

Altruism

Key points

- Introduction
- Theories
- Reasoning
- Importance
- Modernism & Implementation

Introduction (Ali Abbas: Bsef19a525)

Altruism is the unselfish concern to help others without expecting anything in return. Altruism is when we act to promote someone else's welfare, even at a risk or cost to ourselves. Altruism is an alternative approach to having an egoistic or selfish mindset person.

Now let's talk about who popularized this term.

Who popularized it?

The word "altruism" was popularized (and possibly coined) by the French philosopher **August Comte** in French, as altruism. He derived it from the Italian *altrui*, which in turn was derived from Latin **alteri**, meaning "other people" or "somebody else".

Daily Life Examples

If we look around in our daily life, there are a lot of things that shows the act of altruism. What are those scenarios? (Here I will stand someone from the listening audience and ask daily life example from that person).

- From holding the door for someone to giving money to the people in need.
- From holding someone's weight (bag, bottle, luggage) to dive in order to help that person who was drowning in that icy river.
- From sharing someone resources despite of shortage, altruism speaks.

- Giving someone an opinion that will be beneficial for him/her.
- Giving your lunch away to someone who was hungry at cost of being hungry yourself is also altruism.
- Donating blood to someone
- To giving money to charity or volunteering at a soup kitchen,

These are the some of examples that we face in our daily routine of life.

Types:

Now let me share an interesting fact with you guys. Altruism is not all about pure help. There are some more sub-types of altruism.

1) Reciprocal Altruism

we usually help others on the basis of this expectation that they will also help us in future when we need. We help others on basis of expecting something in return. And this concept is known as reciprocal altruism

2) Effective Altruism

Effective altruism is the use of evidence and reason to determine the most effective ways to benefit others.

Like if you have less money to give charity, you choose wisely to spend it upon those who are in more need.

Now, Let's see altruism from some perspectives.

Psychological Point of View

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines psychological altruism as:

"A motivational state with the goal of increasing another's welfare"

Psychological altruism is contrasted with psychological egoism, which refers to the motivation to increase one's own welfare.

In psychological research on altruism, studies often observe altruism as demonstrated through prosocial behaviors such as helping, comforting, sharing, and cooperation. Research has found that people are most likely to help if they recognize

that a person is in need and feel personal responsibility for reducing the person's distress.

Biological Point of View

In terms of biological observation, the everyday individual is performing an action that is somehow at a cost to themselves (cost can be pleasure, quality of life, mental peace). He doesn't care about the benefits (either directly or indirectly). **Steinberg** (American university professor of psychology, specializing in adolescent psychological development) suggests a definition for altruism in the clinical setting, that is **"intentional and voluntary actions that aim to enhance the welfare of another person in the absence of any quid pro quo(exchange)external rewards"**.

Islamic Point of View

In Islam, the concept "**īthār**" (إيثار) (altruism) is the basically notion of "**preferring others to oneself**". For Sufis, this means devotion to others through complete forgetfulness of **one's own concerns**, where concern for others is deemed (consider) as a demand made **by ALLAH SUBHANA-HU-WATA`ALLAH** on the human body. The importance of īthār lies in sacrifice for the sake of the greater good; Islam considers those practicing īthār as abiding by the highest degree of nobility. A constant concern for ALLAH SUBHANA-HU-WATA`ALLAH results in a careful attitude towards people, animals, and other things in this world. As

(“ALLAH is helping the servant as long as the servant is helping his brother.”)

Thirteenth-century Turkish Sufi poet Yunus Emre explained this philosophy as

("We love the creature, because of The Creator")

For many Muslims, īthār must be practiced as a religious obligation during specific Islamic holidays. However, īthār is also still an Islamic ideal to which all Muslims should strive to adhere at all times.

Is there any term exist, that is opposite to Altruism?

In one sense, we can say that opposite of altruism is Spite; a spiteful action harms another with no self-benefit. To spite is to intentionally annoy, hurt, or upset someone knowing that there is no personal gain. When the intent to annoy, hurt or upset is shown subtly, behavior is considered catty (hateful, unkind). Now let's talk about:

Why people adopt altruism?

- 1. Helping Others feels good**
 - When you help others, it can promote physiological changes in the brain that are linked with happiness.
 - Helping others can also improve our support network and encourage us to be more active
- 2. The more you do for others, the more you do for yourself**
 - The benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself, both for you and them.
- 3. It tends to make us more active and ready to help others anytime.**
- 4. It brings mental satisfaction.**

Is Altruism the Result of Nature or Nurture?

There is always a debate in psychology that if altruism is the result of nature or nurture. According to a research conducted by Stanford scientists, Rodolfo Cortes Barragan and Carol Dweck, children are not “born nice” and experience and environment play a determining role in this domain.

A previous study done in 2006 revealed that 18-month-old toddlers were eager to spontaneously help the experimenters. At that time, those findings reinforced what the scientists considered as evidence of inborn altruism and it became the basis of many subsequent researches. The Stanford study shows that this was probably a wrong assumption and that altruism is not an inborn virtue but is learned.

So, from onward **Talha Masood** will explain different theories of altruism.

Theories (Talha Masood: Bsef19a540)

As Ali explained in the introduction that it is so obvious that Altruism is a **prosocial act**.

A prosocial act is which our goal or our intent is to benefit others.

For centuries, many philosophers debated Is any prosocial act is truly altruistic or there is selfishness involved somewhere? When people offer money to a homeless person on the subway, is their action motivated by a pure desire to help, or are they primarily alleviating their own discomfort. There is no selfishness or personal benefit to their own at all. So, in favor of both concepts, theories are introduced with practicality. So, Let's talk about these.

Theories of Altruism divided into two major types:

→ Biological altruism

In this approach, the concepts of Altruism are based in genes and instincts is introduced. And **Kin Selection theory** is a most famous type of this approach. We tend to help our relatives or gene related relations more than others.

→ Psychological altruism

This type comes under the cognitive behaviors and it show that Prosocial behaviors result from egoism rather than altruism. Empathy Altruism theory is major application of this type. And this theory is further divided into two sub categories:

- Danial Batson Theory
- Helping relives negative feelings

So, Let's first talk about the Kin-Selection theory.

Kin Selection theory

Evolutionary psychologists have taken the debate about altruism a step further by redefining it.

A theory names as **Kin Selection** proposed by Hamilton, by this theory, protecting oneself and one's relatives is a basic interest. This is based on genetics. This theory propose that people act in ways that maximize their inclusive fitness and are more likely to behave altruistically toward relatives than others.

There is a simple and clear one example to understand this theory:

In a house, who would you save first? Your brother/sister or your neighbor?

(Wait for 10 sec to give a chance to audience to think)

Then, Ask them the answer

As the answer is obvious and this is what Kin Selection theory.

Now, Take 2 minutes and Create a list of times when you have helped others during this year.

After 2 minutes: Hope that you write down these events. Now, Let's move forward.

Now, let's talk about the 2nd theory:

Daniel Batson theory.

As I told earlier that this theory is also called empathy altruism theory and **Batson** proposed this theory. This theory says that is that people can be genuinely altruistic and they have a natural compassion for one another. They are more engages in altruistic behavior when they feel empathy for the 2nd person.

It says that people are generally self-interested but have a natural empathy for one another that leads them to behave altruistically at times

And experiments show that they are right. Like People who have the opportunity to escape dangerous distress by walking away, or who are offered rewards for doing so,

still frequently choose to help someone in distress. Like fire in building, road accident etc.

Now let's talk about the 2nd theory of cognitive which comes under personal distress. This is also named as ethical hedonism.

Helping relives negative feelings

Before that Many philosophers argue for ethical hedonism, it says that all behavior, no matter how apparently altruistic, are designed to increase one's own pleasure or reduce one's own pain. One famous writer said that,

“Scratch an ‘altruist’ and watch a hypocrite bleed”

According to this theory, People are frequently motivated by their emotions, and behaving altruistically can produce positive emotions and diminish negative ones for them. Helping may also be motivated by efforts to avoid the guilt associated with not helping particularly if it is one's “turn” to “pay it forward.

The crux of this theory is that no prosocial act is truly altruistic, there is a factor of own pleasure or satisfaction or something else in helping other.

Reasoning (Talha Tariq: Bsef19a544)

As Talha explained the Batson and Kin Selection theories, and I'm here to explain why we adopted these theories and what are the reasons to accept these.

So, let's first talk about **Kin Selection** theory.

Kin Selection

In this theory, ones only help his genetic based relatives or closed ones. It accepted by majority of the community because this theory is Supported by empirical studies. I mean Real world example of animals and humans. Let's see some examples:

Evidence of this type of altruistic behavior abounds in the animal kingdom.

- Some mother birds will pretend to have a broken wing to draw a predator away from their nest, Obviously this act can be of a considerable cost to that individual bird. But she only want to save her nest and her childs.
- Chimpanzees “adopt” orphaned chimps, particularly if they are close relatives
- Ground squirrels will warn others of the presence of predator even if making that call draw attention of predator to itself.
- Ratio of sharing foods among close relatives is more than the others in humans.

So, because of practicality, this theory get supports. But it also has some limitations.

Limitations

Before limitations, I would like to ask some questions from you. Any one would like to volunteer please? Otherwise, I’ll nominate randomly by myself.

So, When Talha asked you to write your help events of this year? What you have wrote?

What is the motivation behind this help?

This is the point, This theory doesn’t explain why people help who are not related to themselves or not their relatives. Like blood donations, charity, helping someone’s in distress like fire in building, road accidents etc.

When people offer money to a homeless person on the subway, where is the genetic based relations in this act?

Now, at this point **Empathy altruistic** theory came in the ground. As Talha told you all that this theory is based on purely altruistic behaviors or on personal benefits of satisfaction to some extent. Let me explain it in further details. But I’ll tell you and interesting story with you guys before explaining it.

If someone, did you a favor—something big, something you couldn’t do on your own—and instead of paying it back, you paid it forward to three people ... And then

the next day, they each paid it forward to three more ... And the day after that, those 27 people each paid it forward to another three ... And each day everyone in turn paid it forward to three more people ... In two weeks, that comes to 4,782,969 people.

This is an idea of book named as **“Pay It Forward”** written by **Catherine Ryan Hyde**.

When the author Hyde asked how she came up with the idea of **“paying it forward,”** she recounted a story of her car breaking down many years ago in a dangerous section of downtown Los Angeles. As she emerged from her car, she saw two men running toward her, one carrying a blanket. Although scared that her life was in danger, **Hyde** watched as the two men opened the hood of her car and used the blanket to put out flames coming from the burning engine. When she got around to thanking the men who had acted with no seeming concern for their own personal safety, they were gone. As she thought about their kindness and helpfulness over the next few months, Hyde realized that she would never be able to repay them but that she could “pay it forward” by helping out someone else in need. Sometime later, late one evening, she herself happened upon another woman whose car had broken down. After offering aid to the woman, Hyde was asked how she could be repaid. Hyde’s answer: “Pay it forward.” Importantly, Hyde emphasizes that behaviors involved in “paying it forward” do not have to be major events. Small tokens of kindness that benefit others can lead others to be motivated to behave similarly toward others.

Now, please answer me of the following question.

What if Hyde didn’t act upon the pay it forward or didn’t help of any person after that incident?

Obviously, she will be in guilt or in feeling of burden of that favor of these mans.

And this is exactly what Talha said about the cognitive altruism. If She didn’t do that, she would reach to end of his life in feeling of burden of that favor. She did it to fulfill or satisfying her personal ego.

This Now, what about these two men’s who helped Hyde in that accident? There’s no personal benefit or satisfaction at all. This is what exactly is the Batson or

empathy altruism theory. They feel empathy for the Hyde as we feel for the man on the road while giving money. There is no personal gains at all.

- 1) So, Experimental studies defend the baston theory tells us that Human emotion empathy is the primary motivation for helping, and way this adopts as a practical approach.

So, this is all from my said.

From now, Hurairah will explain you the importance of altruism.

Thank you very much & over to you Hurairah.

Importance (Abu Hurairah: Bsef19a545)

Altruism brings more meaning to our lives. When we see people helping each other, it inspires us to do the same. It reminds us that we're not alone.

It is essential to have altruism in our lives so that our community can thrive and succeed as a whole. Without altruism, a community does not prosper together. This lack of altruistic efforts towards a better community will result in a selfish society spiraling into disaster. Here are some other reasons altruism is important:

How Altruism in Society is Important?

There's no one in the society who can achieve some thing bigger individually. Human Beings are dependent on each other, by nature, in order to survive. In this modern world of selfishness no one cares about others. Every person in this world is trying to get fame even the society may be ruined, he/she won't care about it. In order to overcome these things, we have to be more cooperative, altruistic, compassionate, and trustworthy to make an Altruistic society.

If we take an example that a person is going to his work and he found someone who needs help then that person should help him because this is his moral duty. This will generate a willingness to help others in that person who was helped. Similarly, if the people of a society will help others, then this will create an altruistic society in true senses.

How Altruism in Leadership is Important?

If an organization is comprised of people who are selfish and leg-pullers then that organization will never succeed because a one-man can never do all the things individually. In this situation, a leader can do a lot of things in order to boost up his employees and make them united by his altruistic behavior.

Let's take a look at four ways altruism can be beneficial at work for both the employees and the company.

- **It contributes to employee well-being**

One study on altruism at work found that helping colleagues makes people happier. Since giving back is rewarding in itself, helping others can lead to a greater sense of purpose at work and higher levels of job satisfaction. Not only that, but the so-called "helper's high" produced by performing altruistic acts can even help reduce stress.

- **It helps motivate employees**

Altruism can be a motivating factor at work. When employees feel that their work matters and they are helping others in some way, it boosts their motivation levels. People need intrinsic motivation just as much as external rewards, such as money or recognition. The human drive to help others is innate to all of us. Finding ways to incorporate it into our daily work helps us stay motivated by connecting to something greater than ourselves.

- **It creates an altruistic company culture**

If you're a leader who wants to create an altruistic company culture, it's best to start with yourself. People who benefit from the altruistic behavior of others are more likely to model that behavior and pay it forward by helping others. Let's say you let a team member leave early due to a family emergency. They are then more likely to be

flexible the next time a colleague or customer has a request for them. Had you denied their request, they would have been less willing to help others.

- **It increases productivity**

Employees who are happy and motivated and feel well cared for by their organization are naturally more productive. They are less prone to absenteeism and more likely to stay late to get work done, resulting in lower costs and productivity gains for the company. Happy, healthy employees are also more likely to stay where they are. On the other hand, a company that fails to act altruistically toward its employees is likely to experience high employee turnover.

Modernism & implementation

(Muhammad Abdullah: Bsef19a529)

Today as we see everyone in this era of the modern world is busy with his own tasks and duties without paying attention to others including his/her own family. This creates isolation between our beloved relationships with our family and friends. Everyone in this world is becoming selfish and thinking about their own selves. This type of behaviorism destroys the whole society and it'll never succeed as there's no trust, there's no will to help others, there's nothing productive.

Major Factor: Social Media

On the other hand, excessive use of social media makes us lazy, useless, and worthless. Social media is made for positive use but the misuse of social media made society selfish. If someone is seeking help or support from us but we are making fun of him while we have to help him as this is our moral duty.

So, we have to work on this selfishness by achieving an altruistic behavior in order to get success and become an honorable person. Here are some ways to implement concept of altruism in people living in modern era.

- **Be a Role Model**

Be a role model by helping others at work, in day-to-day life, and online. Help a coworker carry equipment, bake cookies for a new neighbor, and leave uplifting comments on social media. Consistently modeling altruism is one of the most influential ways to encourage it in others — especially kids.

- **Share Real Stories**

Get donations and volunteers for important causes by putting a face to a name and sharing real stories. Raising money for women in business? Share a touching story about how financial aid helped a single mom create a successful business.

- **Promote Acceptance**

People are more likely to help members in their personal circles. Encouraging the people around you to be more inclusive is vital to promoting altruism. Encourage others to bring new friends to gatherings. Share your thoughts on social platforms.

- **Create a Supportive Community**

One of the best ways to promote altruism is by creating an outlet for people to give. Building a supportive community is a great way to do that.

- **Get Your Coworkers Involved**

Bring altruism to the workplace by supporting specific causes and creating an environment of mutual aid.

- **Perform a Random Act of Kindness Everyday**

This is an activity that takes little time, and yet it can have a lasting effect on someone's life. Plus, the more you practice, the more this exercise will become ingrained as a part of your daily routine.

“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”

- **Spend Quality Time with Others**

Whether you attend a community event, accept an invitation from a friend, or host a weekly get-together, you can give to others by sharing the gift of your company. Your time can be a valuable asset, and spending quality time with the people in your life is one of the most generous gifts you can give — not only for them but for ourselves, too.

“Caring about the happiness of others, we find our own.”

- **Give Sincere Compliments**

Each person has unique qualities they bring to the table. If you acknowledge an intrinsic part of someone’s identity, like a personality trait, or an aspect of their character that you admire, you may just make that person’s day.

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

Conclusion

So, as my teammates explained everything related to altruism. From introduction to theories and from theories to Reasoning of adopting it. Then I also explained the modern-day implementation of altruism and the ways to adopt it.

We have to adopt and bring altruism in our life because after all we are all social animals according to Aristotle. We need each other in time of distress. We can’t survive in this world without help of each other. And my message to all of you is that instead of being egoistic, try to bring kindness and passion for helping others. It will nourish your soul and gives you internal satisfaction and bliss. **Thank you very much.**