

Reevaluating Auguste Comte's Philosophy of Altruism among Teachers

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Abstract: *This study explores the extent of altruism practiced by teachers and their willingness to sacrifice for the welfare of others. Using a quantitative research approach with a descriptive-survey design, the study examines the profile of respondents, including their sex, age, civil status, years of teaching, and grade level taught. Additionally, the research investigates the respondents' level of altruism and the motivating factors behind their altruistic behavior. The study also explores whether there is a significant association between the extent of altruism and the profile variables, as well as the reasons motivating altruistic behavior. The participants in this research comprised 31 (45%) male respondents, 36 (52%) female respondents, and 2 (3%) respondents who did not specify their age. Most respondents fell within the age bracket of 20-24 years (41%), with the least number of respondents aged between 55-59 years (3%). The majority of teachers had 0-3 years of teaching experience (46.38%), while only a few had 24-27 years of experience (1.45%). In terms of civil status, the majority were single (71.01%), while a smaller percentage were married (17.39%). Regarding teaching grade level, most respondents taught at the Junior High level (42.03%), followed by the Primary level (29%) and Senior High level (19%). The study found that teachers generally practiced altruism frequently and to a significant extent ($M= 2.45, SD= 0.90$). Specifically, the teachers were highly motivated to sincerely help students ($M= 2.06, SD= 0.83$). Analyzing the association between the extent of altruistic behavior and profile variables revealed a significant connection between the respondents' sex and their propensity to live for others (p -value= 0.036). Furthermore, a significant association was observed between the extent of altruistic behavior and the teaching grade level when grouped (p -value = 0.022). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that female teachers tend to exhibit more altruistic behavior than their male counterparts, and Primary teachers with a student-centered approach are significantly more altruistic compared to teachers at other grade levels. The study suggests several recommendations: 1) Male teachers should enhance their socio-affective skills, including compassion, generosity, and prosocial motivation. 2) Junior and Senior high school teachers should focus on practicing altruism more effectively, investing more time and patience with their students. 3) Respondents should be exposed to programs or activities that encourage the practice of authentic altruism to a significant extent*

Keywords: Reevaluating, Motivation, Auguste Comte, Philosophy of Altruism

I. INTRODUCTION

Auguste Comte, the renowned French philosopher, grappled with the age-old issue of human selfishness at the core of societal foundations. In his seminal work, the "Catechism of Positive Religion," Comte formulated a philosophy known as altruism or "Live for Others," which stood in direct opposition to individual selfishness and self-interest. Altruism, as Comte conceived it, emphasized the significance of communal service over individualism, asserting that every person is born with a multitude of duties and obligations towards others. Comte contended that even when fulfilling our duties, there are underlying altruistic motives behind our actions. In today's modern world, altruism plays an increasingly vital role, given the prevailing sense of growing self-centeredness among people (Jayasree&Sajan, 2018).

Within the realm of education, studying altruism among teachers holds particular relevance, as countless reports abound of teachers making substantial sacrifices for the betterment of their students. It is widely expected that one of the primary duties of a teacher is to prioritize the well-being of their students above all else. However, amidst the

complexities of the modern world, some educators find themselves preoccupied, and occasionally, teachers may engage in actions that primarily serve their own interests. Even Auguste Comte acknowledged that human nature inclines us to live for ourselves and within ourselves, yet he believed that the ultimate purpose of education is to lead individuals to live for and in others (Comte, 1852).

Various studies suggest that altruism among teachers may be on the decline. The diminishing levels of teachers' altruism over the past few decades, as highlighted by Curwin (2021), underscore the significance of understanding this phenomenon and the consequences of neglecting it. Future educators' value systems appear to be drifting away from altruism, and the lack of altruistic attitudes and behaviors is identified as a primary factor contributing to this issue (Pavenkov et al., 2015).

Given these compelling reasons, the researcher is motivated to assess the extent of altruism among teachers. By conducting this assessment, it aimed to shed light on the current state of altruism among teachers and its implications for the entire educational community.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Altruism, the selfless concern for the well-being of others, has been a topic of philosophical and sociological interest for centuries. French philosopher Auguste Comte, in his work "Catechism of Positive Religion," introduced the concept of altruism as "Live for Others," emphasizing communal service over individual self-interest. Throughout history, altruism has been regarded as a noble virtue, particularly relevant in the context of education, where teachers are expected to prioritize the welfare of their students.

In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, there are concerns that altruism may be on the decline. Some studies suggest that the modern society's increasing emphasis on individualism and self-centeredness might be affecting the altruistic tendencies of educators. This trend has raised questions about the extent of altruism among teachers and its implications for the quality of education and students' well-being.

Recognizing the importance of understanding the state of altruism among teachers, this study focuses on assessing the extent of altruistic behavior among teachers. Teachers are known for embodying the core values of the institution, including compassionate caring and selfless service. By examining their levels of altruism and motivation for altruistic actions, this research aims to gain valuable insights into the prevailing attitudes and behaviors of teachers in the context of educational altruism.

Understanding the extent of altruism among teachers holds significance in guiding educational policies and practices. The findings from this study may inform the development of targeted interventions to strengthen and promote altruistic behaviors among teachers, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community. By fostering a culture of altruism, it can further enhance the quality of teaching and learning, creating a positive and supportive environment for students' growth and development.

In conclusion, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on altruism in the context of education. By examining the extent of altruism among teachers, it aspires to shed light on the importance of promoting selfless service and compassionate care within the teaching profession.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a descriptive-survey design to assess the extent of Comte's altruistic behavior among teachers and explore the level of internalization of altruism within this group. Quantitative methods align with the positivist view, emphasizing the careful validation and measurement of the phenomenon or area of interest (Burns & Grove, 2007).

The descriptive method was chosen as it allows for gathering comprehensive information about the present existing condition, extending beyond mere data collection, as explained by Bueno (2017).

A researcher-made questionnaire was the primary data collection tool utilized in this study. The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation by a panel of experts to ensure its relevance and accuracy. Drawing insights from relevant literature, the researcher formulated the questionnaire, incorporating the key variables of the study. Participants rated the appropriateness of each indicator on a five-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part 1 focused on gathering demographic information about the respondents, such as age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, and the grade level taught. Part 2 assessed the extent of altruism practiced by teachers. Part 3 explored the motivating factors that prompt teachers to engage in altruistic behavior.

The survey design allowed for a systematic collection of data from a sizable sample of teachers, providing valuable insights into their altruistic tendencies and the level of commitment to the concept of altruism. Through this quantitative approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive and objective understanding of the extent of altruism among teachers.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study shed light on the extent of altruism among teachers. Through a quantitative approach using a researcher-made questionnaire, data was gathered to assess the level of altruistic behavior and the internalization of altruism within this group of educators. The findings provide valuable insights into the prevalence of selfless service and compassionate care among teachers, revealing the motivations driving their altruistic actions. These results offer a deeper understanding of the role of altruism in the teaching profession and its implications for creating a positive and supportive learning environment.

An overview of the composition of the respondents based on their demographic characteristics. Female respondents constituted the majority, comprising 52% of the total participants, while males represented 45%. The most represented age group was between 20 to 24 years old, accounting for 41% of the respondents. Regarding teaching experience, the highest percentage fell under the 0 to 3 years bracket, encompassing 46.38% of the participants. As for civil status, the majority were single, making up 71.01%, followed by married respondents at 17.39%. In terms of teaching grade level, the majority were involved in Junior High-level teaching, with 42.03% of the respondents.

TABLE 1. THE TEACHER'S EXTENT OF PRACTICE OF ALTRUISM

Indicators	<u>M</u>	SD	VI
Live for Others			
1. I would rather sleep late in the evening to read and double-check my students' paperwork than do nothing at all	2.64	0.94	Sometimes
2. I would rather spend the majority of my time putting extra effort into the advancement of my students than hanging out with friends or spending time with family	2.72	0.82	Sometimes
3. I would prefer not to eat my snacks so that I may give them to my students	3.07	1.18	Seldom
4. I would rather overlook my health (sick with a non-contagious illness) in order to have a class and teach my students	2.43	1.05	Often
5. I spend my own money to buy resources if needed in my work	2.01	0.96	Often
6. I gently correct other people rather than tolerating their wrong behavior	1.94	0.78	Often
7. I must compromise my personal views to meet the expectations of my superior	2.17	0.86	Often
8. I use my free time to continue my work rather than doing my hobbies or rest	2.42	0.93	Often
9. I do not mind time and doesn't go home unless work is finished	2.67	0.97	Sometimes
10. I tend to neglect my own family, friends, and partner because I am preoccupied with work	3.75	1.06	Seldom
11. I am willing to give up things that are important to me for the sake of my students	3.14	1.02	Sometimes
12. I help my students without asking anything in return	1.22	0.48	Always
13. I do things with my own effort and resources	1.74	0.61	Always
14. I sacrificed something that was not even mentioned in my job description	2.42	0.88	Often
Average:	2.45	0.90	Often

Table 1 presents the extent of altruism among teachers, with each indicator's mean and standard deviation provided. The results reveal a prevalent sense of social responsibility and dedication to the service of teaching as a manifestation of altruism.

The highest indicators, #12 "I help my students without asking anything in return" (M= 1.22, SD= 0.48) and #13 "I do things with my own effort and resources" (M= 1.74, SD= 0.61), demonstrate that most teachers are willing to extend help and put in personal effort and resources for the benefit of their students. This underscores their commitment to providing a good education, free from expecting anything in return beyond gratitude.

Additionally, six indicators received the verbal interpretation of "Often" or practiced to a much extent, indicating the teachers' consistent practice of altruism. These indicators highlight aspects such as gently correcting others' wrong behavior, spending personal money on work-related resources, compromising personal views to meet superiors' expectations, overlooking personal health to teach students, using free time for work rather than personal activities, and sacrificing beyond their job description.

Two indicators, #9 "I do not mind time and doesn't go home unless work is finished" (M= 2.67, SD= 0.90) and #11 "I am willing to give up things that are important to me for the sake of my students" (M= 3.14, SD= 0.96), received the verbal interpretation of "Sometimes" or practiced to some extent, indicating a moderate level of altruistic behavior in these aspects.

Notably, the indicator #10 "I tend to neglect my own family, friends, and partner because I am preoccupied with work" (M= 3.75, SD= 1.06) received the lowest mean, suggesting that neglecting personal relationships due to work is not a common practice among teachers.

On average, the respondents' practice of altruism is interpreted as "Often" (M= 2.45, SD= 0.90), signifying that teachers frequently demonstrate altruistic behavior to a significant extent.

Overall, the findings align with Auguste Comte's concept of altruism, emphasizing the moral obligation to assist and sacrifice for others. The high-ranking indicators confirm the teachers' commitment to living for others, selflessly dedicating their efforts and resources to the service of their students.

TABLE 2. THE REASONS THAT MOTIVATE TEACHERS TO ACT ALTRUISTICALLY

Egoism vs Altruism	M	SD	VI
Indicators			
1. I feel better about myself when I am able to help others	1.17	0.42	Always
2. I want to be part of my students' academic journey	1.14	0.35	Always
3. I feel great when I have done something worthwhile for others	1.14	0.35	Always
4. I enjoy working with students	1.29	0.52	Always
5. I place a high value on helping students with their problems	1.41	0.55	Always
6. I help in order to have higher status	3.78	1.46	Seldom
7. Helping others will make me look good in the eyes of others	3.81	1.42	Seldom
8. I help students in obtaining their cooperation	1.93	1.10	Often
9. I find it satisfying to help people	1.28	0.59	Always
10. I want to be known for assisting people	3.64	1.57	Seldom
Average:	2.06	0.83	Often

Table 2 presents the motivations that drive teachers to act altruistically. The results show that the teachers' altruistic actions are primarily motivated by a genuine concern for their students' well-being and academic journey.

The highest-rated indicators, #2 "I want to be part of my students' academic journey" (M= 1.14, SD= 0.35) and #3 "I feel great when I have done something worthwhile for others" (M= 1.14, SD= 0.35), indicate that teachers derive satisfaction from witnessing their students' success and are willing to go above and beyond their role as educators to benefit their students. These findings underscore the teachers' inherent motivation to act altruistically, irrespective of personal gain.

Additionally, five other indicators received the verbal interpretation of "Always," including #1 "I feel better about myself when I am able to help others" (M= 1.17), #9 "I find it satisfying to help people" (M= 1.28), #4 "I enjoy

working with students" (M= 1.29), #5 "I place a high value on helping students with their problems" (M= 1.41). These results reveal a profound sense of social responsibility and dedication to students' welfare and academic development.

On the other hand, one indicator, #8 "I help students in obtaining their cooperation" (M= 1.93, SD= 1.10), received the interpretation of "Often," suggesting that teachers occasionally act with the aim of obtaining students' cooperation.

Conversely, the three lowest-rated indicators, #10 "I want to be known for assisting people" (M= 3.64, SD= 1.57), #6 "I help in order to have higher status" (M= 3.78, SD= 1.46), #7 "Helping others will make me look good in the eyes of others" (M= 3.81, SD= 1.42), indicate that teachers are seldom motivated to act altruistically for the purpose of seeking recognition or personal gain. These findings align with the idea that true altruism stems from selfless and authentic motives, rather than seeking external validation or benefits.

Auguste Comte's proposition that man's greatest challenge lies in reconciling the growth of altruism with egoism is supported by these results. While some teachers may be motivated by indirect rewards or personal enjoyment, the majority of teachers display genuine altruism driven by their commitment to the service of others.

In conclusion, the study highlights the prevailing altruistic tendencies among teachers, with their motivations primarily rooted in a genuine concern for their students' well-being and academic progress. These findings affirm the enduring influence of Auguste Comte's ideas on altruism, emphasizing that authentic acts of care and self-sacrifice should not preclude caring for oneself. The results underscore the importance of nurturing and promoting altruistic behaviors among educators to foster a positive and compassionate educational environment.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the extent of altruism among teachers. Through a quantitative research approach with a descriptive-survey design, the study assessed both the altruistic behavior of teachers and the motivations driving their selfless actions.

The results reveal that teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to altruistic behavior, with a significant majority consistently displaying acts of selfless service for the benefit of their students. The teachers' dedication is evident in their willingness to help students without expecting anything in return, investing personal effort, and utilizing their own resources to enhance the learning experience. The study also highlights the teachers' genuine concern for their students' well-being and academic journey, as they find satisfaction and fulfillment in witnessing their students' success.

It is noteworthy that the motivations driving teachers' altruism are primarily rooted in authentic and intrinsic factors, such as a sense of duty and genuine care for their students. Altruistic acts are not pursued for personal gain or recognition but are driven by the desire to contribute positively to the lives of their students and the broader educational community.

The findings align with the teachings of Auguste Comte, who emphasized the moral obligation of living for others and the significance of selfless service in promoting a harmonious and compassionate society. The study reaffirms the enduring relevance of Comte's ideas on altruism, demonstrating how altruistic behaviors are fundamental to fostering a positive educational environment and enhancing the overall quality of teaching and learning.

These results have significant implications for educational institutions, particularly those with a strong tradition of service and compassion. By recognizing and promoting altruism among teachers, educational institutions can cultivate a culture of care and support, leading to enhanced student well-being, engagement, and academic achievement.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the crucial role of altruism in the teaching profession and its transformative impact on the lives of students. As educators continue to prioritize the welfare of their students and embrace altruistic behaviors, they contribute to the greater realization of Auguste Comte's vision of a society founded on compassion, selflessness, and genuine care for one another.

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