

# Relationship among Parenting Styles, Prosocial Behavior and School Performance of Students Who are Attending to Grade Seven and Eight State Schools

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study was to examine parenting style, prosocial behavior and students school performance in junior school. In addition, this study attempted to examine the level of parenting styles in their children school performance. Two ten hundred adolescents (Mean age = 14.9 years) measured their own prosocial behaviors, their perceptions of parenting styles of their parents and collected their academic scores from the record office of the schools. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Quantitative analyses (both descriptive and inferential statistics) were used to analyze the obtained data. The data collected were analyzed employing different statistical techniques like correlation, multiple regression, and path analysis. Analysis of the data revealed that parenting styles do have significantly higher involvement in their children's school performance. Parenting styles have an effect on prosocial behavior of adolescents. Path analysis of the data showed that prosocial behavior has statistically significant contribution to the students school performance. Prosocial behavior also has mediate effect between parenting styles and school performance. The current study has significant implications for parents, schools, government and non government sectors and practitioners who are concerned about promoting adolescents' positive behaviors and performance and discouraging negative behaviors.

**Keywords:** *parenting styles, prosocial behavior, adolescence, school performance*

**Cite This Article:** Alemayehu Belay Emagnaw, and Jian-zhong Hong, "Relationship among Parenting Styles, Prosocial Behavior and School Performance of Students Who are Attending to Grade Seven and Eight State Schools." *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2018): 44-50. doi: 10.12691/jsa-2-2-1.

## 1. Introduction

Parents should support their child's constructive behavior. If they do not reinforce positive behavior and do not effectively control deviance, they are more likely to experience weak bonds with their child [1]. Parents serve as children's primary socialization agents, particularly for moral development, prosocial behavior and academic outcomes; however, less is known regarding parental influences on prosocial outcomes during the transition to adulthood. The first theoretical model of parenting style was hypothesized by Baumrind [2,3,4]. She identified that parenting styles divide into three main categories (i.e., authoritarian- firm but not warm, permissive- warm but not firm, and authoritative- warm and firm), which focus on four important features of family functioning, namely, nurturance or warmth, firmness and clarity of control, level of maturity demands, and degree of communication between parent and the child. Later, by analyzing Baumrind's conceptualization of parenting styles, [5] highly structured and revised her typologies. They proposed a variation of Baumrind's categorization in which parents are classified based on two dimensions. These are the degree of demand and control and the degree of acceptance/rejection. According to Maccoby

and Martin, these two dimensions jointly creates four types of parenting styles, three of which are quite similar to Baumrind's original classification and conceptualization of parenting styles. Their conceptualization adds the fourth type, the neglecting or uninvolved parenting style (i.e., neither warm nor firm). According to [2,3] and [5], the four types of parenting styles are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive (indulgent) and neglecting or uninvolved Parenting Styles.

[6] study with a sample of 85 students from an historically black college in the Southern United States found that the authoritative parenting style was positively and significantly related to high levels of academic performance. Another study by [7] also revealed that authoritative parenting positively and significantly predicted academic performance of students. Based on the findings of their study, these researchers suggested that parents play an important role through their parenting styles in influencing their academic achievement. [8] also found that parenting styles significantly predicted academic performance of students, after controlling for the effect of students sex (i.e., authoritative parenting had a significant and positive effect on the academic performance of students). Furthermore, [9] reported that students from a family displaying more involvement, higher levels of nurturance, and encouragement of more autonomy (i.e., the characteristics of authoritative parents) were more academically successful.

One of the positive behaviors that need to be supported by parents is prosocial behavior. The term Prosocial behavior is defined as a behavior that is primarily aimed at benefiting others [10,11]. It includes both reactive and proactive responses to the needs of others [12]. [13] pointed out that the scope of prosocial behavior encompasses different behavioral elements, including sharing, helping, comforting, empathy, sympathy, compassion, concern, volunteering, donating and cooperating. These forms of behavior are characteristic of social competence in childhood and adolescence. One of the theories governing prosocial behavior is Freud's structures of personality.

[11] have shown different types of prosocial behaviors which are related differently to theoretically related constructs. Based on prior theories and research [11,14] four types of prosocial behaviors are identified: altruistic, compliant, emotional, and public prosocial behaviors. On the other hand, [10] proposed six prosocial behaviors. The authors identified the existence of plausible motives underlying the tendency towards a certain type of prosocial behavior which makes the study of different prosocial behavior more concrete. The types of prosocial behaviors are defined: Altruistic is the motive underlining the behavior – it is the intention of the helper that determines an altruistic act, and motivation is what distinguishes more general prosocial behavior from altruism [15].

More specifically, altruism requires sacrificing one's own gain in order to promote another's well-being [12]. In order to explain a tendency to altruism, researchers' used the principles of conditioning and learning from social learning theory [16]. Compliant prosocial behaviors:- Researches relate this behavior type with sympathy and other measures of helping [10]. This type of prosocial behavior is more frequent compared to spontaneous helping. The third type of prosocial behavior is Emotional which conceptualized as an orientation toward helping others under emotionally evocative circumstances [11]. The fourth type of Prosocial behaviors is Public which is conducted in front of an audience are likely to be motivated, at least in part, by a desire to gain the approval and respect of others (e.g., parents, peers) and increase one's self-worth. This type of behavior is termed as public prosocial behavior [11]. Based on these basic four types of prosocial behaviors, [10] added the following two prosocial behaviors based on exploratory factor analyses they conducted in three pilot studies. Anonymous prosocial behavior which is defined as helping performed without the knowledge of who helped [10]. Dire prosocial behavior is defined as helping in crisis or emergency situations [10].

Developmental scholars emphasize that parents are important in fostering prosocial behavior in adolescents. Similarly, one longitudinal study showed that parental warmth is a more reliable predictor of prosocial development than strict parental control. Specifically, mothers' warmth was more predictive than fathers' warmth [17]. Similarly, [18] show that promoting adolescent's prosocial behavior found that, children whose parents express warmth and responsiveness to their needs are more likely to develop prosocial behavior. ) suggested direct modeling effect and the promotion of prosocial

norms by parents helps to foster adolescent prosocial involvement.

The following research questions and hypotheses proposed for the study:

Research Question 1: What are the relationships between parenting style and students school performance with respect to pro social behavior among junior school students?

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between parenting style and students school performance.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between parenting style and pro social behavior.

Research Question 2: What are the mediating effects of pro social behavior on the relationship between parenting style and school performance of junior school adolescents?

Hypothesis 3: Pro social behavior of students will mediate the relationship between parenting style and school performance of junior school adolescents.

Hypothesis 4: Pro social behavior of students will positively relate with school performance of junior school adolescents.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

The participants in this study were grade seven and eight students of three primary schools in Woldia (Melka Kole, woldia junior school and Taytu Bitul Primary government Schools). These schools are selected purposely as they are near to the researcher's work place. There are a total of around 600 grade seven and eight students in three schools. Of these 210 students were selected using stratified random sampling technique. That is proportional number of male and female students were selected from each school. So, the required data for this study were collected from 210 students. But ten questionnaires were rejected either because they are incomplete or inappropriately filled as a result analysis was made with data taken from 200 participants.

### 2.2. Materials

Questionnaire was used to gather the required data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part comprised items which asked personal data of the students such as sex, and family demographic variables such as family structure and parental education.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 25 items which were used to measure the level of pro social behavior o students. Pro social Tendency measure (PTM-R): At first, PTM-R was developed by [10] to assess late adolescents self-report of the six types of prosocial behaviors (anonymous, dire, altruism, emotional, public and compliant). Later, Carlo and his colleagues modified it to be used with younger adolescents and add two items based on suggestions they got from young adolescents [19]. The revised instrument, Prosocial tendency measure - revised (PTM-R), consists of 25 items developed in the form of Likert type scale. The response format of the items was a four point Likert scale. The scales in the

prosocial behavior were “Does not describe me at all”, “Describes me a little”, “Describes me well”, “Describes me greatly” which were scored 1,2,3,4 for respectively. The Cronbach alpha reliability of the types of prosocial behaviors such as anonymous, dire, altruism, emotional, public and compliant scales were found to be 0.89, 0.71, 0.73, 0.76, 0.91 and 0.74 respectively.

Parenting styles scale (PSS): PSS was developed by [20] based on [5] revision of [3,4] parenting style scale. This scale has 35 items in which students asked to rate their parents in terms of the two parenting dimensions: Acceptance/involvement (19 items) and strictness/supervision (16 items).

The scales in the parenting style were "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". The Cronbach alpha reliability of the parenting styles (Acceptance/Involvement, Control/Demanding) scales were found to be 0.93 and 0.91 respectively.

### 2.3. Procedure

The questionnaires for gathering quantitative data were formulated in English language. However, these instruments were administered using Amharic language; aiming at resolving the difficulty of language expected to be a barrier in understanding the items. To this end, first, the forward and backward translation of the items were checked and corrected with the help of two PhD students; one from psychology and one from English department. The questionnaire was administered in the sample schools requesting permission from the director of each school. Students were made not to discuss each other on the items as the response of one may be influenced by the other. Before the participants start to respond to the items in the questionnaire, the purpose of the study was explained by the researcher. In addition to the general and specific instructions in the questionnaire, oral instructions were also given. Specific questions in few items raised by few respondents were answered and clarifications were given to few vague items.

### 2.4. Analysis of Data

The data collected for this study was analyzed using different statistical techniques. The quantitative data obtained was encoded in to the statistical package (SPSS). After the data were screened for missing and extreme values,

descriptive analyses (such as percentage and frequency) for all variables were performed. The data were also tested for normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity and linearity using the appropriate statistical techniques, before employing advanced quantitative analyses. Then, different inferential statistical data analytic strategies, including multiple correlation analyses, multiple regression analyses and path analysis were employed for addressing major research questions. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the inter-correlation among independent and dependent variables. Multiple regression and path analysis were used to test the relationships of school performance with the independent variables.

## 3. Results

Participants provided basic demographic information including gender, mother education, father education, and family structure. The table below could explain the demographic characteristics of the research sample in detail. The objective of this section of the study was to provide basic background information about the demographic variables of the study.

**Table 1. Demographic profiles of the respondents**

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Sex of students (N= 210)		
Male	110	52.38
Female	100	47.62
Level of mother education (N= 210)		
No Formal Education	78	37.14
Elementary/Junior Secondary	67	31.91
Senior Secondary	30	14.28
Certificate/Diploma	20	9.53
First Degree and Above	15	7.14
Level of father education(N= 210)		
No Formal Education	31	14.76
Elementary/Junior Secondary	64	30.48
Senior Secondary	48	22.86
Certificate/Diploma	34	16.19
First Degree and Above	33	15.71
Family structure (N= 210)		
Intact	170	80.95
Non-intact	40	19.05

Note: Frequency and percentage of demographic variables.

**Table 2. Inter-correlations between Predictor and Outcome Variables**

Variables	Zero-Order Correlations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Altruism(1)	1										
Anonymous(2)	.091	1									
Public(3)	.410**	-.106	1								
Compliant(4)	-.309**	-.048	.278**	1							
Dire(5)	-.098	.297**	.123	.217*	1						
Emotional(6)	-.107	.113	.134	.141	.349**	1					
Authoritative(7)	.034	.034	.041	.031	.001	.131	1				
Authoritarian(8)	.093	.079	-.117	-.148	.095	-.078	-.613**	1			
Indulgent(9)	-.131*	-.163	.171	.079	-.073	.003	-.601**	-.423**	1		
Neglectful(10)	.013	-.001	-.090	.011	-.007	-.061	-.741**	-.478**	-.478**	1	
School Performance (11)	.403**	.201**	.341**	.710**	.231**	-.210**	.431**	.615**	-.109	-.093	1

Note. \* p < 0.05, two tailed. \*\* p < 0.01, two tailed.

Table 1 shows that 78(39 %) of mothers were not gone to formal education, 57(28.5 %) of them completed elementary/ junior secondary, 30 (15%) of them attended senior secondary, 20 (10%) of them had certificate or diploma and 15 (7.5%) of them had first degree and above. Table 1 also indicates that 31(15.5 %)of mothers were not gone to formal education, 64(32 % )of them completed elementary/ junior secondary, 48 (24%) of them attended senior secondary, 34 (17%) of them had certificate or diploma and 23 (11.5%) of them had first degree and above. From the Table, we can observe that 170 (85%) of students come from intact families and 30 (15%) of students come from non-intact families.

As shown in Table 2 above, there were inter-correlation between the independent and dependant variables. Therefore, these predictive variables had significant correlations with students' school performance. Authoritarian parenting style had shown better statistically significant relation with students' school performance( $r= 0.615$ ). Similarly, authoritative parenting style had significant relation with

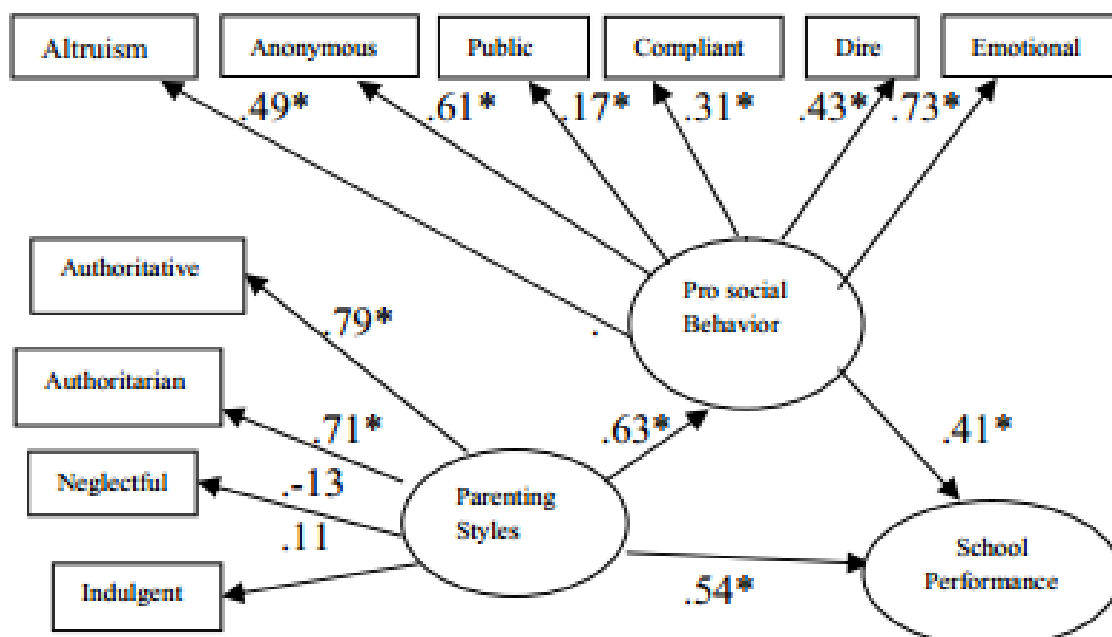
school performance of students ( $r=0.431$ ). The public prosocial behavior was significantly and negatively correlated with the altruism prosocial behavior; it is also significantly and positively correlated with the compliant prosocial behavior; ( $r=0.410$ ) and the dire prosocial behavior was positively and significantly correlated with the compliant, emotional and anonymous prosocial behaviors. The altruism prosocial behavior was negatively and significantly correlated with the compliant and public prosocial behaviors and with that of indulgent parenting style. Authoritative parenting style was significantly and negatively correlated with authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful parenting styles.

The multiple correlations ( $R_{y.123...10}$ ) show a significant relationship between students' school performance ( $y$ ) and a combination of the independent variables ( $F(10, 190) = 34.713$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2_{y.123...10}=0.401$ ) shows 40.10% of the variance in school performance was accounted for by the linear combination of the independent variables.

**Table 3. Results Multiple Regression Analysis of the Joint Effect of Predictor and Mediate Variables on School Performance**

Predictor Variables	Regression Weight(b1)	Standard error (SE)	Beta coefficient ( $\beta_1$ )	t
Altruism (X1)	-0.379	0.6830	-0.0971	-2.2395*
Anonymous (X2)	-4.314	0.7411	-0.0934	-1.7432
Public(X3)	0.9732	0.9791	0.0410	0.7134
Compliant(X4)	3.4791	1.1713	0.0943	2.3413*
Dire(X5)	1.789	0.6017	-0.0499	1.0687
Emotional(X6)	-0.7197	0.0712	-0.3143	-1.1212
Authoritative(X7)	1.1763	0.0741	0.3107	3.1530*
Authoritarian(X8)	1.1324	0.0417	0.4311	4.9834*
Indulgent(X9)	-0.0178	0.09174	-0.0417	-0.0731
Neglectful(X10)	-0.0019	0.0781	-0.0007	-0.0174
R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Constant	
0.634	0.401	34.713	-4.1713	

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ .



**Figure 1. Model results of the hypothesized integrated parental and pro-social model of school performance for the overall sample**

The Path diagram showed the hypothesized integrated parental and social model of school performance for the overall Sample. Paths of influence of parenting styles and prosocial behavior on students school performance. The path diagram includes only path coefficients that are significant beyond the  $P < .05$  level.

## 4. Discussion

The present findings showed that parenting styles has an effect on students school performance. These finding are consistent with the findings of previous studies [7,8,9,21,22], which demonstrated that an authoritative parenting style had a significant and positive effect on the school achievement of students. Whereas, the current findings are not in agreement with the findings of other previous international studies [23,24], which documented that parenting styles did not have a significant effect on the academic achievement of students.

[25] in a study examined the relationship between parenting styles and creativity and educational achievement of the students of grade three of high school and found that there was a significantly positive relationship between the emotional atmosphere of the family, declining to the principles of democracy, and creativity. Furthermore, there was a significantly negative relationship between the creativity and dictatorship principles and there was no statistically significant relationship between the emotional atmosphere of the family, declining to absolute freedom, and creativity which is in an acceptable conformity with the results of this study. The results of the current study support the findings of [26] which state that there exists no significant relationship between parenting style and academic performance.

The literature highlights that authoritative parenting style is more supportive and helps children getting leading edge in their studies [27]. Although there is growing number of research that indicates the better academic functioning due to parenting styles, these results are not consistent among people having different socioeconomic status, ethnicity and cultures [28].

Authoritative parents are active in participating into the life of children, show patience and love toward their children and appreciate their efforts in order to boost their psychological growth [29,30]. These parents are social in nature and appreciate their participation in discussing and planning in the family decisions [31].

The results of these studies predominantly indicate that an authoritative parenting style, with high parental responsiveness and demandingness, is associated with higher student achievement than the other parenting styles [21].

A met analysis of 39 studies confirmed these results and suggested that authoritative parenting is positively associated with academic performance and that it has a greater impact on academic performance than other parenting styles [21].

[32] explored how authoritative components such as maternal support, behavioral control, and psychological control associate with academic achievement. In their research, maternal support best predicted academic achievement in African American students while behavioral control had a strong association with academic achievement and self-esteem in White students.

Overall prosocial behavior across parenting styles had significant correlation with prosocial behavior among students experiencing different parenting styles at home. Similar to this finding, [16] showed that parents play an important role in promoting and fostering prosocial involvement in their children and in adolescents. On the other hand, [13] found an authoritative parenting style to be associated with more prosocial behavior. These analyses showed that parenting styles make great contribution to prosocial behavior. [12] argued that parenting actions may differ widely across contexts and depend on parent's goals. Parents will not always behave in ways that match with a single defined style. Contrary to these findings, the result partly is consistent with a research result by [17]. These researchers showed parent's strict control as relatively, weakly and generally not linked to prosocial behaviors.

The findings extend the evidence that both parenting and prosocial behaviors predict student school performance. The findings regarding the links between prosocial behaviors and school performance are in accord with previous similar findings [33]. Given the recent evidence that prosocial behavior intervention programs are effective in improving school performance [33], the present findings suggest that prosocial behavior programs may be a channel to foster better academic outcomes. Moreover, the present findings also suggest that early prosocial behaviors predict higher academic self-efficacy, which in turn Parenting, prosocial behaviors, and academics predicted better school grades. These findings suggest that the beneficial predictive effects of prosocial behaviors and school performance may be indirect such that engaging in prosocial actions facilitates greater confidence in academics [34].

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the current study, the following conclusions are drawn: With respect to the most commonly practiced parenting style in Ethiopia, although an authoritative parenting style is the most commonly practiced parenting style in the families of Ethiopia. If so, Ethiopian parents are not expected to employ the parenting style (i.e., neglectful parenting style) which is entirely associated with negative developmental outcomes of the children in rearing their children. Regarding the fitness of the proposed integrated parental and social cognitive model of school performance, the model fits satisfactorily the empirical data for the overall sample students. Although the model explained a small amount of variance (i.e., the variance that is lower than one would expect) in the academic performance of and thus it would appear to be applicable in the Ethiopian cultural context. Prosocial behavior plays a vital role in mediating the effect of parenting styles on the school performance for students and the effect of Prosocial behavior on the school performance for students.

## 6. Recommendations

All concerned bodies surrounding adolescents (i.e., parents, teachers, educators, government and non government

bodies) want to seek ways to enhance prosocial behavior and school performance.

The school can promote awareness on parents involvement in their children academic and social behavior. Parents should encourage their children and be good role models in promoting prosocial behavior of their children and students school performance. There are stories in Ethiopia that parents could tell to their children and adolescents about people that were doing things with the intention to benefit others. Parents also advised to take their children to places where they can see or act prosocially and understand the direct and positive effect of their contribution on others.

Other studies require to be conducted in Ethiopia to enhance prosocial behavior and school performance of students. Future researches are recommended to be done on other construct variables, like self efficacy, peer pressure, regulation, and community organizations in relation to their effect on prosocial behavior and school performance. In addition, other mediator and moderate variables should be included to conduct further detail study on the area. Moreover, studying school performance and prosocial behavior in relation to parenting style effect are also other recommendations to be researched across different school level and considering different demographic characteristics. For instance, Conducting researches on school performance and prosocial behavior of adolescents in all age groups and gender differences are also recommended to investigate the possible foundations and development of the variable. 6. Schools should also develop different programs (volunteer service clubs, charity clubs, practical youth centers and peer learning) on helping adolescents to interact more in prosocial activities and to enhance school performance.

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