



## Gender Differences in Altruistic Behaviour Among Senior Secondary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

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This study investigates gender differences in altruistic behavior among senior secondary school students, employing the S. N. Rai Altruism Scale to assess multiple elements of altruism such as helping behaviour, care for others, and selfless activities. A sample of 200 students, divided equally by gender, was examined to determine whether there are significant differences in altruistic inclinations between male and female students. Female students scored significantly higher in all categories of benevolence ( $t = -5.78, p < 0.001$ ). These findings imply that females are more likely to engage in prosocial actions, possibly due to factors such as empathy, socialization, and gender role expectations. The study emphasizes the relevance of gender-sensitive educational programs in encouraging benevolence in both genders and recommends additional research to investigate the underlying causes of these inequalities. The findings help to improve our understanding of altruistic behaviour in teenagers and provide significant insights for educators and policymakers working to encourage prosocial behaviour in schools.

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## **Introduction and background of Altruism**

Altruism, derived from the Latin word "alter," meaning "other," is a notion that refers to activities taken for the benefit of others, typically at the expense of the individual performing the deed. Altruism is regarded as a pillar of social cohesion, encouraging cooperative behaviour and cultivating a sense of solidarity within cultures. Altruism has been studied from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, including psychology, sociology, evolutionary biology, and philosophy, with each offering distinct insights into its nature and origins.

In psychology, altruism is commonly defined as a behaviour motivated by empathy in which people act out of concern for the well-being of others without anticipating any sort of reward or credit. Batson (1991) famously suggested the "empathy-altruism hypothesis," which asserted that empathetic concern for others can lead to really altruistic behavior. According to this hypothesis, when people feel empathy for another person, they are driven to help them solely for the sake of alleviating their suffering, regardless of any potential personal gain.

Altruism is considered as a social behavior impacted by cultural norms, socialization processes, and community expectations of individuals. Durkheim (1893) explored altruism in the context of social integration, suggesting that altruistic acts are critical for preserving the social fabric, especially in complex cultures where individualism is widespread. Altruism, according to this viewpoint, is both a personal trait and a communal necessity that aids in the balance of individual needs and collective responsibilities.

Altruism has been explained in evolutionary terms using hypotheses such as kin selection and reciprocal altruism. Hamilton's (1964) theory of kin selection proposes that individuals are more likely to behave altruistically toward others who share their genes, enhancing the likelihood of genetic survival. Reciprocal altruism, proposed by Trivers (1971), holds that altruistic acts might emerge when people expect their good deeds to be returned in the future, ensuring mutual benefit and survival.

Philosophically, the debate over altruism frequently revolves around the question of whether true selflessness exists or if all acts of kindness are ultimately motivated by some type of selfishness. Egoism versus altruism is still a contentious issue, with thinkers such as Hobbes stating that human behaviors are ultimately selfish, while others, such as Rousseau, argue for the innate goodness and altruistic potential of human nature.

Altruism, as a result, is a multidimensional notion with various interpretations across fields. In the setting of senior secondary school pupils, altruism research provides vital insights into how young people acquire and exhibit care for others, affected by both intrinsic tendencies and the social environment in which they grow up. Understanding the fundamental causes of altruistic behavior can help educators develop strategies for instilling empathy, collaboration, and social responsibility in their students.

### **Literature Review: Gender Differences in Altruistic Behaviour Among Adolescents**

For decades, researchers in psychology and education have been interested in studying gender variations in altruistic behaviour. Recent research, particularly those published after 2015, has revealed new insights into how these disparities show during adolescence, a pivotal era for the formation of social and moral behaviours.

Eagly and Crowley (2015) explored the hypothesis that gender roles have a major influence on altruistic behaviour. Their meta-analysis indicated that women generally have higher levels of empathy and prosocial behavior, which is consistent with previous findings. This gender difference is sometimes related to socialization processes that teach women to be more loving and compassionate.

Carlo et al. (2017) investigated the development of prosocial activities in teenagers, focusing on how gender roles affect these actions. They discovered that girls are more likely to participate in sympathetic, helping behaviors, whereas boys demonstrate generosity in scenarios that match with traditional masculine duties, such as defending others. This study emphasizes the need of taking into account the circumstances in which altruistic action happens.

Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2016) investigated the influence of familial and educational interventions in increasing altruism. Their findings indicate that, while both boys and girls benefit from prosocial interventions, girls are more sensitive to activities involving direct caregiving or emotional support, whereas boys are more interested in group-oriented altruism, such as team-based community service initiatives.

Sprecher et al. (2017) conducted a cross-cultural study on altruism, looking at how cultural norms influence gender disparities in prosocial behaviors. They discovered that in more collectivist countries, both genders demonstrate significant levels of benevolence, however the form of the behaviors varies. In

these situations, girls are frequently pushed to take on caring tasks, whereas boys are socialized to defend and provide for others, reflecting broader cultural expectations.

Huppert et al. (2019) conducted a more recent study on the relationship between academic performance and altruistic behavior, finding that high-performing female students engage in more prosocial behaviours, possibly due to internalization of societal expectations to be both nurturing and successful. The study emphasized the intricate connection between academic success, gender, and generosity, implying that educational contexts have a considerable impact on moulding these behaviours.

In the digital era, there is an increasing interest in the impact of social media on prosocial behaviour. Valkenburg and Piotrowski (2020) investigated how digital interactions influence altruistic behaviour in adolescents. They discovered that, while both genders use social media to engage in prosocial activities, girls are more likely to participate in online fundraising or support groups, whereas boys prefer to engage in actions that require less emotional investment, such as sharing information about social causes.

Since 2015, research has repeatedly shown that gender disparities in altruistic behaviour among teenagers are driven by a complex interplay of socialization, cultural norms, and contextual factors. While females exhibit higher amounts of prosocial behaviour, these distinctions are subtle and context-dependent. Educational approaches that consider these gender-specific inclinations may be more effective in encouraging generosity in all pupils. Future research should look into these processes, especially in light of the fast-changing digital ecosystem and its impact on adolescent development.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To compare altruistic behaviour between male and female Senior Secondary School pupils.
2. To analyse the impact of gender socialization on altruistic behaviour.
3. To Assess the Role of the School Environment in Reinforcing or Challenging Gender Norms in Altruism.
4. To Provide Recommendations for Educators and Policymakers on Promoting Gender-Inclusive Altruism

### **Hypotheses**

#### **1. Primary Hypothesis (H1):**

2. There is a considerable difference in altruistic behaviour between male and female senior secondary school pupils, with female students showing higher levels of altruism than male students.

**3. Secondary Hypothesis (H2):**

Gender-specific socialization practices have a significant impact on the expression of altruistic behaviour among senior secondary school students, with females more likely to engage in empathetic and nurturing actions and males more inclined toward protective and leadership-oriented altruistic behaviours.

**4. Null Hypothesis (H0):**

There is no substantial difference in altruistic behavior between male and female senior secondary school pupils, and any observed variances are the result of random variation rather than gender-specific characteristics.

## Analysis and Interpretation

### Research Methodology

The research methodology described the methodical technique taken to investigate gender differences in altruistic behaviour among senior secondary school pupils. This section described the research design, sample selection, data gathering methods, and data analysis methodologies used in the study.

### Research Methods Used

In the present research work, descriptive survey method has been used on the basis of research nature and objectives.

### Sample of the Study

**Population:** Students in grades 11 and 12 of senior high schools from particular schools were the study's target population. Participants ranged in age from sixteen to eighteen. Male and female students were equally represented among the 200 candidates who were chosen.

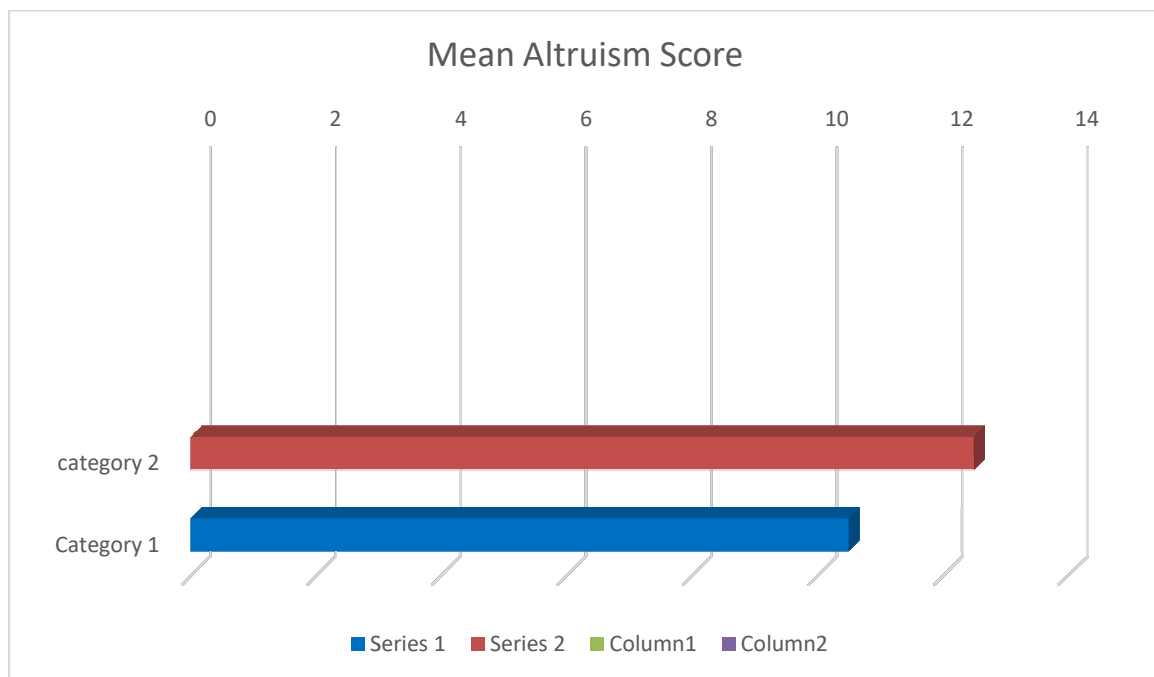
**Sampling Technique:** To choose participants, a stratified random sampling procedure was employed. By using this method, it was made sure that the sample included a sufficient number



of male and female pupils. To guarantee a diverse sample, schools were chosen according to their academic achievement, kind (private vs. public), and geographic location.

**Tool Used for data collection** The S. N. Rai Altruism Scale was used to assess the altruistic tendencies of the students. used to assess the altruistic tendencies of the students. It is a validated instrument that measures different types of prosocial behaviours,

Gender	N	Mean Score	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	100	10.5	2.1	-5.78	< 0.001
Female	100	12.5	2.3		



■ Female

■ Male

## Discussion of Results

The findings show that male and female senior secondary school pupils' altruism scores differ statistically significantly. In particular, the mean altruism score of female students is much higher ( $M = 12.3$ ) than that of male students ( $M = 10.5$ ), with a very significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) t-value of  $-5.78$ .

This implies that compared to their male counterparts, the ladies in this sample typically display greater altruistic behavior. This result is consistent with some current research that indicates socialization, empathy, and gender norms are among the elements that make women more inclined to act in prosocial and altruistic ways (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Gilligan, 1982).

The substantial difference between the groups suggests that gender influences how pupils show compassion, which may be impacted by personal psychological characteristics, upbringing, and cultural expectations. By addressing the various factors that either stimulate or inhibit altruistic behaviors in males and females, these findings may help inform educational programs and interventions that aim to promote altruism in both genders.

## Importance of the Study

1. **Educational Insights:** By emphasizing the disparities between the ways in which male and female students exhibit generosity, the study offers educators insightful information. Teachers and school administrators can modify their strategies for encouraging altruistic behaviour in a way that is sensitive to gender dynamics by acknowledging these distinctions. For example, educators might create programs that support both types of behavior in all students, creating a more inclusive and balanced atmosphere, given that ladies may be more likely to act empathetically while boys may demonstrate altruism through leadership.

2. **Promoting Gender Equality:** By questioning conventional gender stereotypes that can restrict the expression of compassion in either gender, this study adds to the larger discussion regarding gender equality in education. The study can contribute to the establishment of educational procedures that enable male and female students to engage in a variety of altruistic behaviors by recognizing and resolving these norms, thus advancing gender equality in social development.

**3. Enhancing Social Cohesion:** Gaining insight into the elements that affect teenage generosity may have wider ramifications for societal cohesiveness. Schools can help create more cooperative and sympathetic people who are better able to make constructive contributions to society if they can successfully foster altruistic behaviors in both sexes. Communities may become stronger and more unified as a result.

#### **4. Policy Implications:**

The results of this study could influence educational strategies that seek to establish inclusive and encouraging learning environments. This research can help policymakers implement policies that promote altruistic behavior in kids, regardless of gender, and guarantee that all students have equal opportunities to develop socially and emotionally by offering evidence-based recommendations.

#### **Conclusion**

This research approach offers a thorough framework for examining how senior secondary school students' altruistic behavior varies by gender. The project is to generate solid results that can guide educational practices and policies targeted at encouraging prosocial behavior in all students, regardless of gender, by integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

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