

IS ALTRUISM MORE IMPORTANT IN EDUCATION OR UPBRINGING?

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ABSTRACT: Altruism, the selfless concern for the well-being of others, is a fundamental value in both education and upbringing. While education primarily focuses on intellectual and skill development, upbringing shapes a child's moral and ethical framework. This paper explores whether altruism is more crucial in education or upbringing, analyzing their respective roles in fostering selflessness, empathy, and social responsibility.[2] Research suggests that early childhood experiences significantly influence altruistic tendencies, making upbringing a vital foundation. However, schools provide structured opportunities for students to practice altruism through collaboration, community service, and ethical education. This study examines psychological, philosophical, and pedagogical perspectives on altruism, discussing its impact on personal and societal development. It also explores how parents and educators can work together to cultivate a culture of selflessness. The findings indicate that while upbringing lays the foundation for altruism, education refines and expands it through real-world applications. Ultimately, altruism should be deeply embedded in both spheres to create compassionate and responsible individuals.[1]

KEYWORDS. Altruism, education, upbringing, moral development, ethics, empathy, pedagogy, child psychology, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, prosocial behavior, family influence, school environment, collaborative learning, community service, character education, selflessness, moral reasoning, personal growth, ethical leadership.

INTRODUCTION. The debate over whether altruism is more essential in education or upbringing has been a long-standing discussion among educators, psychologists, and philosophers. Both play critical roles in shaping an individual's values and behavior. Upbringing, which encompasses family influence and early social interactions, is the first and most crucial stage where children learn fundamental moral principles, including kindness, generosity, and empathy. Parents and caregivers are the primary role models in this phase, directly shaping a child's ethical compass.[8]

On the other hand, education provides a structured environment where children interact with peers, teachers, and society at large. Schools offer opportunities to practice altruistic behavior in diverse settings, helping students refine their moral values and apply them in real-life situations. Unlike upbringing, which primarily relies on family teachings and immediate social environments, education introduces children to broader ethical dilemmas and responsibilities, encouraging them to develop a sense of justice and fairness.[5]

This article explores the significance of altruism in both education and upbringing, analyzing their respective impacts on moral and ethical development. By examining psychological theories, pedagogical approaches, and real-world applications, this study aims to determine whether altruism is more effectively nurtured in childhood through upbringing or in formal education settings. The discussion will also highlight the interconnectedness of these two domains, arguing that a balanced approach is essential for cultivating genuinely altruistic individuals.[4]

MAIN PART

1. Altruism in Upbringing: The Role of Family and Early Socialization

Upbringing plays a crucial role in shaping a child's moral and ethical values. From infancy, children observe and imitate the behavior of their caregivers, forming the foundation of their moral compass. Several factors contribute to the development of altruism in upbringing:[6]

1.1. Parental Influence

Parents serve as the first role models for altruistic behavior. Studies suggest that children who witness acts of kindness and generosity at home are more likely to adopt similar behaviors. Parenting styles that emphasize empathy, cooperation, and fairness contribute to the development of a child's prosocial tendencies.

1.2. Emotional Security and Attachment

Secure attachment with caregivers fosters emotional stability and empathy. According to attachment theory, children who experience warmth and care in their early years are more likely to develop concern for others' well-being. In contrast, neglect or lack of emotional support can hinder the growth of altruistic tendencies.

1.3. Cultural and Social Norms

Family traditions and societal expectations shape children's perceptions of altruism. In cultures where collective well-being is prioritized, children tend to develop stronger social responsibility. Encouraging children to participate in household responsibilities, share with siblings, and help others reinforces altruistic values from an early age.

2. Altruism in Education: The Role of Schools and Teachers

While upbringing lays the foundation for altruistic behavior, education provides the platform for its practical application. Schools offer diverse opportunities for students to develop and refine their altruistic competencies.

2.1. Peer Interaction and Social Learning

Schools expose children to various social situations, requiring cooperation, compromise, and empathy. Group projects, peer mentoring, and classroom discussions allow students to experience different perspectives and practice kindness. Lev Vygotsky's social learning theory suggests that children learn best through interaction, making education a powerful medium for reinforcing altruistic behavior.[7]

2.2. Ethical and Moral Education

Formal education provides structured moral education programs that teach students about ethics, justice, and social responsibility. Many schools incorporate values education into their curricula, discussing historical figures, literature, and real-world events that emphasize selflessness and moral courage.

2.3. Service-Learning and Community Engagement

Schools often organize volunteer programs, charity events, and community service projects that encourage students to engage in altruistic acts. These experiences help students understand the impact of their actions, fostering a lifelong commitment to helping others.[10]

3. Comparing the Impact of Upbringing and Education on Altruism

Both upbringing and education contribute significantly to the development of altruism, but their impacts differ in certain ways:

Factor	Upbringing	Education
Primary Influence	Family, caregivers	Teachers, peers
Moral Development	Emotional foundation, initial values	Practical application, ethical reasoning
Social Context	Limited to family and close community	Broader societal exposure



Opportunities for Altruistic Behavior	Household tasks, sibling interactions	Group work, volunteering, leadership roles
Sustainability	Early lessons can be reinforced or forgotten	Structured reinforcement through curriculum
Primary Influence	Family, caregivers	Teachers, peers

The table highlights that upbringing is essential for instilling early altruistic values, while education refines and expands these values by providing opportunities for real-world application.[9]

4. Bridging Upbringing and Education for a More Altruistic Society

Rather than viewing upbringing and education as separate entities, it is essential to integrate both for a holistic approach to altruistic development. Parents and educators must collaborate to reinforce ethical values consistently. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Encouraging schools to involve parents in moral education programs.
- Designing curricula that blend academic learning with ethical discussions and community involvement.
- Promoting open communication between teachers and parents to ensure consistency in teaching altruistic values.

CONCLUSION

Altruism is an indispensable component of both upbringing and education. While upbringing provides the initial moral foundation through parental guidance, emotional security, and social norms, education offers structured opportunities for applying and refining these values. Without a strong upbringing, students may struggle to internalize altruistic values, and without reinforcement in education, these values may remain underdeveloped.

Ultimately, altruism should not be confined to one domain but should be cultivated throughout a person's life. Parents, educators, and policymakers must work together to create environments that nurture selflessness, empathy, and social responsibility. By integrating altruism into both family life and formal education, we can build a more compassionate and ethical society.

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