

ABSTRACT

Teachers are the guides who shape minds, inspire hearts, and ignite curiosity. Schools are fertile grounds for knowledge to bloom, friendships to flourish, and futures to take root. In schools, altruistic teachers sow seeds of compassion, nurturing minds and hearts alike. Their selfless dedication fosters a culture of empathy where students learn the transformative power of kindness. The central focus of this research was to explore altruistic behaviour among high school educators. Using a basic random selection method, data were gathered from 200 teachers employed in schools across Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The findings indicated that altruism varied significantly depending on the school's geographic setting. However, no notable differences were identified in relation to the teachers' gender, marital status, length of teaching experience, or academic background.

Keywords: *Altruistic behaviour, intrinsic motivation, community, high school teachers*

Introduction

The concept of 'altruism' was introduced in the 1850s by Auguste Comte, a French philosopher. The word originates from the French term 'Autri', which means 'other people'. 'Autri' itself evolved from the French word 'Autre', meaning 'other', and traces its origins to the Latin term for 'others'. Comte, regarded as the father of Sociology, first presented altruism as a theoretical concept in his 'cerebral theory' and as the core principle of his atheistic 'Religion of Humanity'. Altruism refers to helping others without expecting any form of reward or return. In this way, selflessness contrasts with selfishness. It is seen as the motivation to prioritise the well-being of others over one's gain. However, the improvement of behaviour can influence how individuals view the teacher's role. In some cases, altruistic actions involve a decision-making process that requires rational thought rather than merely being an instinctive or intuitive response.

Rationale of the study

Humans are inherently social beings and cannot thrive in isolation; they depend on others for cooperation and community. Social creatures rely on interactions with others

to exchange ideas, engage in activities, and fulfil their needs.

Without competent teachers, efforts to improve the quality of education will not have a substantial impact on educational outcomes. In essence, raising educational standards starts with the teacher. Teachers hold a vital position within the community. They are expected to possess valuable knowledge, which requires them to demonstrate greater altruistic behaviours. This can include actions such as taking responsibility, helping others, practicing reciprocity, sharing, and contributing to others' well-being. In the classroom, teachers motivate students by encouraging them to focus outward and providing opportunities to understand the importance of helping others. As Baron and Byrne (2005) suggest, altruism is the willingness to assist others without anticipating anything in return.

The current study was conducted to explore the altruistic tendencies of high school teachers. Effective education involves not just teaching but also the holistic

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development of educators. High-quality education is always rooted in the presence of skilled teachers. The teaching profession requires not only mastery of the subject matter and the ability to convey information systematically but also a commitment to improving society. As such, teachers need intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation includes the internal psychological and emotional fulfilment derived from one's work, such as a sense of personal achievement or enjoyment of the work itself (Parkay, 2013). The teaching profession is driven by a desire to help others rather than financial considerations (Stinnett, 1968).

This research offers valuable insights into the altruistic tendencies of high school teachers. Reduced altruistic behaviour may harm teachers' intrinsic motivation, self-interest, willingness to offer support and guidance beyond the classroom, and ultimately, student learning. The study's findings can foster a more positive classroom atmosphere and motivate teachers to engage more actively in classroom interactions, contributing to academic achievement as well as the development of emotional and social skills in students.

This study will offer advantages to teachers by enhancing their ability to assist students in need or support colleagues, leading to greater job satisfaction and improved mental and emotional health. Teachers who practice kindness may experience reduced stress, increased happiness, and a stronger sense of professional fulfilment. Additionally, teachers with higher levels of altruism contribute to developing and reinforcing social bonds.

Focus areas of the investigation

The present study seeks to accomplish the following objectives,

- i. To evaluate the extent of altruistic conduct demonstrated by high school teachers.
- ii. To examine whether significant differences exist in the altruistic behaviour of high school teachers based on factors such as gender, school location, marital status,

residential area, educational background, and teaching experience.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guide the current research,

1. There is no significant variation in the altruistic tendencies of high school teachers concerning gender, locality of school, marital status, or residential location.
2. There is no meaningful variation in the altruistic attitudes of high school teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience and educational qualification.

Methodology

The research utilised a normative survey method. The intended population included all high school teachers working in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The study consisted of a cohort of 200 high school instructors from the Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu. A random sampling technique was used to select the participants. Data was collected using the Altruism Scale (AS), which was developed and validated by the researcher. Participants responded to a structured questionnaire designed to assess their altruistic behaviour. The data were analysed using SPSS software (version 25.0), applying descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation. To explore the connection between altruism (observed outcomes) and demographic variables (predictor elements), t-tests and one-way ANOVA were performed, with statistical significance set at a p-value below 0.05.

Analysis of Data

Table 1

Altruism of High School Teachers

N	Mean Score
200	226.65

In total, 200 high school teachers participated in the survey, achieving an average score of 226.65, notably above the midpoint of 180. This suggests that high school teachers demonstrate a moderate degree of altruism.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant variation in the altruistic tendencies of high school teachers concerning gender, locality of school, marital status, and locality of the residence.

Table 2

**Significant Difference in the Altruism of
High School Teachers with respect to Gender,
Locality of the School, Marital Status and
Locality of the Residence**

Altruism		N	Mean	SD	't' value	df	P	Re mark
Gender	Male	33	227.58	18.12	0.23	198	0.818	NS
	Female	167	226.46	26.6				
Locality of the school	Rural	49	217.67	26.8	2.9	198	0.004	S*
	Urban	151	229.56	24.26				
Marital status	Married	152	227.93	24.09	1.28	198	0.201	NS
	Un married	48	222.56	28.89				
Locality of Resi dence	Rural	66	221.42	25.68	2.05	198	0.042	S*
	Urban	134	229.23	24.98				

(S* Significant at 0.05 level, NS-not significant at 0.05 level)

Table 2 shows that the calculated 't' values for altruism (2.90 and 2.05) among high school teachers exceed the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 significance level in relation to school location and place of residence. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0-1b, H0-1d) is rejected. When comparing the mean scores, urban teachers achieved a higher average score (229.56) than their rural counterparts (217.67), indicating that teachers in urban schools exhibit higher levels of altruism. Similarly, with respect to residential location, urban teachers also scored higher (229.23) than rural teachers (221.42), suggesting greater altruistic tendencies among those residing in urban areas.

It may also be inferred that the calculated t-values for altruism (0.230 and 1.282) among high school teachers with respect to gender and marital status fall below the critical threshold of 1.96 at the 0.05 significance level. As a result, the null hypotheses H0-1(a) and H0-1(c) are retained, suggesting that there is no statistically meaningful difference in the altruistic behaviour of high school teachers with respect to gender and marital status.

Hypothesis 2: There is no meaningful variation in the altruistic attitudes of high school teachers in relation to their years of educational qualification and teaching experience.

Table 3

**Significant Difference in the Altruism of High
School Teachers with respect to Educational
Qualification and Teaching Experience**

Variables	Source and Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p- value	Re sult s
Educational Qualification	Between	2720.078	2	1360.039	2.139	0.034	NS*
	Within	125233.72	197	635.704			
Teaching Experience	Between	2873.961	1	2873.961	4.549	0.042	S*
	Within	125079.83	198	631.716			

(*Significance at 0.05 level)

Table 3 indicates that the computed F-value (2.139) is lower than the critical value (2.99) at the 0.05 level of significance for the variable educational qualification. Therefore, the proposed null hypothesis H0-2(a) is accepted, revealing no statistically significant difference in the altruism levels of high school teachers based on their educational qualifications.

Additionally, Table 3 shows that the computed F-value (4.549) exceeds the critical value (2.99) at the 0.05 level of significance regarding teaching experience. This indicates a statistically significant variation in the altruistic behaviour of high school teachers based on their teaching experience, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis 2.

Table 3.1(a)

Scheffe – Significant Mean Difference in Altruism of High School Teachers with respect to years of Teaching Experience

Variables	Teaching Experience			Mean Difference	Sig.	Result
	Below 5 years	6 to 12 years	Above 13 years			
Altruism	173.71	179.08	....	5.370	0.153	NS
	173.71	....	177.08	3.370	0.023	S*
	.....	179.08	177.08	2.000	0.981	NS

(*Significance at 0.05 level) S-significant, NS-not significant

The above table 3(a) shows that the altruism of high school teachers from teaching experience within 6 to 12 years significantly differs from that below 5 years at the 0.05 level of significance. The mean score of high school teachers with teaching experience within 6 to 12 years (179.08) is greater than that of high school teachers with teaching experience below 5 years (173.71) regarding altruism. It indicates that high school teachers with teaching experience within 6 to 12 years have a higher level of altruism than those with teaching experience below 5 years.

Table 3 (a) reveals that the high school teachers with teaching experience above 13 years (177.08) do not differ from the high school teachers with teaching experience below 5 years (173.71) and the high school teachers with teaching experience within 6 to 12 years (179.08).

Conclusion

Altruism is defined by selfless actions aimed at helping others and building meaningful, unselfish relationships. It is regarded as prosocial behaviour (Boehm, 1979) and is an essential quality for teachers. Altruism involves focusing on the well-being of others rather than one's own interests (Baston, 1987). Teachers are expected to place the welfare of their students above their concerns. In this way, altruism is a framework of social behaviour based on moral principles such as compassion, humility, and a genuine desire to support others. This study gathered data from a sample of 200 high school teachers through a survey method, with an average score of 226.65, significantly higher than the midpoint of 180. This suggests that high school teachers display a moderate level of altruism. Therefore, teachers

with a higher level of altruism may extend beyond the classroom, influencing school culture, parent engagement, and community relationships, ultimately shaping their future students and the broader community.

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strategies align with each school's unique environment. Future research should explore the long-term impact of leadership on teaching and learning across varied educational contexts.

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