

## **ALTRUISM AS A FUNCTION OF VALUES AND SEX OF THE BENEFACTOR<sup>#</sup>**

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*The present study investigated the relationship between two clusters of values (i.e., inner-oriented values and group-oriented values) and sex of the benefactor. The subjects were 60 students (30 males and 30 females) studying in various departments of Punjabi University, Patiala, India. 2x2 analysis of variance was computed for the measurement of altruism. It was found that group-oriented people were more altruistic than the inner-oriented people. Results are discussed in terms of Hofstede's (1980) concept of situation-centredness and self-centredness.*

Altruism is an unselfish consideration, concern, and affection for other people - a term coined by Comte (1967) from Latin word 'alter' which means 'other' so that word 'altruism' means 'otherism'. The concept of altruism, in general, denotes devotion to the ends of others. An altruist is a person who places the thoughtfulness for others above his selfish interests and thus promotes the interest and welfare of mankind. Macaulay and Berkowitz (1970, p.3) have defined altruism "as behaviour carried out to benefit another without anticipation of reward from external sources".

One of the most tantalizing questions for social psychological concerns is the manner in which people can be distinguished on the basis of their inner-oriented values and group-oriented values. People with inner-oriented values are labelled as having individual orientation, and people with group-oriented values are labelled as having group orientation or collective orientation. Hofstede (1980) produced two dimensions – individualism-collectivism. Triandis (1988) defined collectivism as great emphasis on (a) the views, needs, and goals of the group rather than of oneself; (b) social norms and duty defined by the group rather than to get pleasure; (c) beliefs shared with the group rather than on beliefs that distinguish oneself from group; (d) great readiness to cooperate with group members; and (e) intense emotional attachment to the group.

The objective of the present research is to find out how the people with inner-oriented values and people with group-oriented values differ

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in terms of their altruism. Inner-oriented values are ability utilisation, achievement, aesthetics, creativity, personal development, and autonomy, etc. Group-oriented values are social interaction, cultural identity, and social relations, etc.

People high on inner-oriented values are more individualistically centred. In contrast, people high on group-oriented values are more situation centred. Individual centredness gives more individual orientation to people, as a result they are more individualistic. While situation centred people have more social orientation. Consequently, they are more collectivists. Since in collectivism Triandis (1988) puts more emphasis on needs and goals of the group rather than the self, it believes more on the social norms and duty defined by the group rather than behaviour to get pleasure. It shows more readiness to cooperate with group members. On the basis of previous literature, the following hypotheses were formulated in the present study: (i) People high on group-oriented values would be more altruistic than people high on inner-oriented values; and (ii) Males would be more altruistic than females.

## METHOD

### Sample

A total number of 150 postgraduate students (of middle socioeconomic status) from various departments of Arts faculty of Punjabi University, Patiala, India were taken for the study. Out of these 150 students, 60 were selected as subjects for the present investigation on the basis of their scores on Nevill and Super's (1989) Value Scale. Average age of the subjects was 22.8 years. They were divided into two groups. Those earning higher scores on inner-oriented values and lower scores on group-oriented values (cut off point was the criteria) were labelled as high on individual orientation and those earning higher scores on group-oriented values and lower scores on inner-oriented values (cut off point was the criteria) were labelled as high on collective orientation. Out of total 60 subjects, 30 (15 males and 15 females) were identified as having more individual orientation and other 30 (15 males and 15 females) as having more social orientation.

### Instruments

#### *Value Scale*

The Value Scale developed by Nevill and Super (1989) contains 105 items and takes about 30-45 minutes to administer. It yields 21

separate scales each of which measures a value that most people seek in life. The 21 scales have five items each. Each scale corresponds to one of the 21 rows on the answer sheet. For example, row 1 contains the items on the ability utilisation (items 1, 22, 43, 64, and 85), row 2 contains the items on the achievement scale (items 2, 23, 44, 65, and 86), and so forth.

For the scoring of the Values Scale, the score for each value can be calculated by adding the numerical (1 for 'no response', 2 for 'some important', 3 for 'important' and 4 for 'very important') for each of items in the scale. The score is the sum of the weights (1 to 4) given by the respondents to each item scored for each value. Scores can thus range from 5 to 20.

The 21 scales were grouped according to factor loadings. The five groupings were obtained which logically and statistically fall together. These are inner-oriented, group-oriented, material, physical prowess, and physical activity. In the present study only two groups of subscales were used. These are inner-oriented and group-oriented values subscales. Inner-oriented values consist of ability utilisation, achievement, aesthetics, personal development, autonomy, creativity, life style. Group-oriented values consist of social interaction, cultural identity, social relations, working conditions, helping and variety.

The alpha coefficients for the five item values scales were generally above .65 for all three populations i.e., high school, university, and adult samples. The scale has been used in Indian setting quite satisfactorily.

### *Altruism Scale*

The Altruism Scale developed by Chrisjohn, Febben, and Philippe (1981) is a self report inventory. It contains 20 items. Each item is to be rated on 5-point scale which are scored as never (1), once (2), more than once (3), often (4), and very often (5). Subjects' total score can range between 20 to 100. The total marks which an individual earns is an index of his altruistic behaviour. The scale measures the attitudes and behaviours which are potentially altruistic in nature. Altruism which has been measured by this inventory has been defined "as a behaviour carried out to benefit another without anticipation of internal reward" (Macaulay & Berkowitz, 1970, p.3). Initial investigations reveal that the scale is psychometrically stable and has high internal consistency. The discriminant validity of the scale was also good. It has been quite successfully used on Indian sample.

## Procedure

Both scales were administered in groups of 6 subjects each at a time. First the Value Scale was administered and after a time gap of 20 minutes, the Altruism Scale was administered. Subject's responses were scored on the basis of the instructions given in the respective manuals. 21 values of Value Scale clustered into five groups according to factor loadings. For the present purpose only two clusters (inner-oriented values and group-oriented values) were used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Design of the present study was 2x2 factorial with two clusters of values (Inner-oriented /group-oriented) and sex of the benefactor. 2x2 analysis of variance was computed for the measurement of altruism.

Table 1  
*Mean scores of values and sex*

VALUES		SEX	
Inner-oriented Values	Group-oriented Values	Males	Females
<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
59.10	75.30	71.30	63.10

Table 2  
*2x2 analysis of variance of values and sex*

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Values	3969.07	1	3969.07	49.41*
Sex	1008.60	1	1008.60	12.56*
Values x Sex	13.07	1	13.07	0.16
Within	4499.00	56	80.33	
Total	9489.74	59		

\*  $p < .01$

Table 1 and 2 show that the main effect of values was found to be significant [ $F(1,56) = 49.41, p < .01$ ] for altruism scores. Means show

that subjects having higher scores on group-oriented values, scored higher on altruism scale ( $M = 75.30$ ), than the subjects with higher scores on inner-oriented values ( $M = 59.10$ ).

These results are in accordance with the hypotheses that people high on group-oriented values would be more altruistic than people high on inner-oriented values. This might be because group-oriented values orient the people more towards the group's beliefs, values, norms rather than their own. This orientation makes them more collectivistic rather than individualistic. Therefore, people high on group-oriented values become more situation centred rather than self-centred. Group-oriented values give more emphasis on social interaction, social relations, and to help others, etc. While inner-oriented values give more emphasis on person's utilization of his/her own abilities, person's own development, achievement, etc. Findings are explained in terms of Triandis' theoretical framework (1988), reporting that group-oriented people give more emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the group rather than of oneself. Their behaviour is governed more by social norms and duties defined by the group rather than principle to get pleasure. They give more value to beliefs which are shared by the group members rather than the beliefs which distinguish them from the group. Group-oriented people have more readiness to cooperate with others. Because of all these characteristics group-oriented people are more likely to be involved with other's thoughts and feelings and therefore, they tend to empathize more with others (Wispe & Freshley, 1971). Findings are further supported by the studies carried out by Hofstede (1980) and Hsu (1981), which show that situation centredness, collectivism, and group orientation are quite similar concepts which emphasizes more the concerns for others rather than self-centredness. Results are also supported by Yang (1981) which describe that social orientation represents a tendency for people to act in accordance with external expectations or social norms, rather than with internal wishes. As a result they are more likely to pursue group activities. More individualistically oriented people in contrast, are more likely to follow personal desires.

The findings of the present study have certain implications for the effects of socializing agents on children. In family, parents should emphasis more the group-oriented values rather than the inner-oriented values. Only group-oriented value system inculcated through training can produce a better society. A system based on developmental psychology approach should be evolved which should directly

incorporate the educational programmes for facilitation of group-oriented values.

As far as the sex factor is concerned, Table 2 further shows that sex of the benefactor is found to be significant for altruism scores, [ $F(1,56) = 12.56, p < .01$ ], Means (Table 1) show that males ( $M = 71.30$ ) scored higher on altruism than females ( $M = 63.10$ ). The findings are supported by the studies conducted by Latane and Darley (1970), Wispe and Freshley (1971). Results can be explained in terms of different orientations of males and females. Males, particularly in Indian society, are supposed to be responsible for outside home jobs. As a result, they get more opportunities of being with others and consequently are more group-oriented and collectivistic. Whereas, females generally remain inside the forewalls of the house and are considered responsible for inside home jobs. As a result, they may develop personality labelled as individualistic type. These different orientations may account for difference in the helping behaviour of males and females. Interaction effect of values and sex on altruism was not found to be significant.

It is important to consider certain limitations of the present study. For the measurement of altruism the study used a self report inventory. The use of self report inventory, generally involves the problems of uncontrolled favourability sets and halo effects (Krebs, 1970). Altruistic behaviour of people may get influenced if some situational measure is taken. The results, therefore, can be generalised with caution.

By way of summarising, the findings of the present study show that group-oriented people were more altruistic than the inner-oriented people, and males scored higher on altruism than females.

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