

Altruism and Self-Efficacy among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Altruistic abilities that enable a person to help others selflessly and self-efficacy beliefs that one has about one's altruistic abilities greatly influence the kind of person they become. In this study, using convenience sampling method, a sample of 70 young adults from different cities in India, which included 35 males and 35 females, responded to measures of altruism and self-efficacy. The results were then computed to determine the relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults. It was found that the low positive correlation was not statistically significant to be able to say that there is a relationship between the two variables. However, compassion training programs, meditation practices, interpersonal interventions and the like could be employed in order to improve altruism and self-efficacy among the population under study.

Keywords: *Altruism, Self-Efficacy, Young Adults*

Young adults between the ages of 18 to 30, are at a stage of development in their lives, where they come across many changes. There is very little that is normative. Young adults find themselves in a period of constant changes that requires them to explore their unique paths in various aspects of life. They are in the process of transitioning from adolescents into adults.

According to Erik Erikson (1968), by the age of 18, as the period of young adulthood begins, an individual reaches the stage of intimacy vs. isolation, where young adults share their feelings more intimately with others (McLeod 2013). They look for relationships that could lead to a long-term commitment with a person other than a member of their family. Completing this stage successfully can lead to a healthy relationship, instill a sense of commitment and care within a relationship. Success in this stage produces the virtue of true love. On the other hand, isolation could be the result from avoiding intimacy and long-term commitments, along with loneliness, and sometimes even depression.

According to Rushton (1982), altruism can be defined as "social behaviour carried out to achieve positive outcomes for another rather than for the self." Over the years, psychologists have come forward with various explanations for altruistic behaviour. Even though altruism is often seen as selfless acts of helping, the social learning theory argues that the helper

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receives some kind of a rewards, either external or internal. However, the idea that self-interest or egoism motivates all behaviour has fallen into disrepute as it goes into a circular way of explaining the behaviour. Some researchers suggest that with people's empathy aroused, they will help others even when they know that there is no reward in sight and even when no one will know about their altruistic act.

People's beliefs of their own ability to control the events that will have an effect on their lives refers to perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 2010). The factors that motivate and guide their behaviour are based on the belief that one's actions can make a difference. There are four main sources of information that develop the sense of self-efficacy in people. Mastering experiences is an excellent way of instilling efficacy. Successes in it can build a strong confidence in one's abilities and failures can undermine it. Persevering through circumstances to overcome the obstacles can help in building a resilient self-efficacy. Seeing others similar to oneself succeed in various tasks by persevering through obstacles can serve as social models to develop self-efficacy. Another factor that has a great influence on self-efficacy is social persuasion. Logical and practical encouragements from one's surroundings can motivate people to put in more effort to increase their chances in succeeding at a particular task. A person's physical stamina and strength is the fourth factor that influences self-efficacy. People judge their capabilities depending on their physiological and emotional conditions.

In today's world, where people are running a race to maximize their gains and satisfy their own needs, people are remiss of those who might need a helping hand without first thinking of how this act would benefit themselves. People also have varying levels of belief in their abilities to do such tasks. This study focuses on whether a relationship exists between altruism and self-efficacy and how it might be to the benefit of the people.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Following are a few studies that will shed some light on the variables of the study: altruism and self-efficacy.

Warneken & Tomasello (2009) conducted a study at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany on the roots and origins of human altruism. Warneken and Tomasello conduct a series of experiments on human infants and toddlers to gain an understanding on the origins of altruism. Infants, 14 to 18 months of age, showed altruistic behaviours to others, helping them to reach their goals. They did this spontaneously and irrespective of any reward from the adults who received their help. The researchers claimed that humans have a natural predisposition towards altruistic tendencies and that socialization during development is not the primary source. They agree that culture and society can cultivate and train altruism in young ones, but does not implant it. The series of studies conducted by the researchers revealed that the origin and beginning of altruistic tendencies are apparent during early childhood and that there is an intrinsic motivation to engage in altruistic behaviours.

Stephen G. Post (2005) researched the relationship between altruism, happiness and health. He found that altruistic emotions and behaviours is related to mental and physical health. He suggested that there is a strong correlation between the health, happiness and longevity of people who are compassionate and altruistic. The research also discusses its potential implications in public health focusing on engaging the people in civic activities and helping behaviours within their respective communities.

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Firdevs Savi Çakar (2012) conducted a study to look into the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among young adults. 405 young adults who were pursuing their bachelor degree at the Celal Bayar University was selected using simple random sampling. The sample included 224 female and 181 male students. The General Self-Efficacy scale and The Satisfaction with Life Scale was administered to all the participants. The results thus obtained were analysed using ANOVA and regression analysis. The analysis indicated that the self-efficacy of the young adults had a significant influence on their life satisfaction. It was also found that the perceived level of income of the participants did not have an effect on life satisfaction.

Artistico, Cervone & Pezzuti (2003) conducted a research to test the hypothesis that there would be age differences in perceptions of one's self-efficacy and in problem-solving performances, particularly among young and older adults. The authors of the study developed problem-solving stimuli that were ecologically representative of problems that are commonly faced by young adults, by older adults or by both. An abstract problem-solving task that lacked ecological representativeness was also given to the participants. Their performance in all these instances were measured. The young adults had higher perceived self-efficacy and performance levels in the task lacking ecological representativeness. The perceived self-efficacy and performance of the older adults was higher in the tasks that were commonly faced by older people.

Alavi, Zargham-Boroujeni, Yousefy and Bahrami (2017) conducted a research to explore the influence of altruism as one of the dimensions of caring self-efficacy. 27 Iranian paediatric nurses and clinical instructors were selected for the study through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data which was then analysed using a conventional content analysis method. Analysis of the results indicated that altruism is, indeed, an important value aspect of self-efficacy, including categories: humanistic care and caring attitude.

Song, Gu and Zhang (2020) conducted a study to understand the nature of subjective well-being among teachers. The study explored the interaction between some of the key domains of subjective well-being, including altruism and self-efficacy and work satisfaction and income satisfaction. Survey method, using established scales for each of the variables, was used to gather data. 1,525 teachers from primary and secondary schools across the eastern areas of China responded to the survey. The altruistic values and self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers greatly influence their judgement of their quality of life. However, a satisfaction with income and work also affect their perception and judgement of quality of their work life.

Here, it can be seen that altruism and self-efficacy greatly influence an individual. A person's altruistic abilities seem to influence their self-efficacy beliefs. This study aims at studying the relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults as it is a period in the developmental process that sees a lot of change and adaptation as the individual matures.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted with the aim of examining whether or not a relationship exists between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults. The sample consisted of 35 females and 35 males from different cities in India. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 30

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years of age. The study was carried out to understand the relationship between the two variables and whether it was statistically significant.

Research Question

Is there a relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults?

Objective

To study whether there is a significant relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults.

Design of the Study

This study has used the correlational design in order to examine whether there is a relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults.

Sample

The sample of this study comprised of 70 young adults between the ages of 18 and 30, including 35 male and 35 female participants. The participants for the study were chosen using convenience sampling method.

Tools Used

Self-Report Altruism Scale: The Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRAS) developed by J. Philippe Rushton, Roland D. Chrisjohn and G. Cynthia Fekken was used to assess the altruism of the participants. The SRAS is a 20-item scale with responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = Never, 1 = Once, 2 = More than once, 3 = Often and 4 = Very often. The peer-rating study involved 118 undergraduates at the University of West Ontario and 8 raters each for each undergraduate. The scores for all the items are totalled. The minimum possible score for an individual is 0, with 80 being the maximum possible score. The higher the score, the higher the altruism. Peer ratings were used to measure the validity and reliability of the scale. The reliability of the peer ratings were measured; split-half reliabilities were calculated using odd and even numbered raters across the 80 participants who had two or more raters. This produced a significant interrater reliability of $r(78) = +0.51$ ($P < 0.01$) for the peer rated-SRA-scale altruism scores. The internal consistency of the 20-item peer rating form was also calculated and was found to be extremely high ($\sim = 0.89$, $N = 416$). In order to examine the relationship between the Self-Report Altruism scale and existing measures of social responsibility, moral judgment, empathy and pro-social values, a variety of scales were given to around 200 university students, along with a social desirability scale as well. This study found significant positive relations among a variety of questionnaire measures of pro-social orientation. Self-reported altruism was related to all of these.

Self-Efficacy Scale: The Self-Efficacy Scale (SES) developed by Mark Sherer, James E. Maddux, Blaise Mercandante, Steven Prentice-Dunn, Beth Jacobs, and Ronald W. Rogers was used to measure the self-efficacy of the participants. The SES is a 30-item scale. Seven items (1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21 and 25) are filler items and are not scored. The items that are in a negative fashion (3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 29 and 30) are reverse-scored and the scores for all items are added. Prior to reversing the scores, the answers are keyed as

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follows: A - 1, B - 2, C - 3, D - 4, E - 5. The higher the score obtained, the higher the self-efficacy will be. The maximum score that can be obtained is 150 and the minimum score that can be obtained is 30. The initial studies of the Self-Efficacy Scale involved 376 undergraduate students of introductory psychology courses and 150 patients from a Veterans Administration alcohol treatment group. The SES has fairly good internal consistency, with alphas of 0.86 and 0.71 for the general subscale and social subscale, respectively. The Self-Efficacy Scale was shown to have good criterion-related validity. It accurately predicted that people with higher self-efficacy beliefs would have greater success than those who obtain a low score in self-efficacy in past vocational, monetary and education goals. The SES also has demonstrated construct validity by correlating significantly with a number of assessments such as the Interpersonal Competency Scale, the Ego Strength Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Procedure

The participants for the study – 35 males and 35 females – were selected using convenience sampling method. Each of the participants was sent a link to a Google form that contained the measures of the study. The participants were required to go through a description about the questionnaire which explained the purpose and the procedure of the study. This was followed by fields in which the participants were asked to fill out demographic details including their name, age, gender, occupation, Email ID and their current area of residence. They were then required to give their consent to participate in the study. On completing this, they were able to proceed to answering the two questionnaires. The data gathered from the responses of the participants was then analysed to assess the relationship between the two variables under study.

Statistical Techniques

As the research design for this study was the correlational method, the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to analyse the data that was gathered from the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data that was gathered from the participants were scored and their descriptive statistics were calculated.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Self-efficacy and Altruism

	Self-Efficacy	Altruism
N	70	70
Mean	111.53	33.99
Std. Deviation	9.53	11.66

There were a total of 70 participants, 35 males and 35 females, who responded to the scales measuring self-efficacy and altruism. The mean score for the Self-Efficacy Scale was 111.53 and 33.99 for the Self-Report Altruism Scale. The standard deviations of self-efficacy and altruism are 9.53 and 11.66, respectively.

Then, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to calculate the inferential statistics for the correlation coefficient. The results are as follows:

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Table 2: Correlation coefficient on Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

Variables		Self-Efficacy
Altruism	Pearson Correlation	0.22
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.06
	N	70

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults.

In order to test the above-mentioned hypothesis, the raw scores calculated from the data obtained from the 70 participants on altruism and self-efficacy was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, including the significance of the results. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient is $r = 0.22$. The statistical significance of the coefficient was also computed at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The significance value thus obtained was 0.061 ($p > 0.05$). This obtained value is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no statistically significant relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults.

DISCUSSION

Altruism and Self-efficacy are considered to be two aspects that greatly influence a person. Young adulthood, specially, is a time in the developmental process that sees many changes, where the individual comes across many new situations and will be exploring to find their own unique path through life. Altruism is seen as selfless acts that are aimed at the welfare of another rather than oneself. While self-efficacy is the belief one has about one's own abilities to do certain tasks. Research has shown that the altruistic abilities of a person greatly influence their perceived self-efficacy. A person's altruistic abilities influences self-efficacy, as their judgement and perception of their abilities of altruism will motivate them to involve themselves in altruistic acts in the future. This study focused on examining the relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults. The results obtained were checked for significance at the 95% confidence interval. It was found that there is no significant relationship between the two variables, altruism and self-efficacy, among young adults. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The obtained results are not strong enough to be able to say that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables. However, it was found that there is some degree of strength to the relationship between the variables. Perhaps, with more individuals to participate in the study, the results would have been stronger.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine if there exists a relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults. The results obtained, from the data gathered from 70 young adults, indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between altruism and self-efficacy among young adults. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

There have been studies, done in the past, that show that there is a positive correlation between altruism and self-efficacy. Alavi, Zargham-Boroujeni, Yousefy and Bahrami (2017) found that altruism is an integral part of caring self-efficacy. Similarly, Song, Gu and Zhang (2020) suggested that altruism and self-efficacy beliefs greatly influence one's quality of life. However, this study does not quite prove that. Although the results obtained show that there was a positive correlation between the variables under study, it was not statistically

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significant for the author to be able to say that there is, indeed, a relationship between altruism and self-efficacy. It should also be noted that the population chosen for this study was different from those in other studies with similar themes. It could be said that altruism does not have a notable influence on self-efficacy beliefs among young adults and so does self-efficacy not affect the altruistic abilities of young adults.

The results of the study could be used to understand and improve the altruistic abilities and self-efficacy beliefs of young adults. Compassion training programs and meditation practices could be encouraged among the population to increase their empathic feelings toward others and to exhibit selfless behaviour. Interpersonal interventions can also help individuals who have low self-efficacy by giving them opportunities to interact and associate with other people and it will also be an opportunity for them to explore themselves and their abilities.

Perhaps, a larger sample could have produced different results. Extraneous factors that were not controlled for, and errors in sampling could also have affected the outcome of the study. Nevertheless, the results of this study open a new window which has not been explored much. There is little literature on the concepts of altruism and self-efficacy among young adults in India. However, there is hope that there will be more research done in the future on the variables discussed in this study. This will help in extending the available literature on these concepts. This will lead to a better understanding on the importance of these concepts on the life of young adults, their development and their influence on society and culture, at large.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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