

Research Paper

Relationship between Gratitude and Altruism in Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The importance of personal qualities like gratitude and altruism for human well-being has been emphasised by positive psychology. Altruism is the act of genuinely wanting to help others rather than doing so out of obligation, loyalty, or religious duty. This study focused on finding the relationship between gratitude and altruism. Positive psychology research consistently finds a strong correlation between gratitude and better lives. Gratitude improves one's capacity for joy, appreciation of enjoyable memories, wonderful health, and capability for overcoming challenges. Between the ages of 19 and 27, 50 participants—25 boys and 25 girls—participated in the study. Altruism scale by Dr. S.N Rai and Dr. Sanwat Singh and the Gratitude Questionnaire – Six Item Form were used to measure the relationship between gratitude and altruism. SPSS was used to analyze the data. The two variables have a very slight positive relationship, as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.087.

Keywords: *Gratitude, Altruism, Young Adults*

Altruism is the act of genuinely wanting to help others rather than doing so out of obligation, loyalty, or religious duty. Because you care about the well-being of others, you must take action. The Bhagwat Gita, a revered Hindu scripture, argues that when done in the proper spirit, service to others is a form of devotion, associating charity with prayer and spirituality.

Types of altruism

Altruistic behaviour can take many different forms, according to psychologists. These consist of:

- **Reciprocal altruism:**

The foundation of this kind of generosity is a reciprocal give-and-take arrangement. It comprises providing assistance now in anticipation of receiving assistance in return in the future.

- **Group-selected altruism**

Group-selected altruism has to do with being a member of a specific group. In other words, because your pals make up your group, you might act kindly toward them.

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- **Genetic altruism:**

As the name implies, this kind of altruism focuses on doing good deeds for members of one's own family. For instance, parents and other family members frequently make sacrifices to meet the demands of their loved ones.

- **Pure altruism:**

One of the other varieties of altruism is moral altruism, which is sometimes known as "pure altruism" because it is the purest sort of altruism. This type entails lending a helping hand to someone else, even when doing so is dangerous and unpaid.

What Causes Altruism?

We don't know why altruism exists, but psychologists have put up a variety of theories.

- **Evolution**

Psychologists have debated for a long time whether some people are just born with a natural inclination to help others due to the possibility that altruism may be influenced by genetics.

- **Cognitive-Based Rewards**

The brain's reward regions are triggered by altruism. According to neurobiologists, those who behave altruistically exhibit increased activity in their brain's pleasure centers. The parts of the brain connected to the reward system are activated when we act compassionately.

- **Environment**

Altruistic behaviour is greatly influenced by interactions and relationships with other people, and it may be significantly influenced by early socialisation.

- **Social Norms**

Whether or if people act altruistically can also be influenced by social rules, norms, and customs. The "norm of reciprocity" is a social norm that makes us feel obligated to help others if they have already benefited us.

- **Empathy**

According to the empathy-altruism theory, people are more likely to act altruistically when they feel empathy for someone who is in need. Additionally, as children's capacity for empathy develops, they tend to become more altruistic.

Altruism Approaches

Altruism has been conceptualised in numerous ways by researchers. These approaches are classified as Pseudo Altruistic Approach and Altruistic Approach (Feigin et al., 2014).

The Pseudo Altruistic Approach: According to this viewpoint, apparent altruistic behaviour is ultimately driven by ego and the pursuit of internal pleasures, whether directly or indirectly. As a result, altruism is redefined to match the premise that all human conduct is self-serving.

- **The Altruistic Approach:** This method is based on beliefs of 'genuine' altruism, which is kindness to those in need without expecting anything in return. Self-rewards, praise, or return help may appear as a result of helping behaviour, but motivation to help is only focused towards the victim's welfare.

Gratitude

Positive psychology research consistently finds a strong correlation between gratitude and better lives. Gratitude improves one's capacity for joy, appreciation of enjoyable memories, wonderful health, and capability for overcoming challenges.

Signs of Gratitude

- Think about the things in your life for which you are grateful for a while.
- Taking a moment to enjoy everything in your daily life for its beauty and wonder.

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- Praise God for your good health.
- expressing gratitude for someone's contribution to your life.
- Demonstrating gratitude by doing something kind for another person
- Concentrating on the little things that bring you joy and peace in life
- Giving thanks through prayer or meditation.

Benefits of having gratitude

- Improved mental health: Gratitude has been related to a reduction in depression and anxiety symptoms, increasing general psychological well-being.
- Relationships are strengthened by gratitude because it fosters feelings of appreciation and reciprocity, resulting in healthier and more rewarding relationships.
- Increased resilience: Grateful people are more resilient in the face of hardship because they prefer to focus on the positive and find meaning in difficult events.
- Greater physical health: Gratitude is related with lower blood pressure, greater sleep quality, and a stronger immune system, all of which contribute to overall physical health.
- Gratitude fosters a good perspective, which leads to increased sentiments of joy, contentment, and general life satisfaction.

Researchers have examined the relationship between altruism and thankfulness in several studies (e.g., Bartlett & DeSteno (2006), Froh, Bono, & Emmons (2010), McCullough et al. (2008), Schnall, Roper, & Fessler (2010)). Altruism should be studied because it appears to be closely related to the traits that the counselling profession seeks in its counsellors. Altruistic behaviour poses a challenge to ideas about how human social institutions have evolved.

Some have studied direct and indirect reciprocity in attempt to comprehend the development of interpersonal cooperation in society (Boyd & Richerson, 1989). They found that unless the groups are extremely tiny, indirect reciprocity is probably not important. However, Nowak and Roch (2007) have shown that positive emotions like gratitude may have a moderating effect on charitable deeds. Gratitude helps to enhance the link that makes altruistic acts more conceivable in the evolutionary process when contemplating altruistic acts occurring within an evolutionary process in larger populations.

Additionally, some researchers contend that engaging in charitable deeds can increase one's feelings of thankfulness. For instance, a Grant and Gino (2010) study discovered that those who performed acts of kindness reported higher levels of thankfulness and satisfaction.

The literature has also looked into the mechanisms behind the link between thankfulness and altruism. Gratitude, for instance, may boost empathy and perspective-taking, which in turn may encourage altruistic conduct, according to certain studies. (Algoe et al., 2008; McCullough et al., 2008). According to other studies, feeling grateful may increase one's sense of obligation to take care of others and encourage social responsibility. (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006).

Gratitude has been associated with a variety of favourable outcomes and is described as the appreciation and recognition of the wonderful things in one's life. According to studies, being grateful is linked to better levels of subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and happy feelings. (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Wood et al., 2010). Additionally, those who are

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appreciative are more likely to exercise prosocial behaviours like kindness and service to others. Algoe et al. (2008); Bartlett & DeSteno (2006).

Altruism and gratitude are closely related concepts because showing appreciation frequently entails recognizing and appreciating the generosity and compassion of others, which can encourage altruistic inclinations. For instance, being grateful can improve one's desire to assist others and practice prosocial conduct. (McCullough et al., 2002; Tsang et al., 2006). Additionally, studies have shown that being grateful can improve prosocial traits like empathy and compassion. (Froh et al., 2011; Ma et al., 2017).

Objective

- To assess the level of altruism in young adults.
- To assess the level of Gratitude in young adults.
- To explore the relationship/correlation between altruism and Gratitude in young adults.

Hypothesis

H₀ – There exists no relationship between altruism and gratitude

METHODOLOGY

The students were initially briefed on the research and tests. Some preliminary preparations were undertaken prior to the test. The subjects were given a suitable setting. The necessary materials were maintained on hand. Prior to the exam, a good connection was formed with the subject in order for the subject to feel comfortable and at ease. Following the instructions, the subjects were instructed to proceed with the test, and it was ensured that they supplied accurate responses. It was ensured that they gave their consent before the test was administered. The subjects were thanked after the administration.

a) Inclusion criteria

1. Students between the ages of 17 and 20
2. Residents of Raipur, Chhattisgarh, who are students

b) Exclusion criteria

1. Youngsters with a history of mental illness

Sampling method

Initially, a total of 50 students aged 17 years to 20 years, studying in college were selected using stratified random sampling from different institutions.

Tool used

1. **Altruism Scale by S.N. Rai and S. Singh** – The subjects' level of benevolence is evaluated with this test. There are 30 items or statements in all, and there are three possible answers for each one: altruistic, neutral, or egoistic. The exam has a validity score of 0.63 and a reliability score of 0.84. The scores are available between 0 and 60.
2. **GQ-6: The Gratitude Questionnaire** - Six-item self-report survey called the GQ-6 measures a person's tendency to feel grateful. Optimism, life satisfaction, hope, spirituality/religion, forgiveness, empathy, and prosocial behaviour are six personality

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traits that the GQ-6 measures. There are response options on the Likert scale (1 being strongly disagreed and 7 being strongly agreed).

Procedure

The current study is exploratory. It addressed two distinct areas of psychological assessments, namely altruism and gratitude. Gratitude improves one's capacity for joy, appreciation of enjoyable memories, wonderful health, and capability for overcoming challenges. Altruism is the act of genuinely wanting to help others rather than doing so out of obligation, loyalty, or religious duty.

The information is gathered from a population of college students from various institutions. The variables at work in the study are as follows:

- Independent Variable: Altruism
- Dependent Variable: Gratitude

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Altruism of the Samples

N	50
Mean	37.61
SD	6.92

The table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for altruism in a sample of 50 people. The average altruism score in this group is 37.61, indicating a moderate level of altruistic impulses. The standard deviation (SD) of 6.92 indicates that the participants' altruism levels vary.

The distribution of scores suggests that there are individuals in the sample who have higher degrees of altruism than others. Because the mean score is rather high, this group exhibits a good predisposition towards altruistic behaviours.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Gratitude of the Samples

N	50
Mean	29.8
SD	5.97

The descriptive study shown in table 2 of gratitude in a sample of 50 people reveals some intriguing results. The average degree of appreciation in this group is 29.8, indicating a modest level of gratitude. The standard deviation (SD) of 5.97 indicates some variation in the appreciation scores of the subjects.

The mean score is relatively high, this group appears to have a good predisposition towards gratitude. The standard deviation, on the other hand, suggests that there are significant disparities in thankfulness levels among individuals, showing individual variability in how people perceive and express gratitude.

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Table 3. Correlational Analysis between Altruism and Gratitude

Altruism	Pearson Correlation	1	0.87
	Sig (2 tailed)		.542
	N	50	
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	.087	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.542	
	N	50	50

The correlation between the two variables "Altruism" and "Gratitude" was examined, with the results shown in table 3. The two variables have a very slight positive relationship, as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.087. The association could, however, be accidental as the p-value of 0.542 indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

DISCUSSION

The relationship between gratitude and generosity in young adults is a fascinating topic to research. Gratitude and altruism are both desirable traits linked to prosocial behaviour and well-being. According to the correlation analysis, there is no significant association between thankfulness and altruism in young adults. The correlation coefficient of 0.087 indicates a very weak positive connection, and the p-value of 0.542 suggests that it is not statistically significant.

According to this research, gratitude and altruism are not found to be associated among young adults. The findings are not consistent with the previous researches (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Froh, Bono, & Emmons 2010). This might be because just having gratitude does not indicate a person will have altruism.

CONCLUSION

the present exploratory study aimed to investigate the relationship between altruism and gratitude among young adults. The findings indicated that the level of overall altruism among the participants was determined to be Average/Moderate, while the level of gratitude was found to be Average. The correlational research design revealed a positive relationship between altruism and gratitude, as indicated by a Pearson Product Coefficient of 0.542 at a significance level of 0.01. However, it is important to note that this relationship was not found to be statistically significant.

These findings provide initial insights into the connection between altruism and gratitude among young adults. Nevertheless, several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small, which may have limited the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the study utilized self-report measures, which are subject to biases and may not fully capture the complexities of altruism and gratitude. Future research could benefit from larger and more diverse samples, employing a longitudinal design to explore the temporal aspects of the relationship. Furthermore, incorporating objective measures and qualitative methodologies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between altruism and gratitude.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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