Prosocial Behaviour and Mental Well-being of Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study explores the correlation between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among higher secondary school students, aiming to understand how acts like helping, sharing and cooperating influence the psychological health of individuals in this pivotal developmental stage. It seeks to assess the levels of prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among higher secondary school students while examining the disparities across various categorical variables, such as gender, school location and academic stream. A sample of 200 Government-aided higher secondary school students aged between 15 to 18 years participated in the study, drawn from North and South 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal. Employing a survey methodology, the study utilised two scales, i.e., Prosocial Behaviour Scale and the Mental Well-being Scale developed by the researchers themselves. The study revealed significant disparities in prosocial behaviour based on gender and school location as well as variations in mental well-being concerning these factors. Crucially, the research uncovered a statistically significant positive correlation between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among higher secondary school students, highlighting the importance of fostering prosocial behaviours to enhance students' psychological health.

Keywords: Prosocial Behaviour, Mental Well-Being, Psychological Health, Survey Methodology, Positive Correlation.

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Introduction

In recent years, adolescent mental health and well-being have gained attention from researchers, educators and policymakers. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by significant cognitive, emotional and social changes, influencing mental health outcomes. Prosocial behaviour has emerged as a significant area of interest due to its potential to foster positive social connections and emotional resilience (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1998; Caprara et al., 2017).

Prosocial behaviour, broadly defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, includes altruism, kindness, empathy and cooperation (Eisenberg et al., 2006). Research suggests that engaging in prosocial behaviours benefits both recipients and actors, enhancing self-esteem, life satisfaction, and reducing the risk of depression and anxiety (Layous et al., 2012; Aknin et al., 2013). Despite recognising prosocial behaviour's importance, little is known about its prevalence and correlates among higher secondary school students. This age group undergoes a critical transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by heightened peer influence, academic stressors and identity exploration (Eccles and Roeser, 2011). Understanding the factors that promote or inhibit prosocial behaviour in this population is essential for designing effective interventions to promote mental health and well-being.

The mental well-being of higher secondary school students is a growing concern among educators, psychologists and policymakers. Adolescents face challenges, such as academic pressures, social transitions, identity exploration and peer relationships, significantly impacting their mental well-being (Compas et al., 2017; Sawyer et al., 2018). Mental well-being encompasses emotional resilience, positive affect, life satisfaction and psychological functioning (Keyes, 2005). Higher mental well-being levels during adolescence are linked to better academic performance, healthier relationships, and reduced risks of depression, anxiety and substance abuse (Suldo and Shaffer, 2008; Huppert and So, 2013). Comprehensive research is needed to examine the determinants of mental well-being within higher secondary education. This review synthesises existing literature on higher secondary school students' mental well-being, identifying key influencing factors, and discussing implications for educational practice and policy. Influencing factors are multifaceted, including individual characteristics, social factors environmental factors and cultural influences (Furlong et al., 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2019).

This study examines the relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among higher secondary school students, investigating prosocial behaviour prevalence, associated

factors and its relationship with self-esteem, life satisfaction, and psychological distress. Understanding these links can inform targeted interventions to promote positive social behaviour and foster resilience among youth.

Rationale of the Study

Recently, there has been growing concern about the mental well-being of adolescents, particularly in higher secondary schools. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by physical, psychological and social changes, making individuals vulnerable to mental health issues. Higher secondary students face academic pressures, social expectations, identity exploration and peer relationships, impacting their mental well-being. Research indicates that mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, are rising globally among adolescents (Gore et al., 2011). Many mental health disorders onset during adolescence (Kessler et al., 2005). Given the implications of poor mental health on academic performance and long-term well-being, understanding the factors contributing to higher secondary students' mental well-being is imperative.

Despite recognising adolescent mental health's importance, research specific to higher secondary students is limited. Existing literature often generalises findings across age groups, overlooking the unique challenges of this stage. While some studies focus on specific issues like depression, comprehensive research on overall mental well-being, including resilience and coping mechanisms, is lacking. By studying these factors, we can develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms. Understanding protective factors like supportive social networks can help educators, parents and policymakers foster resilience, and well-being. Additionally, this study aims to destigmatise mental illness, promote open discussions, and inform policies to enhance students' academic success and quality of life.

Review of Related Literature

Prosocial behaviour, encompassing actions intended to benefit others, significantly contributes to mental well-being, particularly among adolescents in educational settings. Studies have explored the relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental health outcomes among higher secondary school students. Yadav (2022) found significant differences in prosocial behaviour based on gender and class levels. Notably, there was a distinct difference in prosocial attitudes between students in the Grades IX and X grades, as well as across various student categories.

Saha (2020) investigated the impact of positive youth development interventions on self-concept and prosocial behaviour among adolescents. The study revealed significant gender differences, with females displaying higher levels of

prosocial behaviour than males. Saha noted a positive relationship between positive youth development, self-concept and prosocial behaviour. Interventions targeting positive youth development significantly influenced self-concept and prosocial behaviour, with female adolescents showing stronger associations between positive youth development aspects and prosocial engagement.

Promoting prosocial behaviours within school environments is linked to enhanced social connectedness and peer relationships, crucial for adolescents' mental well-being. Layous et al. (2020) demonstrated that acts of kindness improve mood, strengthen social bonds and foster a sense of belonging. Higher secondary school students feeling connected to peers and the school community are more likely to experience positive mental health outcomes. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) evaluated a school-based social-emotional learning programme's effectiveness in enhancing prosocial behaviour, and reducing anxiety and depression symptoms. The study found significant improvements in both prosocial behaviour and mental health outcomes, highlighting the potential of targeted interventions in promoting positive psychosocial development.

Eisenberg and Fabes (2018) conducted a meta-analysis showing the association between prosocial behaviour and lower levels of internalising problems like anxiety and depression among youth. Kaur (2018) investigated the correlation between prosocial behaviour among university students, activism engagement and psychological hardiness. The study found no significant gender differences in prosocial behaviour but noted higher levels among urban students compared to rural ones. Urban male students demonstrated higher levels of prosocial behaviour than urban female students, suggesting gender-specific socialisation processes or environmental influences within urban contexts.

Studies by Stellar et al. (2017) and Riess (2017), showed that cultivating empathy and compassion enhances emotional regulation skills, and fosters adaptive coping strategies in response to stressors. Higher secondary school students demonstrating empathy and compassion towards others are better equipped to manage their emotions and navigate adolescence's challenges. Srivastava (2012) studied the psycho-social correlates of prosocial behaviour among adolescents, revealing significant findings regarding gender, family structure and Socio-economic Status (SES). Females exhibited higher levels of prosocial activation than males, and adolescents from joint families demonstrated greater prosocial activation than those from nuclear families. Middle-class adolescents showed higher prosocial activation compared to upper and lower-class adolescents. The study also found

that gender and family structure interacted significantly in their impact on prosocial behaviour, with girls from joint families exhibiting the highest levels of prosocial behaviour.

The literature suggests a strong link between prosocial behaviour and the mental well-being of higher secondary school students. Encouraging adolescents to engage in acts of kindness, fostering social connectedness and implementing targeted interventions can contribute to positive psychosocial outcomes and enhance overall mental health in educational settings.

Research Gaps

From the analysis of the related literature, it was found that many studies were conducted on prosocial behaviour. However, there are no such substantial studies on the mental well-being of higher secondary students. Nowadays, because of the increase in frustration, depression and suicidal tendencies among the youth, it is essential to ascertain their mental well-being and accordingly guide them in their future endeavour. It is also important to know apart from the academic factors what are the other correlates that affect students well-being. While going through the review of related literature, it is found that prosocial behaviour is one of the most important among them. So, this is a humble attempt by the researchers to conduct a descriptive survey by taking these two variables and finding out the relationship among them.

Objectives of the Study

Following objectives were identified for the present study:

O_1: To compare the prosocial behaviour of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, location of school and academic stream.

O_2: To compare the mental well-being of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, location of School and academic stream.

O_3: To study the relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the above research objectives, the researchers have formulated the following research hypotheses.

For Objective O_1 following research hypotheses have been formed:

H_1: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of boys and girls students at higher secondary level.

H_2: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of urban and rural school students at higher secondary level.

H_3: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of

arts and science stream students at higher secondary level.

For Objective O_2 following research hypotheses have been formed:

H_4: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of boys and girls students at higher secondary level.

H_5: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of urban and rural school students at higher secondary level.

H_6: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of arts and science stream students at higher secondary level.

For Objective O_3 following research hypotheses have been formed:

H_7: There is no significant relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Operational Definition of the Terms

- **Prosocial Behaviour:** Prosocial behaviour refers to actions and behaviours that are intended to benefit others or contribute positively to social relationships and society as a whole. These behaviours are characterised by empathy, compassion and a concern for the welfare of others. Prosocial behaviours can take various forms, including helping, sharing, comforting, cooperating, volunteering and showing kindness. In the present study prosocial behaviour implies—(i) Social responsibility (ii) Empathy (iii) Equality (iv) Altruism (v) Reciprocity (vi) Self Sacrifice.
- **Mental Well-being:** Mental well-being refers to the state of one's mental health and encompasses various aspects of psychological functioning and emotional resilience. It involves feeling emotionally balanced, capable, content as well as being able to cope effectively with stressors and challenges in daily life. Mental well-being includes factors, such as experiencing positive emotions, maintaining healthy relationships, having a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and feeling confident in one's abilities. In the present study, mental well-being refers to physical, emotional, social and financial well-being of the higher secondary school students.

Methodology of the Study

Given the nature of the research, the descriptive survey method was considered appropriate for the present study.

Sample

As per the nature of the study, a sample of 200 students were randomly selected from ten different government-aided higher secondary schools of North and South 24

Parganas districts of West Bengal comprising rural and urban areas.

Table 1

Sample Frame: Entire Sample

Gender	Boys	103	200
	Girls	97	
Location of the School	Urban	93	200
	Rural	107	
Discipline	Arts	113	200
	Science	87	

Variables

The researchers in the present study have identified two types of variables for their research.

1. Major Variables: Prosocial Behaviour and Mental Well-being

2. Categorical Variables

- **Gender:** Boys and Girls
- **Location of the School:** Urban and Rural
- **Academic Stream:** Arts and Science

Tools Used in the Study

In the present study, the following tools were used:

1. Prosocial Behaviour Scale (PBS): The researchers developed and standardised the Prosocial Behaviour Scale (PBS). The scale has six dimensions, i.e., (i) Social responsibility (ii) Empathy (iii) Equality (iv) Altruism (v) Reciprocity and (vi) Self Sacrifice. The scale is a five-point scale and has 35 items out of which 25 items are positive and 10 items are negative. This is a five-point scale having response category, 'Strongly Agree' was given a weight of 5, 'Agree' a weight of 4, 'Undecided' a weight of 3, 'Disagree' a weight of 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' a weight of 1 in respect of responses pertaining to all positive items. For negative items, the weightage is in the reverse order. The reliability of the scale is 0.821.
2. Mental Well-being Scale (MWS): The researchers developed and standardised the Mental Well-being Scale (MWS) for the age group of 16 to 20 years of age. The Scale has four dimensions, i.e., (i) Physical, (ii)Emotional (ii) Social and (iii) Financial Well-being. There is 28 items and all the items are in positive form. It is a five-point scale. The reliability of the scale is 0.854.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers have collected data from 200 higher secondary school students by using the above-mentioned scales. The responses collected are only made to fulfil the requirements of the research work. It was not disclosed publicly. Their privacy was maintained.

Research Objective-wise Analysis of Data

1. Analysis of Data with respect to Objective 1

O_1: To compare the prosocial behaviour of higher secondary school students with respect to gender (boys and girls), location of school (urban and rural) and academic stream (arts and science). For fulfillment of the above mentioned objective, three research hypotheses were formulated and tested which was as follows:

H_1: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of boys and girls students at higher secondary level.

Groups: Boys and girls students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 2 and 3, it is seen that in case of Levene's Test for equality of variances the calculated 'p' value is 0.189 ($p>0.05$). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 3 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of prosocial behaviour between boys and girls students at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 0.884 and 'p' value is 0.031 ($p<0.05$). Hence, 't' is significant at 0.05 level. So, H_1 is rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of boys students are significantly different from girls students in respect to prosocial behaviour at higher secondary level.

H_2: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of urban and rural school students at higher secondary level.

Table 2
Group Statistics—PBS: Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prosocial Behaviour	Boys	103	151.25	3.542
	Girls	97	146.75	2.716

PBS = Prosocial Behaviour Scale

Table 3
Independent Samples Test of PBS: Gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Prosocial Behaviour	2.118	0.189	0.884*	198	0.031

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

Table 4
Group Statistics PBS—Location of the School

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prosocial Behaviour	Urban	93	147.88	2.938
	Rural	107	150.12	3.320

PBS = Prosocial Behaviour Scale

Table 5
Independent Samples Test of PBS: Location of the School

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Prosocial Behaviour	1.236	0.233	0.731*	198	0.048

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

Groups: Urban and rural school students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 4 and 5, it is seen that in case of Levene's test for equality of variances, the calculated 'p' value is 0.233 ($p>0.05$). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 5 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of prosocial behaviour between urban and rural school students at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 0.731 and 'p' value is 0.048 ($p<0.05$). Hence, 't' is significant at 0.05 level. So, H_2 is rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of urban school students are significantly different from rural school students in respect to prosocial behaviour at higher secondary level.

H_3: There exist no significant mean difference in prosocial behaviour of arts and science stream students at higher secondary level.

Table 6
Group Statistics—PBS: Academic Stream

	Academic Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prosocial Behaviour	Arts	113	149.87	3.218
	Science	87	148.13	3.040

PBS = Prosocial Behaviour Scale

Table 7
Independent Samples Test of PBS: Academic Stream

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Prosocial Behaviour	2.123	0.413	0.588*	198	0.512

**Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

Groups: Arts and Science stream students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 7, it is seen that in case of Levene's Test for equality of variances the calculated 'p' value is 0.413 (p>0.05). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 7 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of prosocial behaviour between Arts and Science stream students at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 0.588 and 'p' value is 0.512 (p>0.05). Hence, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. So, H_3 is not rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of Arts Stream students are not significantly different from science stream students prosocial behaviour at higher secondary level.

2. Analysis of Data with respect to Objective 2

O_2: To compare the mental well-being of higher secondary school students with respect to gender (boys and girls), locati on of school (urban and rural) and academic stream (arts and science).

For fulfillment of the above mentioned objective, three research hypotheses were formulated and tested which was as follows:

H_4: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of boys and girls students at higher secondary level.

Groups: Boys and girls students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 9, it is seen that in case of Levene's test for

Table 8
Group Statistics—MWS: Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mental Well-being	Boys	103	116.50	2.704
	Girls	97	119.50	3.462

**MWS = Mental Well-being Scale*

Table 9
Independent Samples Test of MWS: Gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Mental Well-being	1.782	0.332	1.348*	198	0.043

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

equality of variances the calculated 'p' value is 0.332 ($p>0.05$). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 9 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of mental well-being between boys and girls students at at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 1.348 and 'p' value is 0.043 ($p<0.05$). Hence, t is significant at 0.05 level. So, H_4 is rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of boys students are significantly different from girls students in respect to mental well-being at higher secondary level.

H_5: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of urban and rural school students at higher secondary level.

Groups: Urban and rural school students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 11, it is seen that in case of Levene's test for equality of variances the calculated

Table 10
Group Statistics—MWS: Location of the School

	Location	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Mental Well-being	Urban	93	117.35	2.952
	Rural	107	118.65	3.214

MWS = Mental Well-being Scale

Table 11
Independent Samples Test of MWS: Location of the School

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Mental Well-being	0.981	0.187	1.092*	198	0.049

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

'p' value is 0.187 (p>0.05). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 11 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of mental well-being between urban and rural school students at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 1.092 and 'p' value is 0.049 (p<0.05). Hence, 't' is significant at 0.05 level. So, H_5 is rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of urban school students are significantly different from rural school students in respect to mental well-being at higher secondary level.

H_6: There exist no significant mean difference in mental well-being of arts and science stream students at higher secondary level.

Groups: Arts and Science Stream Students

Interpretation

From the analysis in Table 13, it is seen that in case of Levene's test for equality of variances the calculated 'p' value is 0.383 (p>0.05). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 13 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of mental well-being between Arts and Science stream students at higher secondary level, the calculated $t_{(198)}$ value is 0.765 and 'p' value is 0.608 (p>0.05). Hence, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. So, H_6 is not rejected and it can be inferred that mean scores of Arts Stream Students are not significantly different from Science stream students in respect to mental well-beingat higher secondary level.

3. Analysis of Data with respect to Objective 3

O_3: To study the relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Table 12
Group Statistics—MWS: Academic Stream

	Academic Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mental Well-being	Arts	113	115.85	2.652
	Science	87	120.15	3.514

**MWS = Mental Well-being Scale*

Table 13
Independent Samples Test of MWS: Academic Stream

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mental Well-being	1.349	0.383	0.765*	198	0.608

**Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance.*

Table 14
Correlation Matrix of Prosocial Behaviour and Mental Well-being

Statistics		Prosocial Behaviour	Mental Well-being
Prosocial Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	0.861*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.039
	N	200	200
Mental Well-being	Pearson Correlation	0.861*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.039	
	N	200	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.*

For fulfillment of the above mentioned objective, one research hypothesis was formulated and tested which was as follows

H_7: There is no significant relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Interpretation

The analysis in the Table 14 shows that, correlation coefficient, i.e., 'r' between the scores of prosocial behaviour and mental well-beingis 0.861 which is high and positive in nature and 'p' value is 0.039 ($p< 0.05$), which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, H_7 is rejected. So, it can be said that there exists a high positive and significant relationship between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Major Findings of the Study

Based on the data analysis presented above, the findings are organised systematically in alignment with the following objectives:

1. Finding related to Objective 1

From the analysis of data on prosocial behaviour, the following findings have been revealed:

a. Boys students are significantly different from girls students in respect prosocial behaviour at higher secondary level. Boys students' mean score (151.25) is higher than girls students' mean score (146.75). It means that prosocial behaviour of boys students is significantly better than girls student sat higher secondary level.

b. Students of rural schools are significantly different from the students of urban schools in respect to prosocial behaviour.

The mean score (150.12) of the students of rural schools is higher than the mean score (147.88) of the students of urban schools. It means that prosocial behaviour of the students of rural schools is significantly better than the students of urban schools.

c. It is found that the Arts stream students are not significantly different from the Science stream students in respect to prosocial behaviour at higher secondary level. But, the mean score (149.87) of Arts stream students is slightly higher than the mean score (148.13) of science stream students. It means that prosocial behaviour of Arts stream students is insignificantly better than Science stream student sat higher secondary level.

2. Finding related to Objective 2

From the analysis of data on mental well-being, the following findings have been revealed:

a. Boys students are significantly different from girls students in respect to mental well-being at higher secondary level. girls students' mean score (119.50) is higher than boys students' mean score (116.50). It means that mental well-beingof girls students is significantly better than boys student sat higher secondary level.

b. Students of rural schools are significantly different from the students of urban schools in respect to mental well-being. The mean score (118.65) of the students of rural schools is higher than the mean score (117.35) of the students of urban schools. It means that mental well-being of the students of rural schools is significantly better than the students of urban schools.

c. It is found that the Arts stream students are not significantly different from the science stream students in respect to mental well-being at higher secondary level. but, the mean score (120.15) of science stream students is slightly higher than the mean score (115.85) of Arts stream students. It means that mental well-being of science stream students is insignificantly better than Arts stream students at higher secondary level.

3. Finding related to Objective 3

The present study shows that there exists a high positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.861$) between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of higher secondary school students.

Discussion of the Findings

Gender differences play a role in prosocial behaviour, with boys exhibiting slightly higher levels compared to girls. This finding aligns with certain studies suggesting that boys may engage more in helping behaviours in specific contexts. Additionally, the rural-urban divide

impacts prosocial behaviour; students from rural areas show slightly higher levels of prosocial behaviour than their urban counterparts. However, when comparing Arts and Science students, the differences in prosocial behaviour are negligible.

Gender differences are evident, with girls exhibiting higher levels of mental well-being compared to boys. This finding could be attributed to various social and psychological factors that influence how boys and girls experience and report their mental well-being. Furthermore, students from rural areas tend to report slightly better mental well-being than those from urban areas, similar to the trend observed in prosocial behaviour. The difference between Arts and Science students in terms of mental well-being is minimal.

The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping both prosocial behaviour and mental well-being. Positive classroom contexts, characterised by supportive teacher-student relationships, inclusive practices and opportunities for cooperative learning, can foster prosocial behaviours among students. Teachers who model and encourage empathy, collaboration and helping behaviours create a classroom culture that values and reinforces prosocial actions. Moreover, classrooms that provide emotional support, recognise student achievements and promote a sense of belonging contribute to better mental well-being. Programmes focusing on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) can be particularly effective in integrating these aspects into the classroom setting, enhancing both prosocial behaviour and mental well-being.

The most significant finding of this study is the strong positive correlation between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among students. This correlation implies that students with higher levels of prosocial behaviour tend to have better mental well-being. The interconnectedness of these two variables suggests that fostering prosocial behaviour through classroom interventions and supportive environments can simultaneously enhance students' mental well-being. For instance, engaging students in community service projects, group activities, and peer support systems can provide them with meaningful social connections and a sense of purpose, which are crucial for mental health.

The analysis underscores the importance of considering gender, rural-urban differences and classroom contexts when addressing prosocial behaviour and mental well-being of students. By creating supportive and inclusive classroom environments that promote prosocial behaviour, educators can positively impact students' mental well-being, thereby fostering a holistic approach to student development.

Conclusion

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the prosocial behaviour

and mental well-being of higher secondary school students, revealing significant trends and relationships. Gender differences are pronounced, with boys showing higher levels of prosocial behaviour, while girls demonstrate better mental well-being. This indicates that gender plays a crucial role in these aspects, suggesting the need for gender-specific strategies to enhance both prosocial behaviour and mental well-being.

The location of the school also significantly impacts these variables. Students from rural schools exhibit higher prosocial behaviour and better mental well-being compared to their urban counterparts. This rural-urban disparity highlights the influence of the environment on student development and suggests that urban schools might need additional resources and support to foster these qualities.

In contrast, academic stream differences (Arts vs Science) in prosocial behaviour and mental well-being are minimal, indicating that the type of academic curriculum does not significantly influence these aspects. This finding suggests that interventions to improve prosocial behaviour and mental well-being can be uniformly applied across different academic streams.

A key finding of this study is the strong positive correlation between prosocial behaviour and mental well-being. The correlation coefficient of 0.861 indicates that students with higher levels of prosocial behaviour tend to have better mental well-being. This underscores the interconnectedness of these variables and suggests that enhancing one could positively impact the other. Given these findings, it is imperative for educational policy makers and practitioners to design, and implement targeted interventions that address gender and location-specific needs. Programmes that promote prosocial behaviour can simultaneously boost mental well-being, leading to a more holistic development of students. Future research should explore the underlying factors contributing to these differences and evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions in enhancing both prosocial behaviour and mental well-being.

Overall, this study emphasises the need for a holistic approach to education that nurtures social and emotional aspects of student life, aiming to improve their overall development and well-being. By focusing on these interconnected variables, educators can better support students in achieving both academic success and personal growth.

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