CHAPTER 4
THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Human beings desire to know about the world has led the individual from primitive superstition to scientific knowledge. From mysticism, dogma and the limitations of systematic observation, human beings, in their quest for knowledge, have examined the process of thinking itself, to develop the method of deductive-inductive thinking, which has become the foundation of scientific method. Although first applied as a method of the physical sciences, the process of scientific inquiry has also become the prevailing method of the behavioural sciences.

John Dewey (1938) has suggested a pattern that is helpful in identifying the elements of a deductive-inductive process:

1. Identification and definition of the problem
2. Formulation of a hypothesis
3. Collection, organisation and analysis of data
4. Formulation of conclusions
5. Verification, rejection or modification of the hypothesis by the
test of its consequences in a specific situation

Based on the above pattern, the present investigation attempts to
study the relationship of empathy, self-esteem and social desirability
with altruism. In addition, the study also seeks to investigate
whether there is a difference in altruism with regard to sex and birth
order. This chapter is dedicated to the description of the research
methodology of the present study. Specifically, it describes the
objectives of the study, the hypothesis and the operational
definitions of the variables used in the study. The sample, the
design of the study, the instruments used and the procedure
adopted for conducting the investigation are also discussed.

Issues and Objectives:

Human beings can be extremely irrational, unsociable, selfish
and destructive of self and others. The manifestation of human
aggression and selfishness in everyday life, together with the mass
destruction brought about by war, led Sigmund Freud to believe that human beings are aggressive by nature.

However, manifestations (examples) of human kindness, goodness, love and willingness to sacrifice for others are everywhere. Carl Rogers asserting that man is basically good said;

I am quite aware that out of defensiveness and inner fear, individuals can and do behave in ways that are incredibly cruel, horribly destructive, immature, regressive, antisocial and hurtful. Yet one of the most refreshing and invigorating parts of my experience is to work with such individuals and to discover the strongly positive directional tendencies which exist in them, as in all of us, at the deepest levels.

Rogers, 1961.

Accordingly, reflecting a profound respect for human beings, Rogers posited human beings as positive social animals, ones that can be trusted and basically are constructive. Thus, different observers have been inspired in their thinking about humanity by different parts of the total vista. It was out of an interest to
understand better the nature of humans that the present study was conceived.

The present investigation focuses on the central issue of altruism, attempting to understand the concept and some of its various psychosocial correlates. The specific objectives that have emerged from the need to understand the concept of altruism are:

1- To determine whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and altruism:

   Generally self-esteem refers to a person's self-liking. It is a positive or negative attitude towards the self. Experiments (e.g. Midlarsky & Midlarsky, 1976, Schwarz & Ben David, 1976) have consistently demonstrated that individuals who feel competent to deal with costs of helping are more likely to intervene to help, than are people who feel unable to cope with the situation. Self-esteem, being an indicator of the individuals' perception of his or her general worth, competence and capability,
the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and altruism.

2- To determine whether there is a relationship between empathy and altruism:

Empathy refers to the unique capacity of the human organism to feel the needs, the aspirations, the frustrations, the joy, the sorrows, the anxieties, the hurt, the need, the hunger of others as if it were his or her own. (Clark, 1980).

Most prior research considers empathy to be a prerequisite of altruism, asserting that persons high in empathy will be more altruistic as compared to people low in empathy. Empathy being a unique human trait, important in most social transactions, the present study makes an attempt to study the relationship between empathy and altruism.

3- To determine whether there is a relationship between social-desirability and altruism:
Social desirability refers to the need to obtain approval by responding in a culturally approved and acceptable manner.

Individuals who score high on social desirability know what is socially proper and wants to appear proper. They know what is good as defined by societal consensus and are motivated to confirm to this consensus. Altruistic behaviour, being a positive form of behaviour, generally considered 'good' by society. The present investigator seeks to investigate the relationship between social-desirability and altruism.

4- To determine whether there is a difference in altruism among Indian and U.A.E students:

Children who are brought up in two different cultures, societies and countries, respond in the type of behaviour that is acceptable to their surroundings.

The present investigator seeks to investigate this difference in altruistic behaviour. It is presumed that Indian students show a higher degree of altruism as compared to the students in U.A.E.
The present research also constructs a scale to measure altruism, to make the study of individual differences in altruism easier.

5- To determine whether there is a difference in altruism among young males and females:

Sex is the most basic distinguishing factor among human beings dividing them into males and females. To a large extent, cultural stereotypes for females emphasize qualities of nurturance, gentleness and helpfulness. Men, on the other hand, are encouraged to be competitive, individualistic and goal-oriented. The present investigator seeks to find out whether the cultural stereotypes prevail and whether altruism is affected by the sex of the individual.

The Hypothesis:

A hypothesis is a conjectural statement, a tentative proposition about the relationship two or more phenomenon or variables. It is an educated guess or hunch based on past experience, observations
and/or information gained from others. A hypothesis is formulated in such a way that this hunch can be tested. It is one of the major steps in a scientific inquiry which ultimately guides the line of action. Based upon the findings of the subsequent research, the hypothesis is supported or rejected and more hypotheses are formulated to continue the process of building a cohesive theory.

In this study, the formulation of hypothesis has been influenced both by prior study and intuitive reasoning. They are:

H-1: There is a significant positive correlation between Self-Esteem and altruism.

H-2: There is a significant positive correlation between Empathy and altruism.

H-3: There is a significant positive correlation between Social-desirability and altruism.
H-4: Altruism will be higher among Indian students as
compared to U.A.E. students.

H-5: Altruism will be higher among young females as
compared to young males.

Operational definition of variables:
The variables used in the present study were operationally
defined as:

1- Empathy:

Empathy is defined as an individual vicarious emotional
response to perceived emotional experiences of others (Mehrabian
& Epstein, 1972). It refers to emotional empathy which consists of a
more basic or ‘primitive’ level of interpersonal process whereby,
almost through a process of contagion, one responds with emotions
similar to those of others who are present (Mehrabian, Young & Sato, 1988).

2- Social-desirability:

Social-desirability is defined as the need to obtain approval by responding in a culturally appropriate and acceptable manner. (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

3- Self-esteem:

A positive or negative attitude towards a particular object (Rosenberg, 1965).

4- Altruism:

Altruism is defined as behaviour carried out to benefit another without anticipation of rewards from external sources (McCauley and Berkowitz, 1970).
Method and Procedure:

This section provides a description of the sample, the design, the instruments used, and the procedure adopted for conducting the study.

The Sample:

The number of subjects in this study was 400 college-going students. Of these, 200 were Indians, from different universities of Mumbai, – 100 male and 100 female. The other 200 were U.A.E. students , from different universities of Dubai, again, 100 male and 100 female.

The Indian subjects were drawn from Jai Hind College, H.R College, K.C College, Mumbai, all aged between 18-20 years, the mean age being 20 years. The UAE students were drawn from American University in Dubai, University of Wollongong, Indira Gandhi University, Middlesex University, Skyline College, American centre in Dubai, BITS Pillani, Mahe-Manipal, Mahatma Gandhi University, and Grirates Centre for management and Technology.
all aged between 18-20 years, the mean age being 20 years. Refer to Table 4.1.

**The Design:**

A 2x2 Anova Design with respondents sex, ie, male and female, was used. The study attempted to see the effect of respondents’ sex and nationality on altruism.

Besides the above Anova design, Co-relational analysis and T-Test models were also used in the present study.

Co-relational analysis was done to study the relationship of empathy, self-esteem and desirability on altruism.

T-Test was used in the present study to determine the relationship between altruism and gender (male, female). And the relationship between altruism and nationality.
Table 4.1:

Total Sample Distribution of the present study:

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<tr>
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<td>DUBAI STUDENTS</td>
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Apparatus and materials:

A booklet of questionnaires consisting of:

a. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale

b. The Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale developed by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972)

c. Social desirability Scale developed by Reynolds (1982)

d. The Altruism scale developed by a fellow researcher (1994)

a. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale

This instrument, developed by Rosenberg (1965) was used to assess subjects' global self-esteem. The scale consists of ten statements about the self, to which subjects indicated strong agreement, agreement, disagreement or strong disagreement. Responses were converted to numerical equivalents of +4 (strong agreement) to +1 (strong disagreement). Consonant with other research, the scale was scored according to the likert format (Rosenberg, 1979).
Two week test-retest reliabilities of 0.85 and 0.88 have been reported for the scale (Rosenberg, 1979). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale correlates well with other measures of self-esteem (Demo, 1985) as well as other theoretically related variables (Wylie, 1974).

b. The Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale developed by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972)

This instrument, developed by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), was used to measure empathy. This 13-item measure of empathy is nearly balanced for response bias with sixteen positively and seventeen negatively worded items to which subjects indicated their agreement or disagreement on a nine-point scale. The total score is computed for each subject by algebraically summing his or her responses to the positively worded items and by subtracting from this quantity the algebraic sum of his or her responses to the negatively worded items.
The correlation between scores on the empathy scale and Marlowe and Crowne's social desirability scale was 0.06 (Mehrabian and Epstein, 1972). The split-half reliability was a moderate alpha coefficient of 0.68 and the alpha coefficient for the tests internal consistency was 0.79 (Mehrabian and Epstein (1972). The validity of the test was considered to be high because the reliability proved to be high and correlation with social desirability was low (Kallioopuska, 1980).

c. Social desirability Scale developed by Reynolds (1982)

A thirteen item scale developed by Reynolds (1982) was used to measure social desirability. This scale is a shortened form of the Marlowe and Crowne (1960) social desirability scale. It consists of 13 items and utilises a true-false response format like the Standard Marlowe and Crowne Scale.

The concurrent validity between the short form and the standard Marlowe- Crowne Form was found to be 0.93 indicating that it may be used instead of standard MC Scale (Reynolds, 1982).
The short form also demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability (rKR-20 = 0.76) and compared favourably with the reliability (rKR-20 = 0.82) of the standard Marlowe and Crowne Scale (Reynolds, 1982).

d. The Altruism scale developed by a fellow researcher (1994)

It is a 14-item measure developed by a fellow researcher to measure altruism. The test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.89.

**Procedure:**

The investigator met the subjects in large and small groups during recess hours. Each respondent was given a booklet containing the various instruments (The emotional empathetic tendency scale, The Rosenberg Self- esteem Scale, The social – desirability scale and The Altruism scale). The booklet began with a request to the subject to fill in some demographic information. The following general instructions were given to the subjects:
"The following scales inquire about your thoughts, feelings or behaviours in a variety of situations. You will find information regarding each scale prior to the scale. Please read the instructions carefully before responding. There is no time limit for making your responses. If you have any questions to ask as you read your sheets of paper, raise your hands and I will come to you. All information obtained will be used for research purpose only and will be kept confidential."

After subjects had completed the booklet, the investigator thanked them for their cooperation.