

## **ALTRUISM, MOOD, AND HELPING BEHAVIOUR**

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### **Abstract**

Ninety-six undergraduates were administered an altruism scale after which they were individually induced with the positive, neutral, or negative mood states and requested to help drug addicts by contributing suggestions to rehabilitate them. In A (males and females) x B (high and low altruism) x C (different mood states) factorial design, effect of different variables were observed on the dependent variable of time taken by Ss to write down suggestions. All the main effects were found to be significant. As hypothesized, females devoted significantly more time than males to write suggestions for rehabilitate drug addicts. High altruistic Ss also helped more than the low altruistic Ss. Again, Ss induced with the positive mood state helped more as compared to those induced with the neutral and negative mood states.

Key words: Altruism, mood-induction, helping behavior, adolescent, drug addicts.

### **Introduction**

Altruism or 'selfless help' functions as a mediating factor with a number of variables in real life situations. For example, it has been observed that a person's mood or feeling changes his or her tendency to be helpful. in different situation. It is established through various findings that Ss induced with the positive or pleasant mood states express more helping behavior than those induced with the neutral or negative mood states.

Based on a vast research literature available regarding altruistic personality and mood states, contributing to concrete help (Rani, 1990), the present study sought to determine altruistic subjects help under different mood inductions in the form of contribution the suggestions to rehabilitate drug addicts. It proceeded with the premise that the high altruistic males and females, as compared to the low altruistic males and females, would spend more time to write such suggestions. Also, in line with general

observation, females would devote more time than males. Further, Ss would help more under positive mood induction than under neutral and negative mood inductions.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

Three hundred undergraduates (males = 150, females = 150), aged between 16-19 years, from the two colleges situated at Rohtak (Haryana), were selected randomly and on the basis of their willingness to participate in the research study.

### **Design**

An A (high and low altruism) x B (males and females) x C (positive, neutral and negative mood states) factorial design, with 8 replicates in each cell (N = 96), was employed to study the interactional effects of these variables on the helping behavior (time given to write suggestions) of Ss.

### **Stimulus materials**

The following stimulus materials were used:

1. The modified Hindi version of Rushton et al. (1981) Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA- scale) developed by Sangwan (1988).
2. Songs and musical tunes intended to induce positive or negative and neutral mood states, respectively.

### **Procedure**

All the 300 Ss were first administered, in group of 15 to 20 Ss, the SRA-scale as per standard instructions. On the basis of scores, they were categorized as high, middle, and low altruism scores, the middle altruism scores category was eliminated later on in order to allow comparison only between the high and low altruism score categories. The male Ss who scored between 72-100 were designated as high altruism scores (M=79.36) and those who scored between 21 to 57 were designated as low altruism scorers

(M=46.69). The female Ss who scored between 79-100 were designated as high scores (M=86.87) and those scoring between 45 to 68 were designated as low scorers (M=61.83). Forty-eight male and 48 female Ss were then randomly selected out of the two altruism scores categories. These Ss were later individually induced with the positive, neutral, or negative mood states as per design given above.

Greitmayer (2009) and North et al., (2004) who induced different moods in Ss by listening them to different types of music, positive and negative mood states were respectively induced by means of happy and sad songs of about 10 minute duration in each case. These songs were initially tried out on a small sample of male and female undergraduates and found to arouse happy or sad feelings as per the highest ratings obtained from Ss with respect to potentiality to induce different mood states. The neutral mood was likewise induced by means of a simple musical tune initially found to evoke a mixed feeling of happiness and sadness, or a neutral (undecided) mood. While the happy and sad mood-inducing sets of songs were different for male and female Ss, the neutral mood inducing tune the same for both the types of Ss.

Each S, after being induced with a particular mood state, was requested to rate his feelings on a 7-point rating scale in the case of positive or negative mood induction (1 =extremely happy, 7 = extremely sad) or on a 5 point scale in the case of neutral mood induction (1 = very happy, 3 = undecided, 5= very sad ). This was done to ensure that a particular mood was successfully induced. After ensuring that the different mood states were induced (in terms of rating taken from Ss), the Ss were requested to write down suggestions intended to bring about the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Since, the Ss differed little in terms of number of suggestions contributed, the time (in minutes) each S took in writing down suggestions was noted down. The A x B x C analysis of variance was performed on the time scores of 96 Ss. In the event of a main

effect being found significant, t test was also applied to find out the significance of mean differences among more than two groups relating to the effect.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results indicated that all the three main effects were found to be significant beyond the 0.01 level, i.e. for A (high and low altruism),  $F = 14.40$ ,  $df = 1/84$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; for B (males and females),  $F = 12.20$ ,  $df = 1/84$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; and for C (mood states),  $F=67.04$ ,  $df = 2/84$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The B x C interaction was also found to be significant at .05 level ( $F = 3.85$ ,  $df = 2/84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

It is clear that the means for A1 (high altruistic scores) and A2 (low altruistic scorers), averaged over the levels of B and C effects differ significantly. The high altruistic Ss gave the mean score of 12.58 minutes whereas the low altruistic Ss gave the mean score of 11.05 minutes. Thus, the first hypothesis that the high altruistic males and females, as compared to the low altruistic Ss, would spend more time to write suggestions has been supported. These results strongly support the findings of Borman, Penner, Allen and Motowidlo, (2001); Penner, (2002); Zhao, Ferguson and Smillie, (2016); Rodrigues et al. (2018) found that the higher score on altruism was associated with increased helping tendencies.

The mean time scores for B1 (males) and B2 (females), averaged over the level of A and C effects also differ significantly. Going by the findings, males gave the mean score of 11.07 minutes whereas females gave 12.56 minutes score. It may also be noted that males showed lesser helping behavior (14.48, 10.5 and 8.23 mean scores for positive, neutral and negative mood states, respectively). Thus the second hypothesis that suggested females to be devoting more time than males has also been supported these results get reinforced by a study by Charbonneau & Nicol, (2002); Branas Garza, Caprora and Rascon - Ramirez (2018) Eagly, (2009); Wiepking and Bakkers, (2012). Factors like social approval and demands of traditional sex roles may be stressed as encouraging

females to help more than boys. Draber et al. (2013); Rand, (2017) also found females to be more altruistic than males.

The mean minutes for C1, C2 and C3 (positive, neutral and negative mood states, respectively), averaged over the levels of A and B effects were also found to differ significantly. The Ss induced with the positive mood state gave the mean score of 15.08 minutes, those induced with the neutral mood state 10.99 minutes, and those induced with the negative mood state 9.38 minutes. The t-ratios obtained in case of mean differences between the positive and neutral mood inductions ( $t = 7.05$ ), between the neutral and negative mood inductions ( $t = 3.22$ ), and between the positive and negative mood inductions ( $t = 9.34$ ) were all found to be significant beyond the .01 level. Thus, the third hypothesis that Ss induced with the positive mood state would help more as compared to those induced with the neutral and negative mood states has also been vindicated. These results are borne out by many other studies, Kerr and Donovan, (2014); Otake et al., (2006).

A significant B x C interaction signifies that the B effect is not independent of the C effect. In other words, male and female Ss differ in terms of help rendered, within the limits of random variation at all the three levels of the C effect. Large experimental evidence available on help rendered by males vs. females and help rendered under different mood states could well necessitate such an interaction.

In conclusion, the present study obtained significant effects of dispositional (A), personal (B) and situational (C) variables on the helping behavior of Ss, with the personal and situational variables interacting together. By implication, dispositional traits of altruism and empathy that the conducive to concrete help to drug addicts need to be nurtured by culture. Further, apart from soliciting active help of female volunteers, the problem of drug addiction has to be approached with a positive perspective to be successfully resolved.

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