Altruism, Gender, and Personality: Understanding the Role of Emotional Intelligence in College Students' Helping Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the intricate relationship among altruism, gender, personality, and emotional intelligence (EI) in forecasting college students' helping behaviours. Altruism, characterised by selfless concern for the welfare of others, is shaped by a range of psychological and socio-demographic factors. Emotional intelligence, defined as the capacity to recognise, comprehend, and manage emotions, has been recognised as a significant factor influencing helping behaviours; however, its association with gender and personality is inadequately examined in current literature. This paper seeks to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on helping behaviours and to determine if gender and personality traits serve as moderating factors in this relationship among college students. A cross-sectional design was utilised, with data gathered via surveys distributed to a sample of undergraduate students from diverse disciplines. The surveys evaluated emotional intelligence via the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), altruistic inclinations through the Altruism Scale, personality characteristics using the Big Five Personality Inventory, and gender was recorded as a demographic variable. Statistical analyses, encompassing correlation and regression models, were performed to ascertain the relationships among these variables. The results showed important findings: higher emotional intelligence was linked to more altruistic behaviour, which means that students with higher EI are more likely to help others. Moreover, gender disparities were observed, as female students exhibited elevated emotional intelligence and altruistic tendencies in comparison to their male peers. Personality traits were also very important; students who were more agreeable and open to new experiences were more likely to help others. Nonetheless, emotional intelligence emerged as a more robust predictor of altruism compared to personality traits, indicating that EI may serve as a more direct catalyst for helping behaviour than personality alone. This study enhances the comprehension of altruism among college students by incorporating emotional intelligence as a significant determinant of helping behaviours, alongside gender and personality. It emphasises the significance of cultivating emotional intelligence within educational environments, proposing that initiatives designed to improve EI may encourage prosocial behaviours among students.

Keywords: Altruism, Emotional Intelligence, Gender, Personality, Helping Behaviours, College Students, Big Five Personality Traits, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience.

Introduction

Altruism, characterised by selfless regard for the welfare of others, is a crucial component of human behaviour that has been thoroughly examined in psychology and social sciences. In college environments, student helping behaviours can improve social cohesion, aid in community-building, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose. Different things can affect altruism, such as personality traits and social influences. However, emotional intelligence (EI) has become an important psychological factor

that affects how likely someone is to help others. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise, understand, and control your own emotions and the emotions of others. This could be a big reason why students want to help others in school and in their social lives.

It has been acknowledged that gender may influence helping behaviours. Prior research indicates that women are typically more inclined to exhibit altruistic behaviour compared to men, although this correlation may be affected by cultural, social, and psychological factors. Likewise, personality characteristics, including agreeableness, openness to experience, and empathy, have been consistently associated with altruistic behaviour. Although these traits can affect helping behaviours, it remains uncertain how emotional intelligence might moderate or mediate these relationships, especially among college students.

Incorporating emotional intelligence into the examination of altruism, gender, and personality provides a novel viewpoint. Studies indicate that individuals exhibiting elevated emotional intelligence (EI) are more prone to engage in prosocial behaviour; however, the interplay between EI and variables such as gender and personality in forecasting altruistic actions among college students remains inadequately explored. This gap in the literature necessitates additional investigation, especially considering the possible ramifications for improving social behaviour in educational settings. By comprehending the function of emotional intelligence, researchers can guide interventions that promote constructive social interactions, community involvement, and the overall well-being of students.

Background of the Study

The examination of altruism has historically been a focal point in psychological and social research. Altruistic behaviour, which involves actions that help others without expecting anything in return, is very important for creating healthy communities and encouraging people to work together. College campuses are great places to study altruism because students are often involved in a wide range of social interactions that may affect how willing they are to help others. Helping behaviours can manifest in diverse ways, including providing academic support to peers and engaging in volunteer work or community service.

Researchers have proposed that altruism is not merely a consequence of situational or external factors but is also shaped by individual characteristics. There has been a lot of research on gender differences in altruistic behaviour. Some studies show that women are more likely to be altruistic, while others show that the type of helping behaviour and the situation can change the relationship. The relationship between gender and altruism is well-documented; however, the influence of emotional intelligence in this context remains inadequately explored.

Personality traits, including agreeableness, have been recognised as significant predictors of altruistic behaviour. People who are agreeable are more likely to be helpful because they are more likely to be cooperative, empathetic, and care about the well-being of others. Emotional intelligence, which is the ability to control your own emotions and understand the emotions of others, has also been linked to prosocial behaviour. People with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better at picking up on emotional cues and responding in ways that make social interactions better and encourage helping behaviours.

Although both personality and emotional intelligence are important predictors of helping behaviour, the connection between these two factors, especially when it comes to gender, has not been studied enough. Emotional intelligence, which can improve empathy and emotional regulation, may act as a significant mediator in elucidating why certain individuals are more predisposed to assist others than their counterparts. This study seeks to address this deficiency by investigating the correlation between altruism, gender, personality, and emotional intelligence among college students.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the role of emotional intelligence in forecasting helping behaviours among college students, while accounting for the effects of gender and personality traits. With the increasing focus on emotional intelligence as a significant factor influencing social behaviour, the study seeks to investigate the interaction between EI, gender, and personality in the development of altruistic tendencies among college students. The study will specifically investigate whether emotional intelligence functions as a mediator or moderator in the relationship among gender, personality, and helping behaviours.

By examining these relationships, the study seeks to enhance comprehension of the psychological and social determinants that affect college students' propensity to assist others. The results may enhance the understanding of altruism by emphasising the significance of emotional intelligence in

promoting helping behaviours. Furthermore, comprehending the influence of gender and personality on altruistic behaviours may provide valuable guidance for educators and policymakers aiming to foster prosocial conduct in academic settings.

Ultimately, this research aims to address fundamental enquiries: In what manner does emotional intelligence affect altruism among college students? Does gender influence the development of emotional intelligence and altruistic behaviours? How do personality traits such as agreeableness influence emotional intelligence in forecasting helping behaviours? The study aims to elucidate future interventions and strategies designed to augment emotional intelligence and promote altruism within educational contexts.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the correlation between emotional intelligence and altruism among college students.

- To examine the influence of gender on altruistic behaviour and emotional intelligence.

- To investigate the impact of personality traits, such as agreeableness, on helping behaviours among college students.

- To evaluate the role of emotional intelligence as a moderator or mediator in the relationship among gender, personality, and altruism.

- To offer suggestions for enhancing emotional intelligence among college students to encourage prosocial behaviour.

Significance of the Study

- Contribution to Existing Literature: This study enhances the current research on altruism, gender, and personality by incorporating emotional intelligence as a pivotal element in comprehending helping behaviours among college students.

- Practical Implications: The results may assist universities and educational institutions in formulating initiatives designed to improve students' emotional intelligence, thereby fostering greater prosocial behaviour and enhanced social interactions within campus communities.

- Gender Sensitivity: Knowing how boys and girls help each other differently can help you make interventions that meet the needs of each group, making the environment more welcoming and supportive.

- Impact on Policy and Practice: The study's findings may affect policies and strategies designed to promote volunteerism, community involvement, and cooperative learning among students.

- Future Research Opportunities: This study fills a gap in the literature and opens the door for more research on how EI affects altruistic behaviour in other groups and situations.

Limitations and Scope

Scope

- The research is confined to undergraduate students at a university, concentrating on a particular age demographic (18-24 years).

- Emotional intelligence, personality traits, and altruism are evaluated concerning college students' helping behaviours in both academic and social settings

- The study examines gender disparities while excluding other demographic factors, including socioeconomic status and cultural background.

Limitation

- The study employs a cross-sectional design, indicating that causal relationships cannot be definitively established.

- The sample may not accurately represent all college students, as it is confined to a specific university or region.

- Self-report measures, such as surveys, can lead to response biases because participants might exaggerate or downplay their altruistic behaviours or emotional intelligence levels.

- Contextual factors may influence personality assessments, potentially impacting the accuracy of the results.

Review of the Literature

Altruism and Gender

Sharma and Sharma (2017) assert that gender disparities in altruism stem from socialisation processes that encourage women to embody nurturing and empathetic traits, which facilitate helping behaviours. Their research on altruism among Indian college students revealed that female students exhibited markedly greater altruistic tendencies than their male counterparts, particularly in emotionally charged contexts.

Chaudhary and Mishra (2018) examined gender disparities in altruism, positing that emotional intelligence significantly influences these behaviours, particularly among female students. Their research demonstrated that emotional intelligence increased women's propensity to assist others, thereby strengthening the relationship between emotional intelligence and altruism.

Personality and Helping Behaviors

- **Verma and Rani (2019**) performed a study investigating the correlation between personality traits and altruism among Indian university students. They discovered that students exhibiting elevated levels of agreeableness were more inclined to participate in helping behaviours. Their research indicated that students possessing high emotional intelligence demonstrated increased prosocial behaviours, underscoring the significant role of emotional regulation in fostering altruism.

- **Gupta and Kumar (2016)** examined the influence of personality traits, including openness to experience and conscientiousness, on predicting helping behaviours among Indian college students. Their results indicated that students with elevated scores in openness to experience and conscientiousness were more inclined to participate in prosocial behaviours. These characteristics, in conjunction with emotional intelligence, were substantial indicators of altruism in collegiate settings.

Emotional Intelligence and Altruism

- **Bhatia and Mehta (2017)** assert that emotional intelligence profoundly affects a person's capacity to empathise and comprehend the emotional needs of others, consequently enhancing the probability of performing altruistic behaviours. Their research on Indian college students indicated that individuals with elevated emotional intelligence scores were more predisposed to provide assistance in social contexts, especially when the emotional needs of others were evident.

- **Kumar and Pandey (2020)** examined the influence of emotional intelligence on the promotion of prosocial behaviours among Indian adolescents. They discovered that emotional intelligence enhanced the recognition of emotional cues and facilitated suitable responses, increasing the likelihood of individuals engaging in helping behaviours. Their research emphasised the significance of emotional intelligence in promoting altruism, particularly within educational and community contexts.

Gender, Personality, and Emotional Intelligence

- **Mishra and Sharma (2019**) emphasised the mediating function of emotional intelligence in the correlation between personality traits and altruistic behaviours. They discovered that emotional intelligence served as a more robust predictor of altruism compared to personality traits alone. Their research also indicated that women, especially those possessing elevated emotional intelligence, demonstrated the greatest degrees of altruistic behaviour.

- **Singh and Arora (2021)** examined the synergistic influences of gender, emotional intelligence, and personality traits on altruism among Indian students. Their results indicated that women possessing elevated emotional intelligence were more inclined to exhibit helping behaviours, particularly in contexts requiring emotional support. The study indicated that emotional intelligence serves as a moderator between personality traits and altruistic behaviours, amplifying the influence of traits such as agreeableness and empathy.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The current study employs a descriptive and correlational research design to investigate the relationship between altruism, gender, personality traits, and emotional intelligence in forecasting helping

behaviours among college students. The design is suitable as it facilitates the systematic description of variables and the identification of patterns without experimental manipulation.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of 120 college students selected from both undergraduate and postgraduate institutions. A stratified random sampling method was employed to guarantee equitable gender representation.

- 60 (50%) of the students are male.
- 60 (50%) of the students are women.
  Participants were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Tools for Data Collection

We used standardised self-report questionnaires to collect primary data:

- Scale for Emotional Intelligence
- Scale of Altruism
- Personality Inventory (including traits like empathy, agreeableness, and responsibility)
- Questionnaire on Helping Behaviour

Data Analysis

**Table 1: Level of Emotional Intelligence among College Students**

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Number of Students	Percentage
High	46	38.33%
Moderate	52	43.33%
Low	22	18.34%
Total	120	100%
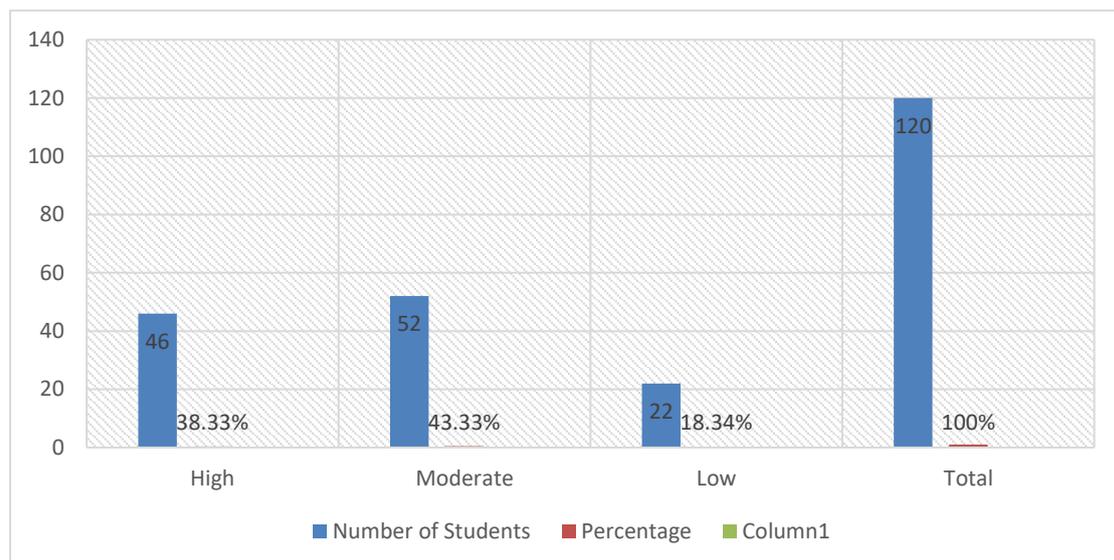
Interpretation: The table shows that 43.33% of students have a medium level of emotional intelligence and 38.33% have a high level. Only 18.34% of college students fall into the low category, which means that most of them are emotionally aware and able to understand emotions, which is important for altruistic behaviour.

Table 2: How Helping Behaviour Varies by Gender

Gender	High Helping Behavior	Moderate	Low	Total
Male	18 (30%)	28 (46.67%)	14 (23.33%)	60
Female	26 (43.33%)	24 (40%)	10 (16.67%)	60
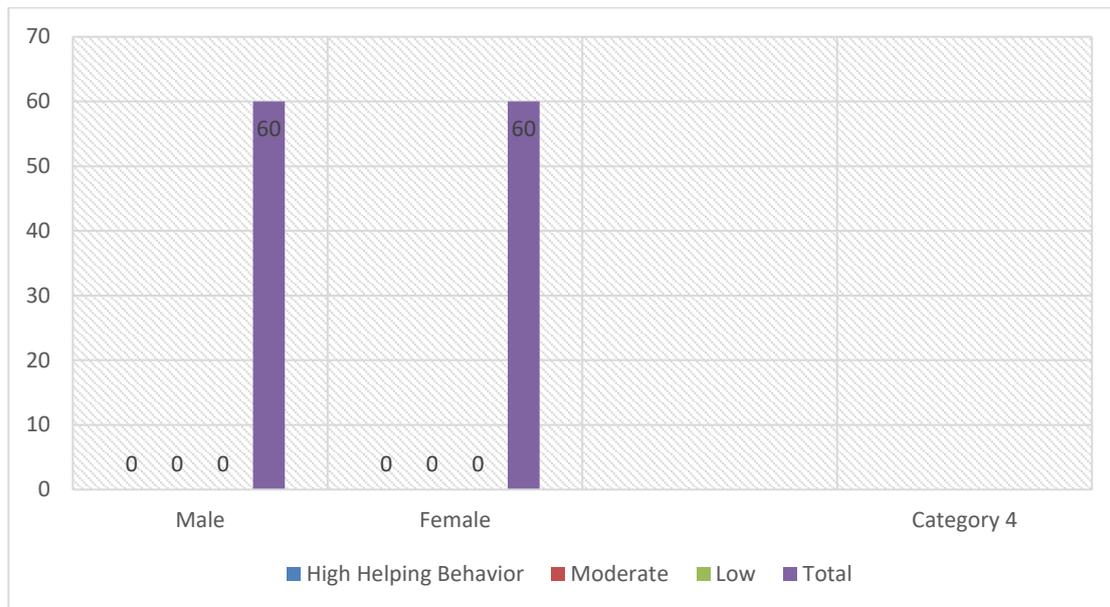
Interpretation: Female students demonstrate a higher percentage (43.33%) of high helping behavior compared to males (30%). This suggests that gender plays a significant role in altruistic tendencies, possibly due to higher emotional sensitivity and empathy among females.

Discussion

The findings of the present study highlight the crucial role of emotional intelligence in shaping altruistic and helping behaviors among college students. Students with higher emotional intelligence displayed greater empathy, emotional regulation, and social awareness, which are foundational elements of altruism. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to recognize others' emotional needs and respond compassionately, thereby increasing prosocial behavior. Gender differences observed in helping behavior indicate that female students are more inclined toward altruistic actions than male students. This aligns with psychological theories suggesting that females are generally more expressive, empathetic, and socially responsive. Cultural socialization patterns may also encourage women to be nurturing and supportive, reinforcing helping tendencies. Personality traits such as agreeableness, responsibility, and emotional stability were found to be positively associated with helping behavior. Students exhibiting cooperative and emotionally balanced personalities were more willing to assist others voluntarily. Conversely, students with lower emotional intelligence and less adaptive personality traits showed reduced involvement in helping activities. The college environment plays a vital role in shaping these behaviors. Exposure to diverse social situations, peer interactions, and academic stressors may enhance emotional maturity and moral responsibility. Emotional intelligence emerges not merely as an individual trait but as a learnable skill that can be developed through education and training. Overall, the study supports the view that helping behavior is a multidimensional construct influenced by emotional, personal, and gender-related factors. Encouraging emotional intelligence development in educational institutions can foster a more compassionate and socially responsible youth population.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to altruistic and helping behaviors among college students. Students with higher emotional awareness and regulation skills are more empathetic and socially responsive, making them more inclined to engage in helping activities. Gender differences further reinforce this relationship, with female students demonstrating comparatively higher levels of altruism. Personality traits also play a supportive role, indicating that emotional intelligence works in combination with personality factors to promote prosocial behavior. The findings suggest that helping behavior is not merely instinctive but is shaped by emotional competence and social learning. The study emphasizes the importance of nurturing emotional intelligence within academic settings to build socially responsible individuals. Developing emotional and interpersonal skills can enhance students' capacity for compassion, cooperation, and ethical engagement.

Suggestions

- Emotional intelligence training should be integrated into college curricula.
- Workshops on empathy and social responsibility should be organized regularly.
- Gender-sensitive approaches may be adopted to encourage helping behavior among all students.
- Counseling services should promote emotional awareness and interpersonal skills.
- Future studies may include larger samples and comparative institutional analy**sis.**

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