

Does Receiving Promote Giving? Gratitude as a predictor of Altruism via Happiness

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ABSTRACT

The current trends in psychology focus on the strength and impact of positive virtues on human behavior and their ability to make an individual more resourceful and efficient. The present study assesses the relationship between gratitude and altruism in order to throw light upon how being grateful might make a person more willing to be concerned for others and put that concern in his behaviors. The present research has also explored the mediating effect of happiness on altruism and gratitude. The research was conducted on 100 emerging adults, including 50 males and 50 females. The psychological tools included Self-Report Altruism Scale, The Gratitude Questionnaire and the Subjective Happiness Scale. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between Altruism and Gratitude ($r = .444$, $p < .01$); between Altruism and Happiness ($r = 0.841$); and between Gratitude and happiness ($r = 0.751$). The results of the study revealed that happiness does not have any mediating effect on the relationship between altruism and gratitude showing that gratitude as a virtue is capable enough to instill altruistic behaviors in people. The study has its immediate implication in helping academicians and students inferring how the behavior of giving and serving others can trigger happiness and how receiving help from others and being thankful of that can foster happiness specifically in Indian context as very less researches have been done collaborating these variables.

Key-Words- Altruism, Gratitude and Happiness.

INTRODUCTION

Altruism:

Human beings are considered a superior living race because of several reasons, one being the ability to identify with the joy and anguish of others and help them intensify their happiness and reduce their pain. Characteristic to this ability is the virtue of altruism. Coined by the French philosopher and sociologist Auguste Comte, altruism is a behavior that is aimed at benefiting another person. It refers to a motive for helping behavior that is primarily intended to palliate another person's distress, with little or no regard for the helper's self-interest. Altruistic help is uncoerced, intentional, and impelled by the concern for another person's welfare. When help is given for altruistic reasons, the helper does not expect repayment, reciprocity, gratitude, recognition, or any other benefits.

The term altruism was presented as an antonym for self-centeredness to refer to the aggregate of allocentric instincts in humans.

Helping others also leads to an increase in the sense of self-worth of people. Nearly all blood donor in Jane Piliavin's research agreed that giving blood "makes you feel good about yourself and "gives you a feeling of self-satisfaction" (1990, Piliavin). This feeling of satisfaction assists in explaining why some people indulge themselves in acts of kindness for strangers whom they will never see again. It has also been found that youth engaged in community service projects, school-based "service learning" or tutoring children evolve social skills and positive social values, They are at noticeably less risk for delinquency, pregnancy, and school dropout and are more likely to become engaged citizens (Piliavin,2003; Andersen, S., 1998).

Gratitude-

The term gratitude originated from the Latin word 'gratia', which implies some variants of grace, gratefulness, and graciousness (Emmons, McCullough, & Tsang, 2003). Gratitude surfaces upon acknowledging that one has received a positive result from another individual who behaved in a way that brings efforts and costs to him or her; valuable to the recipient, and intentionally rendered. Gratitude has important implications both for societal functioning and for collective well-being. In this regard, gratitude can be considered as a vital civic virtue. The sentiment which most immediately and directly prompts us to reward, is gratitude. An attitude of gratitude may be one means by which tragedies are transformed into opportunities for growth, being thankful not so much for the circumstance but rather for the skills that will come from dealing with it. Reminding oneself to "be grateful" or to maintain a grateful attitude might also be a common way of coping with particularly stressful life circumstances.

In her classic work, Klein (1957) argued that the person experiencing gratitude is protected from the destructive impulses of envy and greed. Conversely, envy is a breeding ground for ingratitude. The practice of gratitude as a spiritual discipline (a "thank-you therapy") has been suggested as a cure to excessive materialism and its attendant negative emotions of envy, resentment, disappointment, and bitterness (Clapp, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Schimmel, 1997).

Happiness:

The term happiness encompasses a range of positive emotions including delight, pride, satisfaction, and gratitude. The psychological and philosophical pursuit of happiness began in China, India and Greece nearly 2,500 years ago with Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, and Aristotle. Researchers classify happiness as either being hedonic or eudaimonic. These schools of thought are largely attributed to the Greek philosophers Aristippus and Aristotle, respectively. The notion of hedonic happiness supports the idea that when pleasant experiences surpass the painful or negative ones, a person is likely to be happy and content while the eudaimonic view emphasizes on the importance of self-realization and finding a meaning in life in order to be happy.

There have been ample researches which have highlighted the link between altruism and well-being indicating that the joy of conducting an act of selfless kindness stipulates profound contentment (Seligman 2002; Myers 2000). Particularly in adults, the inner rewards of altruism including feeling good about oneself after donating blood or helping pick up someone's dropped materials can surpass negative states of mind (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Baumann, 1981; Williamson & Clark, 1989).

A significant relation between gratitude and happiness has also been supported by several researches. In a study conducted by Witvliet and others, the grateful remembering condition prompted significant increases in the states of hope and happiness.

Experience of gratitude can encourage acts of altruism as well. A study by Karns, Moore & Mayr (2017) shows that self-reported gratitude and altruism were associated with “neural pure altruism” in ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC) and nucleus accumbens and gratitude journaling increased the neural pure altruism response in the VMPFC.

METHODOLOGY

- Aims and Objectives
 - To explore the relationship between Gratitude and Altruism.
 - To explore the relationship between Happiness and Altruism.
 - To explore the relationship between Happiness and Gratitude.
 - To determine the mediational effect of happiness on gratitude and altruism.

- Hypotheses

H1. There will be a positive relationship between Happiness and Altruism.

H2. There will be a positive relationship between Happiness and Gratitude.

H3. There will be a positive relationship between Altruism and Gratitude.

H4 Happiness will mediate the relationship between gratitude and altruism.

- Sample

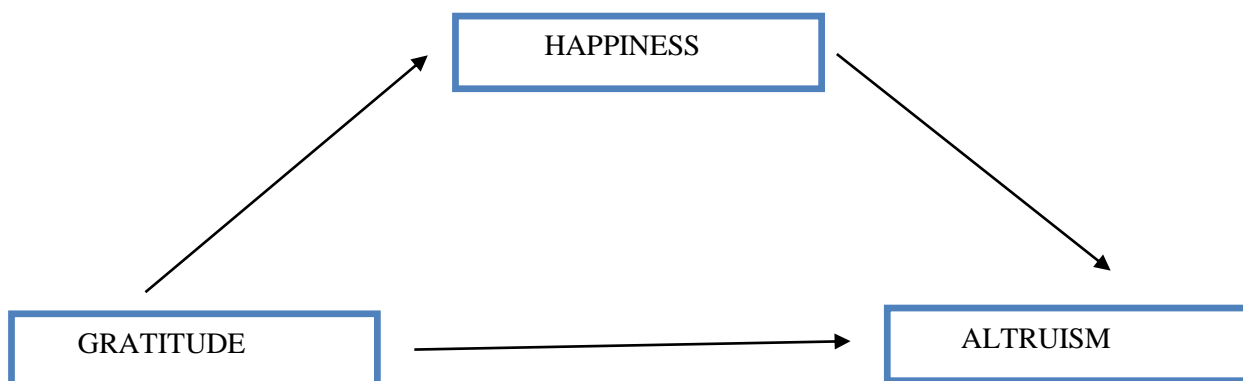
Sample for the present study comprised 100 emerging adults (18-25 years of age) including 50 males and 50 females. Purposive sampling technique was used in the present study.

Criteria for Inclusion: Each participant was a regular student of a recognized college or university, was unmarried, had basic understanding of English, was not suffering from any chronic illness.

Criteria for exclusion: Students who were pursuing their studies through correspondence, were married, didn't have the basic understanding of English, having a chronic physical or mental illness were excluded from the study.

- Research Design

The design of the study is Causal Research Design.



- Tools of the Study

1. Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA-scale): (Khanna, Singh & Rushton, 1992) : The scale consists of 20 items to be answered on 5 point likert scale ranging from never to very often. The test reports satisfactory levels of internal consistency reliability and split-half reliability.
2. The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6): (McCullough, Emmons, Tsang, 2002) The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) is a six-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life. Participants answer 6 items on a 1 to 7 scale (1 = "strongly disagree", 7 = "strongly agree"). The reliability coefficient of the test was found to be 0.75.
3. Subjective Happiness Scale: (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999)

The Subjective Happiness Scale is also known as General Happiness Scale. The SHS is a 4-item Scale was designed as a brief index of subjective happiness or well-being. Each item is completed by choosing one of 7 options that finish a given sentence fragment. The options are different for each of the four questions. The test-retest reliability ranged from 0.55 to 0.90

- Procedure

Different colleges of Jaipur were visited and data were collected after getting required permission.

- Statistical tools

Correlation

Regression

Mediational analysis

RESULT TABLE

Table 4.1: showing Mean and SD's of Altruism, Gratitude and happiness (n=100)

Variables	Mean	SD
Altruism	69.21	13.536
Gratitude	28.52	4.076
Happiness	19.79	4.593

Table 4.2: Co relational analysis showing relationship between Altruism and Gratitude

Variables →	Altruism	Gratitude
↓		
Altruism	1	.444**
Gratitude	.444**	1

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table 4.2 shows correlation between Altruism and Gratitude. From this table it is evident that Altruism and gratitude has positive significant relationship with each other ($r = .444, p < .01$).

Table 4.3: Co relational analysis showing relationship between Altruism and Happiness

Variables →	Altruism	Happiness
↓		
Altruism	1	0.841
Happiness	0.841	1

Table 4.3 shows correlation between Altruism and Happiness. From this table it is evident that Altruism has positive significant relationship with Happiness ($r = 0.020$) and Happiness has positive significant relationship with Altruism ($r = 0.841$)

Table 4.4: Co relational analysis showing relationship between Gratitude and Happiness

Variables →	Gratitude	Happiness
↓		
Gratitude	1	0.751
Happiness	0.751	1

Table 4.4 shows correlation between Gratitude and Happiness. From this table it is evident that Gratitude has positive significant relationship with Happiness ($r = 0.032$) and Happiness has positive significant relationship with Gratitude ($r = 0.751$)

Table 4.5: Linear Regression Analysis (prediction of altruism by gratitude)

Table 4.5.1: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Standard error of the estimate
1	.444a	0.198	0.198	12.190

Table 4.5.2: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficient (β)	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error			
1	27.112	8.658	0.444	3.131	0.002
(constant)					
Gratitude	1.476	0.301	0.444	4.911	0.000

Table 4.5.1 & 4.5.2 shows that predictor variable of the study i.e. Gratitude is significantly predicting Altruism in college students

Table 4.6: Mediation Analysis showing Effect of happiness on gratitude and altruism

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
HAPPINESS	.0006	.0518	-.1545	.0588

X- Happiness; **Y-** Altruism

Table 4.6 shows that mediation analysis to assertion that positive happiness has no any mediated effect on altruism. Since the LLCI (-.1545) and ULCI (.0588) range contain zero; there is no indirect effect. Therefore, gratitude can promote altruism directly.

DISCUSSION

Gratitude is viewed as a prized human propensity. It entails some variant of grace, gratefulness, and graciousness. Altruism refers to a motive for helping behavior that is primarily intended to relieve another person's distress, with little or no regard for the helper's self-interest. Altruistic help is voluntary, deliberate, and motivated by concern for another person's welfare. According to Waterman, Happiness is based on lifelong pursuit of meaningful, developmental goals, the key to the good life.

The purpose of the research was to highlight the importance of the Positive virtues such as altruism and gratitude, and how they are related to happiness. The sample was 100 college students including 50 males and 50 females. The study proved the hypothesis.

Analysis of results revealed that gratitude and altruism are positively correlated to each other with the correlation of $r = .444$ ($p < .01$). Many previous researches have also found similar results that support gratitude as an important component of pro-social behavior and suggest that gratitude may contain an altruistic component, consistent with its relational function (Tsang & Martin, 2017). Researches also revealed that a positive mood of relief can dramatically boost helping (Poland, Dariusz Dolinski and Richard Nawrat, 1998)

The analysis of results also revealed that Altruism has positively correlation with ($r = 0.841$). Many other studies highlight the link between altruism and positive well-being. The number of experimental studies has shown that altruistic people are happier and happy people made more efforts to help others (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Baumann,

1981; Williamson & Clark, 1989). A positive mood is, in turn, conducive to positive thoughts and positive self-esteem, which predispose us to positive behavior. (Betkowitz, 1987; Cunningham & others, 1990; Isen & others, 1978). Altruistic emotions and behaviors are associated with greater well-being, health, and longevity (Post, 2005). According to research conducted by Williamson & Clark (1989), inner rewards of altruism eliminate the bad moods, guilt feelings and improve positive feelings.

The results of the study indicate that there exist a positive relationship between happiness and gratitude. Gratitude has positive significant relationship with Happiness ($r = 0.751$). Various previously done studies also support the finding of the present study claiming that gratitude is the key to happiness (Chesterton, 1924). It is also evident that grateful thinking improved mood and findings also support the theory that gratitude is an affective trait important to subjective wellbeing (Watkins, Woodward, Stone & Kolts, 2003).

According to the analysis of results, gratitude is significantly predicting altruism. The result of mediation shows that there is no mediated effect of happiness on altruism. The LLCI (-.1545) and ULCI (.0588) range contain zero; there is no indirect effect. Gratefulness can directly encourage helping behavior.

Implications

The present study will serve as a useful literature both for the academicians and students for increasing insights in understanding of Altruistic behavior. Also it can be a beneficial tool for future researchers for exploring the relation exist between Gratefulness, Helping and Happiness.

The results imply that the altruistic behavior can boosts happiness. Altruism and Gratitude can significantly enhance positive moods and eliminate the guilt and other negative moods. The role of gratitude in altruism can be assessed more precisely by invention of new tools of psychological assessment. Lastly the results are of appreciable utility in the developing field of positive psychology especially in the Indian context.

Suggestions

- Broader age group must have been taken from adults i.e. ages after 25.
- Even though college students were taken into consideration but certain groups like married, physically handicapped students can also be taken as a sample.

Limitations

The present study was found to have the following limitations: -

- Questionnaire as a tool for data collection is prone to have socially desirable responses.
- Quantitative measures of data collection were used. Qualitative measures like interview, case study method were not used for data collection.
- The sample size was less in number

Conclusion

On the basis of the above discussed results, Helping behavior and Gratefulness has positive relationship and between Gratefulness and happiness. Furthermore it has been found that happiness has no indirect mediating effect on altruism and gratitude. Holistically, it can be concluded that there exist a significantly positive relationship between the Altruism, gratitude and Happiness.

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