a few researches in Ethiopia have looked at the prosocial side and related factors (Zenebe and Demssie, 2020; Solomon, 2015; Tsehay et al., 2014) than antisocial behavior. This reflects that less attention has been paid to prosocial behavior in Ethiopian context which needs attention to explore tendencies of adolescents in prosociality to improve social sustainability.

How prosocial behavior occurs can be explained using theoretical basis. For example, social cognitive theory states that behaviors, thoughts and feelings are influenced by personal and social environments (MacLeod, 2016). This theory capitalizes on observational learning to produce an intended behavior. Children learn and adapt behaviors through observation and modeling from the people around them, especially parents (Maccoby, 2015; Kuppens et al., 2013). In fact, parents may use different practices and styles to shape their adolescents' behaviors and attitudes. The dominant theory often used when exploring and explaining parenting styles is Baumrind's Theory of Parenting Styles. Baumrind (1966) stated that parents might apply any of the four parenting styles including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive-indulgent and neglectful styles, resulting different behavioral outcomes. Effective parenting styles appear to positively determine adolescents' prosocial behavior (Carlo et al., 2007). Prior studies underscored unlike authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved styles, the authoritative strategy of parenting appears to be the most effective approach in creating mature and competent adolescents by ensuring acceptance of their needs, applying adaptive control techniques, and granting autonomy (Milevsky 2007). On the other hand, a study in the area of adolescents' developmental outcomes (e.g., empathy, self-concept, self-esteem) supports the notion that a permissive parenting style can result in better developmental outcomes even than the authoritative parenting style (Alfirević et al., 2024). It has also a positive connection with the installation of prosocial behavior in adolescents (Hasbullah et al., 2024).

Therefore, Bandura's social cognitive theory and Baumrind's Theory of Parenting Styles are relevant in explaining parents as a social environment to influence adolescents' prosocial behavior. These theories are appropriate to support an argument that adolescents' social participation, social adjustment, sense of concern for others, and self-regulatory abilities rely on the way they acquired the social competencies from their parents and significant others in their everyday interactions. On this point, despite many studies demonstrating the influences of personal and social factors on adolescents' prosocial tendencies in other countries, in Ethiopia, studies focusing on the role of parenting styles in adolescents' prosocial behavior are inadequate, particularly in the study area. In fact, some scholars (e.g., Azmeraw and Belay, 2023; Shemsedin, 2022; Zenebe and Demssie, 2020; Eyoel, 2018; Solomon, 2015; Tsehay et al., 2014) studied about this behavior using different variables like civic engagement, but most of these

studies didn't identify type of parenting style critical to promote prosocial behavior while existing studies vastly focused on antisocial behavior than adolescents' behavioral potentials.

In addition to environmental factors like parenting, individual characteristics such as gender have also been shown to potentially influence prosocial tendencies. Gender, a social construct characterized by collection of beliefs, emotions, behaviors and social values associated with individual's being male or female plays a vital role in understanding human behavior (Manandhar et al., 2018; APA, 2012). Prosocial behavior could be one example of which prior studies have reported mixed findings both locally and internationally. Females reported better prosocial tendencies than males in majority of prosocial components (e.g., Xiao, Hashi et al., 2019; Nielson et al., 2017; Tsehay et al., 2014; Carlo and Randall, 2002; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000), while other studies shown non-variation in prosocial behavior by gender (Abdullahi and Kumar, 2016; Barry et al., 2017; Chadha and Misra, 2006; Solomon, 2015). This implies that there are inconsistent international and local findings regarding gender differences in prosocial tendencies that require revisiting of prosocial behavior variation by gender.

In general, considering that limited evidence exists about the relationship between parenting styles and prosocial behavior, along with conflicting results regarding gender influence, little is also understood about the type (s) of parenting style that effectively promotes prosocial behavior among senior secondary school students in our context. This study thus, has contextual relevance, and a contribution to the literature by adding knowledge about the influence of parenting approaches on adolescents' prosociality in Ethiopia, capitalizing on the positive association between authoritative and permissive parenting styles and prosocial tendencies in adolescents. Particularly, it adds knowledge to the literature about the positive contribution of the permissive parenting style that was less emphasized in previous literature, recognizing merely authoritative parenting approach as a most effective form of parenting style. Therefore, this research intended to identify the level of prosocial tendencies, the contribution of parenting styles, and students' gender in influencing their prosociality.

Materials and methods

Design of the study

Researchers used a correlational research design to scrutinize the association among the variables. This design is relevant for testing and discovering associations between and/or among

variables and making predictions (Stangor, 2011). The current researchers used this design because it allows them to examine the relationship between variables without manipulation of the variables. The relationship between existing parenting styles and prosocial tendencies was examined, and prosociality was compared across parenting styles and gender of the participants.

Participants of the study

Senior secondary school students (i.e., grades 11 and 12) took part in this study. Out of 9963 target students as of the south west Shewa Zone Education Office's report (2023), a total of 380 students were selected using simple random sampling from six districts (Amaya, Saden Soddo, Soddo Daci, Goro, Ilu, and Wolisso) of the Zone, where three districts (i.e., Amaya, Saden Soddo, and Soddo Daci) were randomly selected from rural Woredas that have relatively outlying locations to the zonal administrative town, while the three districts (i.e., Goro, Ilu, and Wolisso) were randomly selected based on their nearest location to the zonal administrative town and being located on the main road passing to Jimma Town. Three hundred eighty (380) participants were first determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling method. Basically, during sample size determination using Morgan's approach, a type I error is assumed to be fewer than five percent. The result obtained from calculating via this formula appears to be equal to that already determined and indicated using the table. The formula can be stated as:

$$S = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 \cdot P(1 - P)}$$

Where,

S- stands for a required sample size

X^2 - represents table value of chi-square for 1degree of freedom at (0.05 =3.841) CI

N- a population size

P- a population proportion that assumed to be 0.05

d-degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)

Therefore, this formula was used because it provides us with a manageable and straightforward method to determine a required figure of a representative sample from a given population, in our case senior secondary school students, ensuring the reliability of statistical inferences.

Data collection methods

Data were collected using survey/ scaled questions about prosocial tendencies of the students and the parenting styles reported by the students. Although the medium of instruction in Ethiopian secondary schools is English, to make a language comfortability for the participants, forward-backward translation from the English language to the mother tongue (Afaan Oromo) has been made and used in both languages. Once the questionnaires were prepared, permission was obtained from the classroom teachers to include the selected participants in the study. Finally, data was collected from the participants using self-administered questionnaires in a classroom setting, ensuring the choice of the participants of languages.

Gender as demographic information was obtained by a self-developed question, while the Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PMT-R) developed by Carlo and Rondall (2002) was used to obtain data about prosocial tendencies. This scale is rated using a five-point scale that takes values between 1 and 5, representing "does not describe me at all" to "describes me very well," respectively, with 3 representing average prosocial tendency. It consisted of 25 items and six subscales that focus on public, altruistic, anonymous, emotional, dire, and compliant. However, during the validation stage in this study, the anonymous subscale was split into two structures using exploratory factor analysis, making the scale seven dimensions. The two anonymous dimensions were labeled as "donation creates good feelings" and "helping when they do not know," using the item that loads highest in the factor. No item was dropped since all 25 items have high loadings on each factor.

A tool used to measure parenting approaches was the scale devised by Lamborn et al. (1991). It has twenty-five (25) items to be rated by the students about their parents, which can be labeled to two parenting dimensions (e.g., acceptance and control subscales). Scores of each participant for each question under respective dimensions are totaled to create each category. The former has 13 questions, while the latter contains 12 questions. The acceptance/involvement subscale helps to identify the degree of parents' nurturing practices as perceived by adolescents using a 4-point scale that ranges between 1 and 4, or strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Additionally, the control dimension is used to evaluate adolescents' perception of their parents' vis-à-vis provision of care and controlling their actions. This subscale is constructed on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 to 3 for ten questions. One (1) represents doesn't try/know, while 3 represents tries/knows a lot. Responses for the two questions are given on the scale ranging from

1 to 4, where 1 stands for ‘as late as I want,’ and 4 represents ‘does not allow me out.’ During validation, there were no items dropped from the parenting style scale. Finally, 25 items were used for this scale. In order to form common approaches of parenting (e.g., permissive, authoritative, neglectful, and authoritarian) from the two subscales, an average (sample median) of each structure was used.

In the categorizing process, the continuous scores obtained from the two parenting dimensions, namely acceptance/involvement and control/strictness, were categorized into the four parenting styles, including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. To obtain these four styles, the sample medians for the two parenting dimensions were calculated. Based on the median values, participants were then categorized into one of the four styles: authoritative (high acceptance, high control), authoritarian (low acceptance, high control), permissive (high acceptance, low control), and neglectful (low acceptance, low control).

The specific procedures followed in this study were as follows:

1. Parents who were rated by their late adolescent and young adult children with a score above or equal to the sample median on the acceptance/involvement and strictness/supervision indices were considered as authoritative parents and assigned a parenting style score of “3”.
2. Parents who were rated by their late adolescent and young adult children with a score below the sample median on the acceptance/involvement index but above or equal to the sample median on the strictness/supervision index were considered as authoritarian parents and assigned a parenting style score of “2”.
3. Parents who were rated by their late adolescent and young adult children with a score above or equal to the sample median on the acceptance/involvement index but below on the strictness/supervision index were considered as indulgent parents and assigned a parenting style score of “1”.
4. Parents who were rated by their late adolescent and young adult children with a score below the sample median on both acceptance/involvement and strictness/ supervision indices were considered as neglectful (uninvolved) parents and assigned a parenting style score of “0”.

Methods of data analysis

The researchers utilized descriptive analysis using means, t-tests (including independent and one-sample), the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and one-way analysis of variance.

The status of prosocial tendencies was identified by means of a one-sample t-test based on means and standard deviation. Furthermore, the association between the main variables was tested using a bivariate correlation technique. One-way ANOVA was also used to examine prosocial variation across categories of parenting style. Variation in prosocial tendency by gender was examined applying an independent sample t-test. Normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were checked before running advanced statistical analysis. For instance, skewness and kurtosis values are used for testing the assumption of normal distribution. It is based on the rule of thumb recommended by Collier (2020). Principally, it is suggested that data are supposed to be normal when skewness values fall in the -2 to +2 range, while kurtosis values are expected to be located in the range of -10 to +10 [13]. These values are located in the suggested ranges for both skewness and kurtosis in this study, where skewness values ranged between -1.59 and 0.66 and kurtosis values fluctuated between -0.85 and 2.99, supporting that data are normally distributed. All data were analyzed employing Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26, and the p-value was assumed at alpha 0.05.

Results

Demographic information

Out of a total of 380 sample, 353 respondents completed the questionnaire appropriately and returned, indicating 92.89% response rate. As shown in Table 1, the majority of them were male students (55.53%) and the remaining (44.47%) were female students from both education levels.

Table 1. Demographic description of the respondents

| Demographic Characteristics | | Gender (n/%) | | Total (n/%) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Education level | | Male | Female | |
| | 11 th | 99(28.05%) | 75(21.25%) | 174(49.29%) |
| | 12 th | 97(27.48%) | 82(23.23%) | 179(50.71%) |
| | Total | 196(55.53%) | 157(44.47%) | 353(100%) |
| Age | | | | |
| | 16-17 years | 76(21.53%) | 72(20.39%) | 148(41.92%) |
| | 18-19 years | 69 (19.55%) | 78(22.1%) | 147(41.65%) |
| | 20 & above | 39(11.05%) | 19(5.38%) | 58(16.43%) |
| | Total | 184 (52.12%) | 169 (47.88%) | 353(100%) |

The slight difference in sample representation between the two genders may reflect the difference in the ratio of male and female students in secondary schools. Most students (50.71%) were from grade 12th, while 49.29% students were from grade 11th. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (83.57%) are between 16 & 19 years of age. The sample contains ($M_{age} = 18.05$, $SD = 1.82$). These results may reflect that the age of most students in senior secondary school ranges from 16 to 20 years.

Table 2. Descriptive summary of the prosocial tendencies and parenting style sub-scale (n=353)

| Dimensions of prosocial tendencies | Mean | SD |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Public | 2.35 | 0.86 |
| Altruism | 3.77 | 1.33 |
| Donation Creates good feeling | 3.5 | 1.03 |
| Helping when being helped don't know | 3.67 | 0.98 |
| Emotional | 2.74 | 0.82 |
| Dire | 3.42 | 1.06 |
| Compliant | 4.08 | 1.06 |
| Aggregate | 3.36 | 1.04 |
| Cronbach's alpha (α)=0.90, 0.92, 0.77, 0.78, 0.70, 0.75 & 0.85 | | |
| Sub-scales of parenting style | | |
| Acceptance | 3.53 | 1.12 |
| Control | 2.72 | 0.67 |
| Aggregate | 3.13 | 0.89 |
| Cronbach's alpha (α)=0.790 & 0.88 | | |

As can be seen from table 2, the descriptive results—means and standard deviations of components of prosocial tendencies and parenting style sub-scales—were presented. The mean score of compliant dimensions ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.06$) was found to be high, followed by the mean score of the altruism dimension ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.33$), helping when being helped don't know dimension ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.98$), donation creates good feelings ($M=3.5$, $SD=1.03$), and dire dimension ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.06$). Respondents had low mean scores on emotional and public prosocial behavioral tendencies ($M=2.74$, $SD=0.82$; $M=2.35$, $SD=0.86$), respectively. The overall mean scores for seven factors of prosocial tendencies were found to be $M=3.36$, $SD=1.04$, indicating a score above the mean of the scale. This reflects that the respondents have

moderate tendencies of prosocial behavior practices, implying these tendencies to be further strengthened in adolescents.

PTM-R also has adequate internal consistencies. The internal consistency of the PTM-R was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and the reliability of the 25-item PTM-R for each dimension was $\alpha = 0.90$, $\alpha = 0.92$, $\alpha = 0.77$, $\alpha = 0.78$, $\alpha = 0.77$, $\alpha = 0.75$ and $\alpha = 0.85$, respectively, as indicated in table 2, which are very consistent. With regard to parenting style, internal consistencies of the parental dimensions, namely acceptance and control, were separately checked. The mean value of the parenting style scale for acceptance dimension items was $M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.12$, which was above the average value of the acceptance subscale, which is 3. The mean value of the parenting style scale for control category items was $M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.67$. This also shows that the respondents reported above the average value of the control dimension, which is 2.5. The Cronbach's alpha results for acceptance and control dimensions were $\alpha = 0.79$ and $\alpha = 0.88$, respectively, indicating an appropriate reliability level.

Level of prosocial behavior among students

In analyzing data on the total prosocial tendency, the respondents ranged from a low score of 25, meaning 1.25, to a high score of 5.25, which gives 125 on prosocial behavior. As a rule of thumb, a midpoint on the Likert scale was used to compare it with an actual average score of the participants concerning prosocial tendencies. Therefore, $25 \times 3 = 75$ was an average of the scale in this study.

Table 3. One-Sample t-test result of the level of prosocial behavior of the participants ($n = 353$)

| Variable | N | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>SE</i> | Test value |
|--------------------|-----|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Prosocial behavior | 353 | 81.99 | 11.13 | 0.59 | 75 |

As can be seen above, respondents had ($M = 81.99$, $SD = 11.13$) aggregate prosocial tendencies, indicating a better mean score than the already fixed test value ($M = 75$). This result shows that the tendencies of respondents in partaking in positive activities and supporting others are at a good status. This might be due to interdependence and collective cultural values, norms, and practices of the Ethiopian context.

Table 4. Intercorrelations of parenting style and prosocial behavior of the participants (n= 353)

| Variable | 1 | 2 |
|--------------------|--------|---|
| Prosocial behavior | - | |
| Parenting style | 0.105* | - |

* $P < 0.05$ alpha level

A result obtained from correlation analysis indicated statistically a significant positive relationship between prosocial tendency and parenting style among senior secondary school students ($r = 0.105$, $p < .05$). This result shows that as parents used positive approaches in parenting, the positive behaviors, including prosocial behavior, would be enhanced.

Variations in prosocial behavior across the four parenting styles

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and One Way ANOVA results of prosocial behavior across parenting styles (n=353)

| Variables | M | SD | <i>F ratio</i> | df | p |
|---------------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Prosocial behavior | 81.99 | 11.12 | | | |
| Authoritative | 84.10 | 10.73 | 7.39 | 3. 35 | 0.000 |
| Authoritarian | 79.08 | 11.85 | | | |
| Neglectful | 79.01 | 11.66 | | | |
| Pervasive/Indugence | 85.15 | 8.29 | | | |

** $P < .001$.

One-way ANOVA was used to examine variation in prosocial behavior among the four parenting styles. Fundamental assumptions were checked before this analysis. Each individual responded to the survey once in an autonomous way, and the responses were recorded independently for each. This ensures a notion of score independence. Skewness and kurtosis values were used to check for the normality notion. Finally, parity of error variances was checked using Levine's test, which indicated a non-significant outcome, showing that the homogeneity assumption was satisfied. That is, checking the significance value (Sig.) for Levine's test, the Significant value was 0.14, which is greater than 0.05. After fulfilling the above-mentioned necessary conditions, a

one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether variation exists or not across parenting categories on prosocial tendency. In the current research, the effects of the four kinds of parenting on prosocial tendency were compared. As indicated in Table 5, results of one-way ANOVA for parenting style, which was categorized into four groups as Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, and Group 4, representing authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and indulgent, respectively, showed statistically a considerable difference among the groups concerning prosocial behavior ($3.35 = 7.39, p < .001$).

Guided by results of one-way ANOVA that showed a significant difference between the groups, post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test was used to determine which group is exactly different. Results showed that the mean of prosocial for the indulgent group ($M = 85.15, SD = 8.29$) was different from the authoritarian group ($M = 79.08, SD = 11.85$) and the neglectful group ($M = 79.01, SD = 11.66$). The mean prosocial behavior of participants from the authoritative group ($M = 84.10, SD = 10.73$) was also significantly different from the authoritarian group ($M = 79.08, SD = 11.85$) and the neglectful group ($M = 79.01, SD = 11.66$). The mean prosocial scores of the permissive/indulgent group and the authoritative group did not differ significantly, as did the authoritarian and neglectful groups. This indicates that participants from permissive/indulgent and authoritative parenting styles were better at exhibiting prosocial behaviors. It can be said that both parenting styles have nurturing, respecting, and accepting conditions in common, which in turn can contribute to adolescents' autonomy in their actions.

Table 6. Difference in prosocial behavior by gender (n = 353)

| Variables | Male | | Female | | $t(351)$ | p |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|----------|------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| Public prosocial dimension | 9.23 | 3.18 | 9.61 | 2.87 | -1.15 | 0.25 |
| Altruism prosocial dimension | 22.44 | 6.87 | 22.85 | 7.02 | -0.55 | 0.58 |
| Donation creates good feeling prosocial | 10.65 | 2.34 | 10.80 | 2.43 | -0.58 | 0.56 |
| Helping when being helped don't know | 7.16 | 2.07 | 7.08 | 1.92 | 0.38 | 0.70 |
| Emotional prosocial dimension | 13.61 | 2.98 | 13.83 | 2.92 | -0.70 | 0.48 |
| Dire prosocial dimension | 10.34 | 2.75 | 10.15 | 2.48 | 0.69 | 0.49 |
| Compliant prosocial dimension | 8.16 | 2.06 | 8.17 | 1.88 | -0.01 | 0.99 |
| Total PTM-R | 81.60 | 11.73 | 82.48 | 10.34 | -0.74 | 0.46 |

An independent *t*-test was used to check if there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their level of prosocial tendencies. Results on each component and composite of prosocial tendencies of the participants indicated no statistically significant difference. Therefore, there was no significant variation by gender, $t(351) = -0.74$, $p = 0.46$. As can be seen in table 6, the female group has a slightly higher mean than the male group (hence the negative *t*-value), but the difference is small relative to the variability in the data, showing statistically non-significant variation between the two groups. This result may reflect that the way students were gendered had no influence on their prosocial behavior, indicating both relatively equally performing prosocial behaviors. This result may also suggest that there might be a positive awareness among individuals regarding gender roles and their tendency to participate in positive behaviors in the community.

Discussion

Findings of this research regarding the status of prosocial tendencies underscored a good position as tested using the mean score of the sample against the expected mean or test value, indicating students have a good tendency to participate in positive behaviors. No considerable variation by gender was observed in prosocial behavior, and authoritative and permissive parenting styles had better contributions in promoting prosocial behavior. A significant positive association between prosocial tendencies and parenting style was also achieved in this study. Therefore, this study has contextual relevance and contributes to the literature by adding knowledge about the influence of parenting approaches on adolescents' prosociality in the study area, capitalizing on the positive impact of authoritative and permissive parenting styles on prosocial tendencies in adolescents. Particularly, it adds knowledge to the literature about the positive contribution of the permissive parenting approach that was less emphasized in previous literature. This implies that, besides the recognized authoritative parenting approach, a permissive parenting style, which provides adolescents with autonomy, warmth, and love from their parents without strictness, can maximize the opportunity to think freely and act reasonably in a way they consider beneficial to others. There is inadequate existing literature concerning the status of prosocial tendency, particularly in Ethiopia, though a recent study employing just eighty volunteers in Bedesa town in Eastern Ethiopia found a higher level of prosocial behavior (Shemsedin, 2022), which is

consistent with the current finding. A study by Gupta and Thapliyal (2015) among adolescents residing in Delhi, India, reported an average of prosocial behavior. This consistency in results reflects that prosocial behavior appears to be a common phenomenon in adolescents, regardless of the degree of practice in different contexts, which could result in a variation in the level of prosociality.

A significant positive correlation obtained between prosocial behavior and various parenting styles among the students in this study, indicating participants from the authoritative and indulgent groups have a better tendency in these behaviors. This evidence is in line with some previous findings. Prior studies indicated similar findings supporting a positive association of participants' prosocial actions with their parents' authoritative behavior (Llorca et al., 2017b; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Yarmurly & Sanson, 2009). As stated by Zaff et al. (2003), it was found that a higher level of voluntary work engagement was predicted for adolescents who felt their parents were warm and involved in their lives. In a similar way, Llorca et al. (2017b) also reported that individuals with more prosocial behavior tend to come from authoritative parents as opposed to authoritarian or neglectful ones. Moreover, it was noted that prosociality is fostered most successfully in authoritative parenting (Padilla-Walker et al., 2012; Penner et al., 2005). The present study adds knowledge to the consensus in the literature regarding the importance of authoritative parenting for promoting prosocial behavior. Similar to the current study, the body of previous literature capitalizes on the relevance of the authoritative parenting style for promoting prosociality in children in varied contexts.

Inconsistent findings exist about the correlation between prosocial and indulgent/permissive characteristics of the parents. This can happen as a result of cultural contexts. In a permissive parenting style, parents have less chance to take control over adolescents' behavior, providing high parental warmth and acceptance, which can vary in different cultures. In some prior studies, permissive parenting and prosocial behavior have been positively correlated (e.g., Bagán et al., 2019; Alemayehu and Jian-zhong, 2018; Carlo et al., 2017; Williams and Berthelsen, 2017), though some studies still revealed a negative or no association between permissive parenting and prosocial behavior. In the current study, the permissive parenting style also contributed to promoting prosociality in adolescents. This might be due to the fact that permissive/indulgent parents are seen as having warm and loving behavior even though they are unable to control their teenagers' behavior (Smith, 2019). In contrast, studies by (e.g., Parwez et al., 2020; Vita, 2020)

reported a non-significant correlation, while other studies revealed that permissive parenting was negatively correlated to prosocial behavior (Llorca et al., 2017b). However, the current findings are harmonized with the beneficial effects of the permissive parenting style. In line with this concept, while previous literature has established the authoritative parenting style as an effective approach to determine adolescents' developmental outcomes, in the current study, the permissive parenting style, known by features such as warmth, love, care, and responsiveness with limited strictness, contributed to the prosociality of adolescents. As indicated in some prior findings and discussed earlier, this might have occurred due to the supportive nature of a permissive parenting style. Parents with a permissive parenting style inspire individuals, allow them great autonomy, and set fewer restrictive rules. This can help adolescents to get an opportunity to freely decide on what they deem socially appropriate.

Therefore, the common characteristics such as responsiveness, nurturing, loving, and caring nature of permissive and authoritative styles might have contributed to prosocial tendencies, and they are important in promoting positive social behaviors in adolescents. The contribution of parenting environment to prosocial behavior can be explained using social cognitive theory, which asserts that parental behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are important in influencing the later actions of adolescents. According to this theory, how individuals act is influenced by the way parents appear to their children and adolescents (MacLeod, 2016). This theory strengthens the understanding that, as a form of social environment, parenting that is characterized by warmth and responsiveness (whether accompanied by high or low control) appears to be key in fostering prosociality. In the current finding, no gender effect was observed on this behavioral tendency, though mixed findings are available on variation of prosocial behavior by gender. As Jaffee and Hyde (2000) revealed, girls exhibit prosocial morality and behavior more often than boys. Similarly, Carlo and Randall (2002) found that females outscored males in the categories of altruistic, complaint, and anonymous, as well as emotional aspects. In another study, females had better scores on some dimensions of prosocial behavioral tendency, while males showed greater scores on merely the public aspect (Xiao et al., 2019). However, consistent with the current finding, prior studies have shown no variations in prosocial tendencies by gender (Barry et al., 2017; Abdullahi and Kumar, 2016; Chadha and Misra, 2006). As also reported by Nielson et al. (2017), only a gender difference existed in the public prosocial behavior dimension, favoring

boys. In the Ethiopian context, some studies revealed gender variation in prosocial behavior, while others did not. According to Tsehay et al. (2014), female students had higher scores as compared to male students, whereas in a study by Abel (2015), statistically established variance was not revealed on overall facets of this behavior. In the same way, the current finding indicated no significant variation in overall dimensions of prosocial behavior by gender. This result might have occurred due to better awareness individuals have regarding gender issues and allows both groups to partake equally in positive behaviors.

The current findings have practical implications for educators, parents, and policymakers. The findings of this study showed the importance of authoritative and permissive parenting approaches as positively influencing factors of prosocial tendencies, and gender had no significant impact on this behavior. Therefore, parents should sustain these approaches in shaping their children's and adolescents' behavior. The importance of a permissive parenting style should not be overlooked in the literature by researchers and educators. These insights inform programs related to adolescents' development to include strategies that enhance prosocial behavior in adolescents. It can also inform policymakers to capitalize on the role of positive parenting style on prosociality in adolescents to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. Gender equity in education should also be further promoted in academia and the community.

As this study is correlational, no causal conclusion can be drawn. The data used in this study is a perceived report of adolescents about their parents' parenting styles. The data from the parents' perspective about adolescents is not included. In this study, the longitudinal data are not used, and this may cause a limitation in understanding behavioral development. Demographic variables of the parents, such as parental education, socioeconomic status, family structure, and school type, are not controlled in this study. However, the findings of this study can add insight about the contribution of parents to adolescents' holistic participation in the community, leading to achieving sustainable psychosocial developments. Therefore, subsequent investigations might consider incorporating additional independent variables, such as parental socio-economic status and students' social media usage, as mediating factors to elucidate this association using a more sophisticated research design.

Conclusion

The tendency of senior secondary school students to participate in prosocial behavior is found to be in a good status, indicating a positive affinity among students toward prosocial activities.

Additionally, the study found no gender-based variations in prosocial behavior among the participants. Participants' prosocial behavior showed a favorable association with their reported parenting style. When compared to authoritarian and neglectful styles, prosocial behavior differed for both authoritative and permissive parenting styles. This shows that the nurturing, loving, supporting, and encouraging nature of both authoritative and permissive parenting approaches might have contributed to better outcomes of prosocial behavior among the students in this study. In other words, the authoritative style gives support and care with high strictness, while the permissive parenting style also provides warmth, support, and care with low control, indicating that both share high support, warmth, and care in parenting children. This finding adds new knowledge to the literature about the importance of a permissive parenting style in addition to the well-established literature regarding the authoritative parenting style as an effective way of parenting. As emphasized in the social cognitive theory, the social environments and personal beliefs are known to cause human behavior. From this point, parents as a social environment have a vital role in building children's behavior and preparing them for engaging in voluntary activities that benefit society. Therefore, empowering adolescents with resources, a sense of morality, a sense of social belonging, and a connection with parenting to uncover their potential to innovate, advocate, participate, and build a world that sustains social well-being is found to be critical.

Recommendations

Promoting positive behaviors like prosocial behavior in adolescents is essential. This can assist in controlling antisocial actions and strengthening connectedness in the community. Specifically, prosocial behavior becomes real when parents play their positive roles in assisting students to learn and participate in prosocial activities in addition to a formal class. For example, parents should focus on being warm, supportive, and responsive to their children's needs, as these qualities are found to be strongly linked to prosocial development, regardless of their preferred level of behavioural control. Schools should integrate programs that promote prosocial values and educate parents on effective parenting styles, and policymakers (e.g., Public health campaigns) should highlight the importance of nurturing parenting environments for holistic youth development. Therefore, in addition to parents, educators, and policymakers have to

consider the importance of effective parenting styles in adolescent behavior related programs to promote positive behaviors. This could be achieved by teaching, supporting, and guiding parents to implement parenting styles (e.g., authoritative and permissive parenting styles) that are productive in building positive behaviors in adolescents.

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Conflict of interest

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