

Interpersonal relationships paper

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



There is evidence that a motivation for helping is feeling empathy for the other person. Researchers hypothesize that people are altruistic as long as the result is reducing another's stress. Unfortunately, some researchers believe that altruistic helping is instrumental egoistic response. Providing evidence of this is difficult as egoism and altruism are motivational concepts, and they cannot be directly observed, (Nier, 2010). Summary of Issues The arguments in contention deal with altruism and whether people feel motivation for pure altruism or empathy. C. Daniel Batson and his colleagues believe that people have a motivation to help not for what they can receive but for pure altruistic reasons. Nier (2010) states that people who are altruistically motivated to help do so with the goal of increasing the welfare of others, (Nier, 2010, p. 379). Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Cuckley, and Birch performed an experiment using similarity information to manipulate another's empathy. With 44 female introductory psychology students as the subjects the women are randomly selected to fill out a personal and interest questionnaire.

The subjects were assigned to four conditions of easy versus difficult escape and similar versus dissimilar victim design through a random block procedure with 11 people in each cell. One participant from each cell is excluded because that person can suspect Elaine was not receiving shocks. They participants are told to wait for a second subject, Elaine, who is a conspirator of the experiment, and given an introduction while waiting. Drawing roles after signing a consent form is next with the 2 drawing rigged.

They measure the level of arousal on a monitor to determine accurately the worker's emotional response as well as help to form an impression. They

manipulate the difficulty to escape a situation by letting every subject know that Elaine will complete all 10 trials. This gives the subjects a chance to help her by trading places with her after the second trial. They use similarity manipulation and need situation to determine the subject's level of empathy. The experimenters give the subjects a chance to trade places with Elaine if they so choose to do so.

The results suggest to researchers that suggesting that empathic motivation to help can be altruistic. Batson et. al. conclude that the easy-escape-dissimilar-victim condition is lower than the other three conditions. The difficulty to escape from the situation has a big effect on helping. Robert Cialdini and his colleagues believe that people have a motivation to help others so that they can feel better themselves rather than empathy. Those egoistically motivated to help others help so that they can increase their own welfare and personal gain.

The idea is that those with low empathy should help less but when a person's empathy is high, the sense of escape minimizes by the person's primary altruistic motive to help the victim. Cialdini and his colleagues sought to test alternative explanations separating subjects' feelings from empathic orientation. They replicate the Batson et. al. procedure presenting a gratifying event, allowing the subjects a chance to help a victim or escape the situation, finally assessing the subjects' helpful tendencies against Batson's measure of empathic concern.

The results find that subjects with a high-empathy-set had elevated helping scores except when they got a sadness-canceling reward. This shows that

they are no more helpful than those with low- 3 empathy. It seems that it was personal sadness that causes a person to have an increase helping motivation. Evaluation of Arguments Each argument proposes hypotheses about altruism and if it exists or not and how much altruism plays in motivating others to help another.

Empirical research with a basis of self-interest provides limited and often insufficient explanations for some helping behaviors meaning that altruism can be another separate construct, (Burns, et. al, 2006, p. 83). It is not necessarily just altruism that encouraged the participants to help but a sense of sadness over the victim's plight. By relieving the sadness of the victim, the subject's sadness can disappear. Helping can have rewards for most adults it can restore mood. Rather than helping for altruistic reasons, people help others for their own reasons such as personal mood management.

Batson and his colleagues identify an empathy-altruism model, which involves one person witnessing another's distress elicits personal distress and empathic concern from the witness. Personal distress can promote an egoistic need to help another's distress and empathic concern develops an altruistic desire to reduce the other person's distress, (Dovidio, Schroeder, & Allen, 1990, 249). The other determination of some researchers is that people who have high levels of empathy have high levels of helpfulness.

Empathy can enhance prosocial behavior. Selfishness and egalitarianism are important for interpersonal settings, whereas the outcomes for another, or altruism, are important for enhancing joint outcomes, (Van Lange, 2008, p. 767). The 4 participants saw Elaine's distress and wanted to eliminate it as

their need to escape the situation decreased. Support of a Concept After analyzing both arguments and evaluating them, it seems that the most plausible argument is that altruism does exist, but it is not the biggest motivator for helping others.

Some researchers believe that there are several volunteering activities where altruism is not a particular motivator, (Burns et. al. , 2006, p. 82). Involuntary volunteering is one. A person can have a court order to volunteer for example. People can start out with altruistic reasons for helping but altruism is not always the main motivator. In some ways helping another when they feel a sense of connection cannot be selfless because by helping another would be helping the helper, (Maner et. I, 2002, p. 1602). Some studies have evidence that suggest that when people appear altruistic that the motivations are ultimately egoistic by nature. Conclusion Altruism is about doing the greater good without any expectations back. Unfortunately, whereas altruism does exist many researchers determine that helping others is not for purely altruistic reason as people help others for many reasons. People can start out with altruistic motivations but they do not always stay altruistic.