

Essay

Egoistic and Altruistic Behaviors

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Egoism and altruism motivate individuals to behave and act in a certain manner. Egoism is characterized by total self-interest where individuals seem to care for their wellbeing and interests and desires only. Altruism is characterized by absolute collective interest, and individuals with this trait are overly concerned about the welfare, wellbeing, and happiness of others. Although human beings are inherently selfish, evolution has made human minds to develop differently, such that individuals are motivated by either selfishness or selflessness. Altruistic and egoistic behaviors can be understood through the identification of various motivations of behavior. The paper will discuss the differences between egoistic behavior and altruistic behavior and try to answer the question of whether purely altruistic behavior exists.

Egoistic behavior is characterized with good actions aimed for personal gain, mostly for people to impress others, draw attention, receive gratitude, or get some rewards. Egoism makes people have inflated opinions of themselves, which makes them put own needs first before those of others. According to psychological egoism theory, people act to their advantage and they do well to serve own interests. Egoistic behavior, in this case, can be said to be full of selfish acts. For instance, a person may donate money to charity with the intention of getting a business contract in return. In contrast, altruistic behavior involves acts that show concern and care for others. Psychological altruism comes naturally while ethical altruism is the expectation that individuals ought to mind others. The behavior can be observed when individuals show devotion and unselfish concern for others (Stocks & Lishner, 2018). For instance, an act of altruism can be demonstrated by a person who assists a stranger to change a tire.

Egoistic behavior is characterized with reciprocity and the expectation of rewards. Individuals behave and act with an intention to get benefits in one way or another. People with this kind of behavior do things to feed their greed. The extreme self-centeredness makes people have various selfish motivations. For instance, egoistic people will feel energized and more fulfilled when they get rewards or recognitions for their actions because it is always the end goal (Zaluski, 2018). In contrast, altruistic behavior is driven by empathy, moral concerns, and compassion for other individuals. Individuals show reactive behavior where they respond to another in need with acts of kindness. Altruistic individuals show emotional empathy by understanding when others need help. An altruistic person may also feel energized and more fulfilled after doing acts of kindness. However, this can be argued to be an example of egoistic behavior. Individuals who show altruistic behavior are known to reason differently, although it is not easy to tell their intentions.

The inability to tell people's intentions and motivations makes it impossible to believe that purely altruistic behavior exists. Altruistic behaviors can be motivated by self-interests. In most cases, the seemingly selfless acts can be intended to attract personal rewards. People have different motives when doing such kind of acts. The act of putting others before oneself and showing actions that are truly unselfish is, however, a rare thing. Purely altruistic behavior does not exist. Arguably, an altruistic person

who feels more energized and fulfilled after doing acts of kindness can be said to be egoistic. Therefore, the unselfish acts for the sake of other people that disregard own well-being cannot be interpreted as pure altruism (Siem & Stürmer, 2018).

People feel empathetic and have the desire to help others because they also focus on their emotional states. For instance, when someone is sad, an act of kindness can be therapeutic, can make them feel better. In this case, the behavior is driven by a strong desire to better own emotional state which may not be pure altruism. Many people exhibit actions that seem selfless to either receive gratitude or better themselves in one way or another. For example, charitable deeds are often made with the expectation of getting some benefits in return. However, in a psychological sense, true altruism may seem to exist between individuals who are in close relationships (Gebauer et al., 2015).

Purely altruistic behavior is difficult to identify because of the hidden motives. There are people who may want to feel good or get praise for helping others. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the various motivations that drive people to show extreme care and interest to help others. For instance, many people who show altruistic behavior are driven by the need and desire to feel good about themselves and their actions. Also, individuals may want to be viewed as altruistic by society mainly because there is something they need in return. Thus, many heroic acts and kindness have motivating factors which can be said to be egoistic in some sense. It is tempting to think that even if people may have the ultimate goals to care for others, there is an intrinsic force that has some level of self-interest. However, most individuals are inherently capable and sometimes compelled to help others in unselfish ways.

In conclusion, people are considered to be naturally selfish. While individuals may show acts of kindness, psychological egoism theory states that an individual will always have natural selfishness which guides one to think and consider oneself even when acting for the good of others. People are motivated by self-interest or some benefit to some extent, including actions that seem altruistic.

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