

Exploring the Associations between Ethnocentrism, Narcissism and Altruism in the Youth of Today

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ABSTRACT

India is a country known for its distinct culture. Its strength lies in its diversity and it is recognized for its Unity and acceptance of cultural differences. However, nowadays, hate crimes and prejudices are on the rise, especially among the youth, which could be due to the belief that one's group, religion, or culture is better than that of others. Hence the authors felt it was important to investigate ethnocentrism and narcissism among the youth. The study examined the relationships between ethnocentrism, narcissism and altruism among high school and college students. The study also investigated if there were any gender differences in ethnocentrism, narcissism, and altruism among students. 210 high school and college students from 6 Schools and 5 colleges of Chennai city completed Narcissistic Personality Inventory – 16 (NPI -16) (Ames.D., Rose.P., Anderson.C.P (2006) Ethnocentrism Scale (Neulip.J.W., McCroskery J.C. (2012), Adapted Self Report Altruism Scale (Wilt.P., Boleman.C., (2009) Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to investigate the relationships between ethnocentrism, narcissism and altruism. Independent samples t -test was computed to examine gender differences in the three variables. The analysis revealed that ethnocentrism was significantly and positively correlated with narcissism and significantly, negatively correlated with altruism. Narcissism was significantly, negatively correlated with altruism. Gender differences were observed for all the three variables. Male students were more narcissistic and ethnocentric compared to female students. Females were more altruistic than males.

Keywords: *Narcissism, Ethnocentrism, Altruism, Youth, Gender differences.*

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India is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse countries in the world. It has seen a fusion of cultures across time. These ethnic distinctions of the community leads to the emergence of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism has been described as considering one's ethnic group to be higher in status, rank and degree. Ethnocentrism has been prevalent all over the world for ages, the reasons for it may include, intolerance to diverse races, religions, cultures, customs, ethics and behaviors. Ethnocentrism can be viewed as a defense against both real and imagined threats. The fact that religion is a crucial part of one's culture cannot be denied and it may play a key role in the emergence of ethnocentrism. Some researchers are currently investigating the possibility that narcissism and ethnocentrism are comparable as well as that individual narcissism assumes a key part in deciding the probability that one tends to be ethnocentric. In our study we set to find out the relationships between ethnocentrism, narcissism and altruism.

1. Ethnocentrism can be conceptualized as group self-centeredness.
2. Narcissism is described as being self-absorbed, and having a high opinion of oneself in all aspects. Narcissism can be conceptualized as personal self-centeredness.
3. Altruism can be described as unconditional humanitarianism that looks forward to the welfare of others without considering selfish needs of one's own.

Narcissism and Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentric people tend to be self-confident, conceited and are impertinent to other groups, cultures or their views which may further lead them to have narcissistic tendencies and having high self-adoration. Narcissism can be conceptualized as personal self-centeredness whereas ethnocentrism can be conceptualized as group self-centeredness. Studies have shown a strong positive correlation between ethnocentrism and narcissism (i.e.) highly ethnocentric people are more likely to be narcissistic. (Bizumic and Duckitt, 2003)

Ethnocentrism and Altruism

Individuals display altruism irrespective of their self-image, but highly ethnocentric people show high self-image and low concern for others. Studies have shown that, highly ethnocentric people show low altruistic tendencies. (Clark, Lin and Maher, 2015)

Narcissism and Altruism

With the rise in narcissism, people neglect to help other people, unless they believe they will be acknowledged for doing so or will have a prompt gain and show low benevolence and less helping tendencies.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objectives of the study were

1. To assess the level of narcissism, ethnocentrism and altruism among students.
2. To investigate if there were any gender differences in narcissism, ethnocentrism and altruism among students.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were formulated,

1. There will be no significant relationship between altruism and narcissism among students.
2. There will be no significant relationship between altruism and ethnocentrism among students.
3. There will be no significant relationship between narcissism and ethnocentrism among students.
4. There will be no significant difference in altruism among male and female students.
5. There will be no significant differences in ethnocentrism among male and female students.
6. There will be no significant difference in narcissism among male and female students.

Research Design

The research design was an Expost –facto research.

Sample

The sample consisted of 210 high school and college students selected from 6 schools and 5 colleges from Chennai city, in the age range of 16 to 22 years. Of the sample 105 were males and 105 were females.

Description of the tools

1. Narcissistic Personality Inventory – 16 (NPI -16 ; Ames, Rose, and Anderson, 2006) is a shortened form of the NPI-40 by Raskin and Terry (1998). NPI-16 is a 16 item scale designed to measure the subclinical Narcissism. The respondents make choices between statements differing in narcissistic content (e.g “ I insist on getting the respect due to me” vs “I usually get the respect I deserve”. Scores are obtained by summing the computed proportion of responses consistent with Narcissism. NPI-16 has shown a meaningful validity and is also reliable (0.72 and $r= 0.90$).
2. Ethnocentrism Scale (Neulip, J.W., McCroskery J.C., 2002) Ethnocentrism is a 22 item scale designed to measure ethnocentrism. Respondents report their level of ethnocentrism using a 5 point Likert format (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral,4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. A higher score indicates higher ethnocentrism. This scale has a satisfactory reliability in the range of 0.80 and 0.90.
3. Adapted Self Report Altruism Scale,P.C.Rushton (original, 1981), Peter Wilt and Chris Boleman (Adapted Version, 2009) is a 14 item scale which is designed to assess the intensions related to altruistic behavior among population such as High School, College, Young Adults, and Adults. Respondents report their tendency to engage in Altruistic behavior using a 5 point Likert response format (0= Never, 1= Once, 2= More than once, 3= Often, 4= Very Often). Scores are obtaining by summing all the item ratings together. Higher scores indicate greater altruism. Adapted Self report Altruism Scale has shown a satisfactory reliability of 0.80.

Statistics used

1. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between variables.

2. Independent samples t test was used to examine gender differences in the three variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 – Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between ethnocentrism and narcissism among college students.

Variables	N	Correlation Co-efficient
Ethnocentrism and Narcissism	210	0.253**

**p = 0.000

The correlation co-efficient between ethnocentrism and narcissism among students is $r(208) = 0.253$, $p=0.000$. This indicates that there is a significant, positive correlation between ethnocentrism and narcissism. Thus, it can be inferred that, as narcissistic tendency increases, ethnocentrism also increases in the young adults. Hence it is evident that there is a strong, positive association between personal self-centeredness and group self-centeredness. This finding is supported by the study done by Bizumic and Duckitt (2003) who examined the relationship between narcissism and ethnocentrism in 264 undergraduate students and found that people who are narcissistic also tend to be ethnocentric.

Table 2 – Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between ethnocentrism and altruism among college students.

Variables	N	Correlation Co-efficient
Ethnocentrism and Altruism	210	-0.247**

**p = 0.000

The correlation co-efficient between ethnocentrism and altruism among students is $r(208) = -0.247$, $p=0.000$. This indicates that there is a significant, negative correlation between ethnocentrism and altruism. Thus, it can be inferred that altruistic tendency decreases with an increase in ethnocentrism. With the rise in ethnocentrism, people are less likely to engage in helping behaviors. The findings also suggest that people can have low social conscience with an increase in ethnocentrism. This finding is supported by the study done by Clark, Lin and Maher(2015) who examined the relationship between altruism and ethnocentrism in 281 students and found that higher levels of ethnocentrism were linked to low levels of altruism.

Table 3 – Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between narcissism and altruism among college students.

Variables	N	Correlation Co-efficient
Narcissism and Altruism	210	-0.254**

**p = 0.000

The correlation co efficient between narcissism and altruism among students is $r(208) = -0.254$, $p=0.000$. This indicates that there is a significant, negative correlation between narcissism and altruism. Thus, it can be inferred that altruistic tendency decreases with an

increase in narcissism. The findings of the study suggests that narcissistic people are conceited and do not give importance to the needs of others.

Table 4 – Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value for ethnocentrism among male and female college students.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Male	105	45.36	5.32	2.67
Female	105	42.63	9.05	

$p = 0.008$

The results indicate that there are significant gender differences in ethnocentrism $t(208) = 2.67$, $p = 0.008$. The results seem to show that gender differences exist for ethnocentrism male students ($M=45.36$, $SD=5.32$) seem to be more ethnocentric than female students ($M=42.63$, $SD=9.05$). The study reveals that male students may tend to believe that their group, religion or culture is better than that of others. Similar findings were reported by Markus. K. (2010) who reported that men are higher in ethnocentrism than women in a study conducted on 398 undergraduate students in the U.S.

Table 5 – Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value for narcissism among male and female college students.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Male	105	9.32	2.47	8.46
Female	105	6.25	2.79	

$p = 0.000$

The results indicate that there are significant gender differences in narcissism $t(208) = 8.46$, $p=0.000$. The results seem to show that gender differences exist for narcissism male students ($M=9.32$, $SD=2.47$) seem to be more narcissistic than female students ($M=6.25$, $SD=2.79$). The study reveals that male students tend to believe that they deserve special attention; may seek and expect praise from others; exaggerate their potentials and achievements and may lack the ability to empathize. This finding is supported by the study done by Tomoko (2013) who reported that men had significantly higher scores for self-grandiosity than women among 354 college students.

Table 6 – Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value for altruism among male and female college students.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Male	105	17.99	7.81	5.66
Female	105	24.97	9.95	

$p = 0.000$

The results indicate that there are significant gender differences in altruism $t(208) = 5.66$, $p=0.000$. The results seem to show that gender differences exist for altruism, female students ($M=24.97$, $SD=9.95$) seem to be more altruistic than male students ($M=17.99$, $SD=7.81$).The

study reveals that female students tend to believe that they have a need to help others, may be more concerned about the welfare of other people; put the needs of others before their own. This finding is supported by Khachatryan et al.(2015) who examined gender differences in altruism in a large sample of children and adolescents ,aged 7 – 16 years in Armenia and found that boys are less altruistic than girls These findings are contradicted by a study done by Shah and Ali (2012) where their results have concluded that men are more altruistic than women.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a significant positive relationship between narcissism and ethnocentrism.
2. There is a significant negative relationship between ethnocentrism and altruism.
3. There is a significant negative relationship between narcissism and altruism.
4. There is a significant gender difference in ethnocentrism. Males are more ethnocentric compared to females.
5. There is a significant gender difference in narcissism. Males are more narcissistic compared to females.
6. There is a significant gender difference in altruism. Males are less altruistic compared to females.

Implications

The results of the study reveal that ethnocentrism is significantly, positively correlated with narcissism. Narcissism and ethnocentrism are significantly, negatively correlated with altruism. Thus it can be seen that narcissism and ethnocentrism seem to be linked to reduced helping behavior. These findings are disconcerting and indicate a need for some kind of psychosocial intervention and training programs to enhance tolerance and respect for other ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

Limitations

1. The research was done with only 210 students.
2. The geographical area was restricted to the state capital- Chennai.

Suggestions for further research

1. A large sample can be used.
2. Other Psychological variables related to ethnocentrism can be investigated.
3. Research can also be conducted in other age groups.

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