

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Identity motives in charitable giving: Explanations for charity preferences from a global donor survey

Cassandra M. Chapman<sup>1</sup>  | Barbara M. Masser<sup>2</sup> | Winnifred R. Louis<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia<sup>2</sup>School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia**Correspondence**

Cassandra M. Chapman, UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, St. Lucia, QLD 4072, Australia.

Email: [c.chapman@business.uq.edu.au](mailto:c.chapman@business.uq.edu.au)**Abstract**

Millions of charities compete for donor dollars, yet why people prefer to give to particular charities remains poorly understood. Informed by the social identity approach, and using mixed methods, we analyzed open-ended responses from a global donor survey ( $N = 1,849$  from 117 countries) to understand why participants see their favorite charity as important, and how identities influence charity preferences. Nine subthemes were generated under two overarching themes: Self and Other. Theme prevalence and charity category were not independent: donors were more likely to explain giving to religious and research charities in relation to the self, but to explain giving to social service, animal, or international charities in relation to the other. We also present an inventory of the identities that consumers use to inform their giving. Together, findings show the importance of identities in charitable giving and demonstrate how consumer motives depend on the cause or beneficiary.

**KEYWORDS**

charitable giving, charity preference, donor motivation, identity

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Why do people give to charity? This question has been systematically studied by researchers across the disciplines of marketing, psychology, philanthropy, and economics. A range of motives have been identified, including altruism, reputation, values, identities, guilt, and strategic group interests (e.g., Aaker & Akutsu, 2009; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Hibbert, Smith, Davies, & Ireland, 2007; Nadler, 2002). These motives have generally been investigated in relation to an individual's decision to give at all. Yet large numbers of charities compete for donors' attention. There are, for example, over 57,000 charities registered in Australia (ACNC, 2020), 1.4 million in the United States (McKeever, 2015), and over 2 million nonprofits in India (Mahapatra, 2014). Why people give to particular causes is therefore a question that will be of interest to scholars and practitioners alike. We seek to understand if and how consumer motives for giving vary across different types of charity targets.

Although charitable giving is a dyadic phenomenon—with a donor giving to help a beneficiary—approaches to understanding giving motives tend to exclusively consider the donor, without reference to how the beneficiary may also influence consumer decisions. An emerging

body of research has begun to demonstrate that different types of people tend to give to different types of charities (Chapman, Louis, & Masser, 2018; Neumayr & Handy, 2017; Wiepking, 2010). Chapman et al. (2018) argue that these patterns of preferences likely reflect the values and priorities of important social groups. Yet, until now, research has not examined the way identities are used to explain giving preferences, nor how different charity targets may reflect or activate different giving motives. The current research applies Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) to understand how donors use their own and others' identities to explain the importance of certain charities over others. Further, taking a mixed-method approach, this study investigates whether identity-based and other donor motives vary depending on the target of help (i.e., the beneficiary).

Below, we first review the existing literature on motives for charitable giving. Next, we argue that giving can be understood as a social process using the social identity perspective to explain self-other considerations. Finally, we present the results of qualitative and quantitative analyses of data from a global survey of donors explaining why certain charities are important to them. Comparatively little research has studied how donor motivation may change

as a function of the charity target. The present research thus lays the groundwork for the development of a new theoretical understanding of donor motivation. In particular, we seek to understand how donors use identities to make sense of their giving choices. We also highlight the motives and identities that are most relevant for giving to different types of charity or beneficiaries.

### 1.1 | Self- and other-oriented motives for giving

Charitable giving refers to the act of donating money to organizations that benefit targets outside the donor's own family (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). We might therefore expect that charity is motivated primarily by an altruistic concern for some other (i.e., the beneficiary). A range of other-oriented motives have indeed been highlighted in the literature, which explain giving as motivated by concerns for beneficiaries. For example, awareness of need (knowing donations are needed), altruism (concern about the wellbeing of the less fortunate), efficacy (whether or not the donation will make a difference), and empathy (the ability to understand what other people are thinking or feeling) have all been highlighted as common other-oriented motives for giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Konrath & Handy, 2017; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007).

Yet charitable giving may also accrue benefits to the self (i.e., the donor). Indeed, many motives for giving also appear to be self-oriented, driven by the interests of the donor rather than the beneficiary. For example, donors may give for egoistic reasons (seeking to enhance their reputation or be praised), to gain material or psychological benefits (e.g., tax rebates or a good feeling), or to enact important values in the world (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Konrath & Handy, 2017; Lehman & James, 2019; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007). While these motives stress the interests of the individual donor, people may also give to promote the strategic interests of their important social groups. For example, donors sometimes give to restore a threatened group identity, to make their own group look good in front of others, or to demonstrate the power of their group over beneficiaries (Nadler, 2002, 2016; Nadler & Chernyak-Hai, 2014; Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, & Ben-David, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2007, 2017; van Leeuwen & Harinck, 2016).

Consumer research has also investigated self- and other-oriented motivations, and the way that contextual factors and individual differences may shift these orientations. For example, people prefer to spend on themselves when they feel powerful and prefer to spend on others when they feel powerless (Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2010). Also, people who strongly believe in karma are less motivated by self-oriented appeals than people who do not believe in karma (Kulow & Kramer, 2016). Finally, the real or imagined presence of others can influence self versus other orientations: when giving is private, people respond more readily to marketing appeals that highlight self-benefits; however, marketing appeals that stress benefits to others are more effective when people have a heightened sense of public scrutiny (White & Peloza, 2009).

Broadly speaking, these diverse consumer motives—grouped under the categories of self-oriented and other-oriented—highlight

the inherent interpersonal and (potentially) intergroup nature of giving. Further, consumer research shows that these orientations are malleable and can be influenced by salient information in the social environment. Given the dynamic and social nature of motivations, social psychological theories of group processes can help shed new light on the question of why people give to charity.

### 1.2 | A social identity approach to understanding giving preferences

Charitable giving is inherently a social process, in which gifts link donors and beneficiaries. Different combinations of donors and beneficiaries, therefore, may promote giving through different mechanisms. As such, understanding both the self (donor) and the other (beneficiary) are important when seeking to understand whether or not a gift will be made, and why or why not (see also Andreoni & Payne, 2013; Chapman et al., 2018).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) proposes that humans use a process of categorization to navigate the complexity of the social world. This leads people to think of both self and other in terms of groups. Individuals have a personal identity (sense of I), yet the groups they belong to can also be seen as extensions of the self, creating social identities (sense of we). Thinking of oneself in social identity terms, that is, as a “we,” leads one to categorize others as either insiders (us) or outsiders (them), and respond accordingly.

Self-other distinctions (or, using social identity terminology, ingroup-outgroup distinctions) are a normal and natural by-product of social categorization. When targets are categorized as “other” they are seen as more interchangeable with one another, perceived less favorably, and are less likely to be helped than ingroup targets (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Donors may therefore be more willing to give when a shared identity is salient and they perceive the beneficiary as part of an ingroup.

Previous research has found that identities do affect consumer behavior (e.g., Klein, Lowrey, & Otnes, 2015; McCarthy, Collins, Flaherty, & McCarthy, 2017; Oyserman, 2009; Pinna, 2020), including charitable giving (e.g., Aaker & Akutsu, 2009; Reed, Aquino, & Levy, 2007). Priming donor and community identities in fundraising appeals can increase charitable gifts (Kessler & Milkman, 2018). Identifying with a charity can lead peer-to-peer fundraisers to put in more effort to raise money for the cause (Chapman, Masser, & Louis, 2019), while identifying with the beneficiaries via some shared identity increases the likelihood that help will be offered (Charnysh, Lucas, & Singh, 2015; James & Zagefka, 2017; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005; Maki et al., 2019; Tarrant, Dazeley, & Cotton, 2009). Finally, donors are more strongly influenced by the actions of past donors that share an identity with them (James, 2019; Shang, Reed, & Croson, 2008). However, the roles of identity extend beyond just triggering increased helping for ingroup members. For example, donors may strategically use their national identity to articulate why they do or do not help people in other countries (Stevenson & Manning, 2010).

Despite this growing body of evidence that identities influence giving in general, it remains poorly understood just how identities inform charity preferences. What is known relates to broad giving orientations rather than specific choices of one charity over another. For example, women higher in moral identity donate more to outgroups, while men higher in moral identity donate more to ingroups (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). Also, consumers prefer donation-based promotions (over cents-off promotions) when there is strong identity congruence between the consumer and the relevant partner charity or when their cause-related identity is more salient (Winterich & Barone, 2011). These studies highlight the role that identities may play in the choices of which causes to endorse, but provide little understanding of the range of identities that affect giving preferences and just how donors use their own and others identities to justify their charitable choices.

### 1.3 | The current research

The current research has two key objectives. First, we seek a deeper understanding of how donors use identities to explain their relationships with charities. Second, we consider whether or not people have different motives for giving to different types of charity. A variety of reasons for charitable giving have been identified in the literature. To date, however, research has neither theorized nor tested the contexts in which self- or other-oriented motives, or motives based on shared identities, may emerge. Nor has it tested how different motives may be more or less relevant for giving to different causes.

Exploratory in nature, but informed by the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987), the present research asks how donors use conceptions of their personal and social identities as well as beneficiary identities to explain their giving to the charities that are most important to them. Though important to understand, charity preferences have only occasionally been studied explicitly (e.g., Breeze, 2013; Chapman et al., 2018; Neumayr & Handy, 2017; Wiepking, 2010). The research therefore seeks to understand how participants' explanations of their motives vary across different types of charities, which represent different types of beneficiaries.

In this way, the research is poised to answer three novel theoretical questions. First, why people give to particular charities (rather than why they give to charity at all). Second, how donors use their own and others' identities to justify their charity preferences. And third, which identities are most relevant to donor decision-making. In answering these questions, the research findings can help nonprofit marketers to more effectively segment, frame, and execute their campaigns.

## 2 | METHOD

### 2.1 | Procedure

Individuals took part in an online study in exchange for partial course credit in an introduction to psychology massive open online course. These free online courses tend to attract participants who are older

than traditional University students, from diverse corners of the globe, and already employed but taking the course for curiosity or career development (Christensen et al., 2013). Participation was voluntary as students could select from a range of studies or choose to participate in none at all.

During a 30 min survey, participants answered questions about their own charitable giving. Participants first named the charity that was most important to them personally ("Now, thinking just about the charity or not-for-profit organisation that is most important to you personally [whether you have donated to them recently or not], please answer the following questions: What is the name of this organisation?"). They then indicated the charity category ("Which category best describes the work of [nominated charity]?"), with 15 response options based on the United Nations nonprofit reporting guidelines (United Nations Statistics Division, 2003). Finally, participants responded to an open-ended question asking why that charity was important to them ("In your own words, why is [nominated charity] important to you?"). Demographic questions regarding gender, age, and nationality were asked at the end of the survey and were optional. On completion, participants were fully debriefed as to the purpose of the study.

### 2.2 | Participants

In total, 1,887 participants provided valid responses to the focal question of why their nominated charity was important to them. Nine participants asked for their data to be deleted after debriefing, 12 were excluded because their response was not written in English, and 17 duplicates were removed. Of the final pool of 1,849 participants, 968 identified as female, 419 as male, nine as other, and 453 did not indicate their gender. Respondents ranged in age from 10 to 78 years ( $M = 32.21$ ,  $SD = 14.21$ ) and represented 117 different nationalities. The most common nationalities were American ( $n = 251$ ), Australian, ( $n = 196$ ), and Indian ( $n = 99$ ).

Of those who answered demographic questions, 49% self-identified as religious. Regarding political views, 54% reported their views were at least slightly progressive, 16% at least slightly conservative, and the remainder considered their views to be centrist. Of the global sample, 47% said their earned less than \$250 per week, 29% earned between \$250 and \$750 per week, and 24% earned over \$750 per week; though the currency was not specified so this information must be interpreted with caution. Approximately a third (31%) of the sample had children.

### 2.3 | Thematic analysis

Survey data were imported into NVivo 11 and thematic analyses were conducted on responses to the question: "In your own words, why is [nominated charity] important to you?". Responses ranged from 1 to 181 words in length, and most were relatively short ( $M = 23.32$  words,  $SD = 20.95$ ). Although some responses were very

short, all responses could be coded because the very nature and brevity of such responses implied the dominance of certain motives. This point is elaborated further in the relevant subtheme sections below.

To explore the ways that participants used their own and others' identities to make sense of their charitable giving, we conducted a thematic analysis, informed by the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987). Although we specifically sought to understand the way identities were used to construct giving relationships, we made no assumptions about the form, nature, or prevalence of identity use. Subthemes were generated from the data and considered at the latent level. That is, following Braun and Clarke (2006), we looked beyond the surface level of words to also identify the underlying ideas and assumptions that we theorize to have shaped such responses.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis were followed, which involve six steps (see also Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). First, the first author familiarized themselves with the data by reading all responses and noting initial ideas. Second, they generated the codes by systematically coding all interesting features in the data that related to identities. Initial coding was conducted blind to the charity category to reduce expectation bias. The first author completed all analyses, with two co-authors (also blind to category) reviewing codes after approximately 10% of the data ( $n = 200$ ) had been coded. This resulted in 90 initial codes. Third, the first author collated the various codes into potential themes. Fourth, they reviewed all potential themes to ensure both construct clarity (i.e., that the codes within each theme held together) and that the thematic structure represented the full data set well. At this point, the first author also reviewed all responses in the data set again to ensure they were captured in the appropriate themes and that no potential subthemes had been overlooked. Fifth, themes were named

and defined. Sixth and finally, the report was produced and relevant extracts were identified to evidence each subtheme.

### 3 | RESULTS

This paper takes a mixed-method approach. First, results of the thematic analysis are summarized to delineate the ways that donors used concepts of self and other to explain their charity preferences. In the social identities and beneficiary identities subthemes, we also present results of content analyses showing the frequency of identity evocations. Then, we report prevalence rates using  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit tests to evaluate whether or not the prevalence rates of different themes depended on the category of charity being considered. The key contribution of this paper is an understanding of how motives depend on the beneficiary. As such, the global thematic analysis is presented only briefly before elaborating the prevalence rates across categories.

#### 3.1 | Thematic analysis

Nine subthemes, nested under the overarching themes of Self and Other, were generated by the analyses. These themes are presented in Table 1. Below we summarize each theme and subtheme briefly and provide examples. Where examples are given, the participants' full response is included for context. Responses are verbatim, with spelling and grammatical issues retained. Substantial overlap between subthemes is present in the data, with some responses tapping multiple subthemes. Where necessary for clarity, the relevant coded portion is italicized. Attribution is given with the participant's nationality, gender, age, and the category of their nominated charity.

**TABLE 1** Description and prevalence of themes and subthemes generated from the analysis of donors use of self- and other-oriented explanations of their charity preferences

Theme Subtheme	Description	Frequency	
		<i>n</i>	%
<b>Self</b>	<b>Charity preference explained in relation to personal ("I") or social ("we") identities</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>45</b>
Social identities	Donor evoked their social identities in explaining the importance of the charity	600	32
Values and beliefs	The charity's mission aligned with the donor or their group's values or beliefs	226	12
Benefits	Donors or their groups have benefited from the charity's services	159	9
Suffering	Donors or people in their groups have suffered from something the charity addresses	156	8
Shared identity	Donors share an identity with the beneficiaries	148	8
<b>Other</b>	<b>Charity preference explained in relation to beneficiary ("they") identities</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>59</b>
Beneficiary identities	Donor evoked beneficiary identities in explaining the importance of the charity	991	54
Power	Donors perceive the beneficiaries to be low in power or unable to care for themselves	143	8
Importance	Donors perceive the beneficiaries to be valuable and important	130	7
Neediness	Donors give in response to perceived need	108	6

Note:  $N = 1,849$ . Participants responses have been coded into any theme they evoked, thus themes overlap.

## 3.2 | Self-oriented giving motives

We first explored how donors explain giving to some charities in relation to their sense of self. Informed by the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987), the self was conceptualized to include both personal identities (“I”) and social identities (“we”). Whether talking about *social identities, values and beliefs, benefits, suffering, or shared identity*, the subthemes outlined below describe how donor motives for giving are sometimes self-oriented.

### 3.2.1 | Social identities

The most common thread within the “self” theme was that participants explicitly identified one of their own social identities in explaining their connection with the charity. For example:

*I, myself, am a veteran and have had friends who have been wounded in Afghanistan [emphasis added] (American male, 26; advocacy).*

There are so many kids in the world that don't have access to good healthcare and education. [Charity Name] provides my sponsor child with these things. *I'm a christian so I like that [Charity Name] is a Christian organisation. As well as education and healthcare, they teach children about God [emphasis added] (Australian female, 23; education).*

However, social identities were also often implied. For example, a participant talking about prayer or God is highlighting the importance of their religious identity to their giving preference:

*It is an organisation devoted to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well as showing love and providing for the needs of thousands of orphans and widows, as well as bringing them into a relationship with God (Australian male, 20; religious).*

Alternatively, mentioning “our country” or the name of their nation suggests that national identity is relevant to the giving decision:

The take care of the less privilege children and I love to help people and children are the future of *our nation* and they should have the best [emphasis added] (Nigerian male, 33; social services).

Family identities were frequently evoked. Participants either mentioned their family explicitly, or evoked family identity through relationship labels like mother, son, sister, or grandfather. For example,

*My brother lost his fight with bowel cancer (Australian female, 62; research).*

*Traditionally our family has been donating there (Indian female, 22; health).*

Content analyses revealed that, in addition to religious, geographic, and family identities, diverse other identities were evoked, including organizational, friendship, human, professional, alumni, and identities related to illness or suffering (see Table 2 for results of the content analysis and frequency of the social identities mentioned by participants).

The evocation of social identities highlights giving as either a reflection of self or as a gift to the self, construed at either the personal (I) or social (we) level. The frequency with which social identities were mentioned demonstrates the importance of identities in donor decision-making. Further, results show diverse identities can be considered relevant to different types of giving choices. Many of the social identities highlighted by participants have never been investigated by scholars of charitable giving.

### 3.2.2 | Values and beliefs

Another way that participants explained their giving choices in relation to personal and social selves was to talk about values and beliefs. This subtheme constructed important charities as speaking for the donor in the world—promoting what the donor and their group believed in or valued. In many of these cases, the focus was on the mission of the charity rather than its beneficiaries. That mission was seen as aligned with the donor's priorities. Sometimes these connections were very explicit. For example:

*I am concerned that everyone is treated in a manner that allows them to lead their lives without being victimised (United Kingdom male, 76; advocacy).*

*I believe that human beings are the caretakers of this planet and we should be responsible for everything that lives in it (St. Lucian female, 35; animal).*

At other times, the values and beliefs were suggested by the passion and urgency in the donors' responses. For example,

*With the current president, I am outraged at his attitude about immigrants, Moslims, women, LGBT, poor. We need [Charity Name] to keep everyone's rights the same despite color, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic, and women. I am horrified by the treatment of Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris when they are talked over, told to stop talking...in CONGRESS for G... Sake! (American female, 64; advocacy).*

**TABLE 2** Types and frequencies of social identities spontaneously evoked by participants in relation to their most important charity

Social identity	Description	Example	Mentions
Family	Family identity evoked directly or indirectly through mention of family roles	Because I lost both <i>my Mum</i> and <i>my Aunt</i> to Cancer. I have also watched <i>my Step-Mum</i> and <i>her Mum</i> both battle various types of Cancer over the years. The more I can support them in anyway the quicker we can be to finding a cure or more successful treatments	152
Geographic	National, regional, or other geographic identities evoked	Because in <i>Mexico</i> there are no animal rights, or the law is just ignored, and <i>we are</i> living in a extremely violent environment, specifically in <i>Mexico</i> , so, this violence is translated to any other part of <i>our life</i>	139
Organization	Participant identifies directly with the organization in question	<i>I am part of [Charity] board</i> and I really like the friendly atmosphere and inclusiveness	90
Religious	Religious identity is specifically mentioned or evoked indirectly	Because <i>I am a Seventh-Day Adventist</i> and [Charity] is an SDA based organization	87
Friends	Participant mentions friendship groups or acquaintances	As an ex member of the military I have many <i>friends</i> who are in the defence and I understand what defence families go through and [Charity] supports the families after they have lost a loved one, or if a loved one is suffering due to the nature of their work	52
Human	Participant evokes their identity as a human	Because I believe this charity does a lot of work in supporting our wild animals, nature and the world <i>we</i> live in. <i>We</i> often forget that there are other things just as important if not more than <i>our human lives</i> and it's good to get involved to keep yourself grounded and remember what is important	47
Health	Participant mentions identities based on physical or mental health issues they suffer from	<i>I have been suffering from an eating disorder for the past 4 years.</i> [Charity] helps sufferers like me. They also raise awareness for eating disorders which I find hugely important as in my experience we as a society dont really understand eating disorders and this creates a lot of problems for sufferers	28
Professional	Work or professional identities evoked	As a <i>medical practitioner</i> , it is the charity that directly affwcts my day to day activities due to the far reaching support they offer to the Kenyan Health System	22
Alumni	Alumni or student identities evoked	<i>My alma mater</i> and an incredible staff	11
Economic	Participant evoked current or past identities related to class or economic standing	I do not like to see children suffer, who are not able to afford their own food and clothes. <i>I grew up living in poverty</i> and it was a really difficult point in my life	7
Pet owner	Participant mentions their identity as a pet owner	I think how we treat animals reflects our humanity. Please <i>I have a dog</i> from [Charity] and the thought of her without a family breaks my heart	8
Disabled	Participant evokes their identity as a disabled person	because they are major advocates for my independence as a <i>disabled adult</i>	6
Survivor	Participant identities as a survivor	<i>I'm a survivor of rape</i>	5
LGBT	Participant mentions their gender- or sexual-orientation identity	The organization is on the forefront of educating the public and fighting for equality for the <i>LGBTQ community</i> . As a <i>member of that community</i> , the work they do has an impact on my life directly	4
Orphan	Participant identities as an orphan or former foster child	Because <i>I was once a foster child</i> and I understand the experience that kids entering the system have to go through	4
Gender	Participant evokes their gender identity	[Charity] is important to me because, they help a lot of <i>women like myself</i> to obtain affordable medical help when needed and if any diagnosed with cancer, they do all in their power to help as quickly and efficiently as possible	3
Age	Age group identities evoked	<i>I am a senior</i>	3
Racial	Racial identities evoked	AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN I THINK ASSOCIATION WITH [CHARITY] IS AN OPPORTUNITY ADD TO BLACK PRESPECTIVES	3
Vegetarian	Vegetarian or vegan identities evoked	<i>i became a vegetarian</i> on my way to becoming vegan because i dont want to contribute to animal cruelty anymore	2

Note: Relevant coded sections have been italicized for clarity.

Again, the prevalence of values highlights how donors sometimes choose to give to charities as a kind of self-expression. These results align with past research suggesting that donor values are important in motivating giving more broadly (e.g., Joireman & Duell, 2007). Here we see that values are also used to inform charity preferences.

### 3.2.3 | Benefits

Participants also described giving to charity because they had benefited from the services of the charity, or expected to benefit in the future. The concept of benefits suggest donors sometimes choose to support charities in a transactional way—to gain future utility or to repay past experiences. Sometimes the benefits had accrued to them personally:

*Because it accept us as refugee (Pakistani female, 32; international).*

They are the few organization which support young LGBT peers in Brisbane and South East Queensland. They provide a safe place and a bunch of event and services for young LGBT people. Also, personally, I was being in some kind of depression last year and their services really helped me a lot [emphasis added] (Macau male, 22; social services).

Sometimes the benefits fell to others within groups that were important to them, serving their social, rather than personal identities. For example,

[Charity Name] is important to me as my youngest sister was diagnosed with autism when she was very young and being able to use this charities resources has been very helpful to our family and in helping my sister grow and develop [emphasis added] (Australian female, 19; social services).

### 3.2.4 | Suffering

Participants sometimes described charities as being important because of their focus on something that the donor had suffered from personally:

*It deals with a medical condition I have had all my life (American female, 56; research).*

*I am paralyzed (American male, 57; research).*

Sometimes participants' responses indicated that they cared about charities that addressed something that their groups, or important people within them, had suffered from. For example,

*My family has a history of cancer and we've already lost two members due to nose cancer and brain cancer. Donating to Cancer Research helps fund the research for this illness [emphasis added] (Malaysian female, 25; research).*

*Thalassemia is disease that affects many families in the Maldives, including my own. Majority of my family members, including myself, are beta thalassemia carriers. I have lost family members who were beta thalassemia major. It is a life long disease that greatly impacts the quality of life for the patient. While there is routine treatment for it now, it is not a cure. Furthermore, there may be those denied of proper treatment due to expenses [emphasis added] (Maldivian female, 21; health).*

Although one would expect the experience of suffering to be a bridge to empathy with current victims, leading to an other-orientation in giving (see Taylor & Hanna, 2018), this was not apparent in donor responses. Many of the explanations that related to suffering highlighted the past or current suffering of the self (I or we), without linking it to empathy for others going through a similar plight. Thus, giving in response to suffering may often be a kind of palliative response to one's own wounds—a balm to ease the psychological and physical scars that the experience has wrought on the donor or their group.

### 3.2.5 | Shared identity

A final subtheme existed at the intersection of self and other, where beneficiaries were drawn towards donors through a shared sense of self. Respondents mentioned that they shared an identity with the beneficiary in question, and saw commonality between one of their social identities and the person in need. The most frequent shared identities were geographic, gender, or as sufferer of some form of illness. Donors sometimes explicitly mentioned the commonality:

*[Charity Name] is important to me because, the kids there are very poor. Having went through poverty myself, I felt that I am somehow connected with those Children (Rwandan female, 23; social services).*

*[Charity Name] deals with issues that has a direct impact on my color, class, and culture of people (American male, 38; advocacy).*

Other times shared identity was implied by the connection between the beneficiary's identity and the donor's demographics. For example, women helping women:

*[Charity Name] is important to me because it gives women access to safe healthcare (American female, 35; health).*

Given that the connection was not always explicitly made, it is possible that this subtheme is even more prevalent in donor motivation than captured by the coding. A number of references to beneficiary groups may implicitly have named a shared identity. Nonetheless, a significant number of participants actively discussed shared identity as a motivating factor in their giving.

The role of shared identity supports social identity theory's prediction of a strong preference for helping ingroup members (Tajfel, 1981). This finding also aligns with past evidence that people prefer to help others that share an important identity with them (e.g., Charnysh et al., 2015; Levine et al., 2005). Until now, however, there has not been an inventory of when and which shared identities are most relevant to giving.

### 3.3 | Other-oriented giving motives

We next explored how participants described charities in relation to some beneficiary, or "other." Relating as they do to *beneficiary identities*, *power*, *importance*, and *neediness*, the subthemes described below demonstrate the ways in which participants construct their motives for giving in relation to the identities of beneficiaries.

#### 3.3.1 | Beneficiary identities

The most prevalent subtheme pertaining to the other was when participants simply evoked or named the beneficiary group. Whether the beneficiaries were, for example, children, animals, the poor, the sick, or people overseas, there was usually little comment made beyond simply naming them:

*It helps take care of orphans (Ugandan female, 37; social services).*

*It helps refugees around the world (Palestinian male, 33; international).*

*To protect the environment around the world (Thai male, 42; environment).*

*It supports people with cystic fibrosis (Canadian female, 29; health).*

*Protection of animals (American female, 62; animal).*

*Give food and cloth to the poor (Venezuelan male, 36; social services).*

The simplicity of such responses implies that the respondents perceived inherent value in helping such beneficiaries. Donors seemed to feel that some beneficiaries—most notably children and animals—were inherently important and worthy of care. Thus, while

importance was only occasionally mentioned explicitly (see *importance* section below), it seemed to be a core feature of other-oriented motives, whereby participants did not feel the need to explicitly articulate any purpose or value beyond merely naming the beneficiary group. Further, it is illustrative to note not only the beneficiaries most likely to be mentioned—children, animals, poor people, people in other countries, or people who were sick and dying—but also to consider which types of beneficiaries are rarely mentioned, including addicts, offenders, and people in the LGBT community (see Table 3 for results of the content analysis of the beneficiary groups mentioned).

#### 3.3.2 | Power

Participants sometimes talked about helping because the beneficiaries lacked power. They explicitly indicated that those "others" are vulnerable, helpless, disadvantaged, or unable to look after themselves:

*They are helpless, unable to speak (Italian Polish, 49; animal).*

*Charity for children is important as children do not understand why is their situation different than others. They do not know how to tackle their problems (Polish female, 26; health).*

#### 3.3.3 | Importance

Many participants supported charities that they perceived to be helping beneficiaries that the donor explicitly valued or felt were important. There was a sense that certain beneficiaries were important and deserved good things, and that this could be freely asserted:

*Because I love animals (particularly dogs) and believe they all deserved to be loved and treasured (Papua New Guinean/Thai female, 18; animal).*

*i think they deserve to be part of this world and hopefully some day they might change the world (Indian male, 36; social services).*

*Animal are just important as us for this world (Trinidadian male, 43; animal).*

#### 3.3.4 | Neediness

Finally, sometimes beneficiaries were described in terms of their neediness. For some donors, it appeared that the existence of need was reason enough to help:



**TABLE 3** Categories of beneficiaries mentioned by respondents when explaining why they support their most important charity

Beneficiaries	Example	Frequency
Children and youth	[Charity] help disadvantaged <i>children</i> to get the best out of education, by supporting them financially	437
Animals	They help protect <i>animals</i> —mainly <i>cats and dogs</i> through Thailand and other parts of Asia. They are also strong advocates for stopping the cat and dog meat trade. I strongly agree with what they stand for and think they're a great company	187
Poor people	raise money for and help <i>the poor</i>	126
People in other countries	They have been helping <i>people in need around the world especially those in the third world</i> . No matter their religion, race, gender etc. They are very selfless	123
People who are sick or dying	[Charity] is important to me because they are helping fight cancer and improving the lives of <i>those with cancer</i>	103
Women and girls	[Charity] is important to me because it gives <i>women</i> access to safe healthcare	59
Families	IT HELPS VULNERABLE <i>FAMILIES</i>	50
Disabled people	Cares for <i>mentally and/or physically disabled</i> children until adulthood and even longer if necessary	42
Homeless people	because it helps <i>the homeless</i> and provides shelter and food	35
The environment	to protect <i>the environment</i> around the world	34
Victims of violence or conflict	it helps stop sex trafficking and supports <i>people who have experienced sex trafficking</i>	29
People suffering from mental illness	They do a variety of essential, incredible work for <i>people who are dealing with a range of mental health issues</i>	26
Elderly people	<i>Old aged people</i> with no family to support require a lot of assistance for everything	22
Disaster victims	It helps people locally with basic provisions, emergency shelters and food, hygiene kits <i>in event of disasters</i> anywhere in the world	17
Refugees	Providing legal assistance to <i>refugees and asylum seekers</i>	16
Veterans	It helps <i>veterans</i> who are experiencing hardships due to their military experiences	10
LGBT people	They work to protect the rights of <i>LGBT people</i>	9
Addicts	I think that it is an excellent program that has helped many people over the years to return to the work force after their <i>recovery from alcoholism and/or drug addiction</i>	6
Offenders	Its main objective is to rehabilitate <i>Ex-offenders</i> and reintegrate them back into the community to live responsible lives thereby creating peaceful society	4
Other	I believe in the work they are doing to spread the gospel and support <i>persecuted Christians</i>	14

Note: Other included categories that were each mentioned by fewer than three people, namely Christians, minorities, educators, Michael Jackson fans, hunters, single people, Chinese immigrants, gypsy people, people with unusual appearances, prostitutes, and Sadhus. Some respondents mentioned multiple beneficiary groups. Relevant coded sections have been italicized for clarity.

*Helps to save people in need (Kazakh male, 20; health).*

*Is one of the organizations in Honduras that really help, financially, to people who need it (Honduran male, 25; social services).*

*Because [Charity Name] gives clothes, shoes, blankets to people who need it (Mexican female, 60; social services).*

Taken together, the other-oriented themes paint a picture of the kinds of beneficiaries that are worthy of care: those that are low in power, high in warmth, and demonstrably needy (see also Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). The content analysis reinforces the idea that some beneficiaries are more worthy of care than others—especially animals and children.

### 3.4 | Prevalence of self/other orientations across categories of charity

Above we have briefly described emergent themes in the way participants explained their giving in relation to their own or beneficiaries' identities, or an explicitly shared identity. However, the prevalence of self- versus other-orientations varied considerably when considering the category of charity that the donor was talking about. The prevalence of themes and subthemes across all 15 categories of charity are available in the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/equpv/>). Here we present and discuss results only for those categories mentioned by at least 5% of participants.

As will be apparent from the examples above, many participants evoked multiple themes in their responses. In Table 4 we, therefore, present the prevalence of participants who explained their charity

preferences in terms of only self, only other, in relation to themes of both self and other (including shared identities), or in relation to neither self nor other. Table 5 also summarizes the results across all nine subthemes. In both tables,  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit tests are reported. These tests first compare the observed overall prevalence rates of themes against the assumption that all themes were equally likely. The tests then compare the observed prevalence rates of subthemes within each charity category against the assumption that the observed overall prevalence rates would apply equally to all categories (i.e., assuming no difference of theme prevalence across different charity categories). These tests allow us to ascertain the dominant themes used to explain giving to each category of charity.

A  $\chi^2$  test for independence revealed that theme use and charity category were not independent,  $\chi^2(48) = 735.79$ ,  $p < .001$ . In other words, and as illustrated in the pie charts presented in Figure 1, the types of themes evoked when describing charity preferences depended on the category of charity in question. Below we briefly summarize the patterns of theme use across each major category of charity.

The pattern of themes used to explain giving to religious charities was significantly different from the overall pattern of themes generated across all categories,  $\chi^2(8) = 130.60$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants were more likely to describe their giving to religious charities in relation to self and less likely to evoke an other. Donors often referenced their personal and social identities when explaining their support of religious charities, but rarely talked about beneficiary identities. Donors to religious charities stressed their religious identities and talked about charity as a way of reflecting and promoting their religious groups' values and beliefs.

The thematic structure was also significantly different for research charities,  $\chi^2(8) = 349.43$ ,  $p < .001$ . Giving to research charities appears to be more self-oriented and less other-oriented, as participants often referenced their personal and social identities to explain their support. Most of the research charities mentioned worked

on medical research, particularly cancer research. Donors to these organizations explained their giving preferences with reference to their own suffering or that of important group members, in particular family members who suffered or died from cancer. Family identity was frequently evoked in reference to such charities. Similarly, suffering was a dominant theme for donors to health charities,  $\chi^2(8) = 67.46$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Unique patterns of theme prevalence were also returned for animal charities,  $\chi^2(8) = 176.19$ ,  $p < .001$ , social service charities,  $\chi^2(8) = 49.71$ ,  $p < .001$ , and international charities,  $\chi^2(8) = 37.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . Donors to all these categories of charity were more likely to explain their support with reference to some other rather than the self. Specifically, they talked about beneficiary identities, neediness, and power but rarely mentioned benefits or suffering. Animals and children were two categories of beneficiary considered by donors to be highly important, and the focus on helping these groups was illustrated by the prevalence of the beneficiary identities subtheme, as well as ideas about importance and power. Those who gave to international charities often highlighted the beneficiary as being poor, in another country, and in need. However, donors to international charities were comparatively unlikely to talk about importance of the beneficiaries, while donors to social services and animal charities frequently mentioned importance.

Donors to animal charities were also more likely to be motivated by the intersection of self and other. Many donors explained their motives for giving to animal charities as an intersection between the importance of animals (other), a reflection of deeply held values to do so (self), and the interplay between human (self) and animal (other) identities. Similarly, a unique pattern of themes emerged among donors giving to education organizations,  $\chi^2(8) = 19.15$ ,  $p = .014$ , who were also more likely to be motivated by the intersection of self and other. Donors to the education sector talked, for example, about the importance of helping children (other) and the benefit to "us" as humans in wider society (self).

**TABLE 4** Relative prevalence of use of self only ("I/we"), other only ("they"), or self and other ("I/we" and "they") themes in explanations of giving to charities in different categories

Theme	All categories	Frequency by category of charity						
		Social services	Health	Animal	International	Education	Religious	Research
Self only	27%	17%	27%	5%	18%	20%	62%	56%
Other only	41%	52%	37%	62%	46%	43%	10%	18%
Self and other	18%	22%	18%	33%	16%	24%	12%	9%
Neither	14%	9%	18%	0%	20%	13%	15%	18%
<i>n</i> (category)	1,849	423	365	190	182	140	125	120
$\chi^2$	328.70***	35.41***	6.46	102.89***	11.39***	5.24	91.17***	61.20***

Note:  $N = 1,849$ . Participants responses have been coded into any theme they evoked, thus themes overlap. Only categories nominated by more than 5% of sample are represented in the table.  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit tests are reported. For summary results the expected rate was set by assuming equal rates across all categories. For individual categories of charity the expected rate was set based on overall prevalence in summary results.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**TABLE 5** Relative prevalence of self/other themes and subthemes in explanations of giving to charities in different categories

Theme Subtheme	Frequency by category of charity							
	All categories	Social services	Health	Animal	International	Education	Religious	Research
Self	45%	39%	45%	38%	35%	44%	74%	65%
Social identities	32%	28%	36%	25%	17%	26%	68%	61%
Values and beliefs	12%	7%	5%	19%	16%	16%	20%	3%
Benefits	9%	8%	8%	3%	4%	14%	21%	6%
Suffering	8%	4%	16%	0%	1%	1%	0%	54%
Shared identity	8%	12%	9%	1%	7%	9%	6%	4%
Other	59%	72%	52%	95%	61%	65%	22%	26%
Beneficiary identities	54%	64%	49%	91%	53%	59%	20%	25%
Power	8%	11%	2%	24%	7%	6%	4%	2%
Importance	7%	10%	3%	26%	3%	6%	0%	1%
Neediness	6%	9%	5%	3%	9%	6%	2%	0%
<i>n</i> (category)	1,849	423	365	190	182	140	125	120
$\chi^2$	2,458.59***	49.71***	67.46***	176.19***	37.28***	19.15*	130.60***	349.43***

Note:  $N = 1,849$ . Participants responses have been coded into any theme they evoked, thus themes overlap. Only categories nominated by more than 5% of sample are represented in the Table.  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit tests are reported. For summary results the expected rate was set by assuming equal rates across all categories. For individual categories of charity the expected rate was set based on overall prevalence in summary results.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## 4 | DISCUSSION

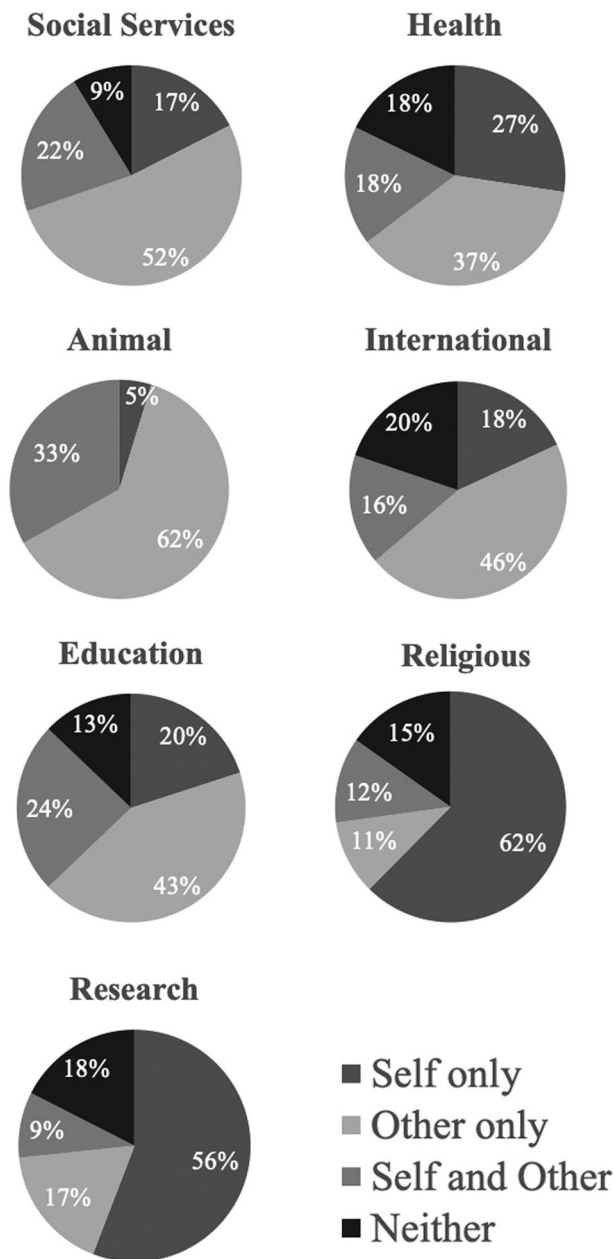
Thematic analyses of a large-scale, global survey of donors revealed both self- and other-oriented explanations for charity preferences. Nine sub-themes were generated from the data. When talking about giving in relation to the self, donors mentioned *social identities*, *values and beliefs*, *benefits*, *suffering*, and *shared identity*. In contrast, when giving was explained with reference to the other, donors highlighted *beneficiary identities*, *power*, *importance*, and *neediness*. Overall, other-oriented motives were more prevalent than self-oriented motives. However, the prevalence of themes varied substantially depending on the category of charity considered.

### 4.1 | Why donors give to particular causes

Past research has focused on why people give to charity in general. In this article, we instead ask why people give to *particular* charities. To our knowledge, this is the first research to explicitly consider how donor motivations are associated with particular beneficiaries. This shift in emphasis moves the question of why people give from the abstract (why they give in general) to the concrete (why they give to this specific beneficiary), bringing details into focus that have not previously been visible. It has been demonstrated that who gives depends on who receives (Chapman et al., 2018). We see here that *why people give* also depends on who receives (see also Park & Lee, 2015).

The data support the view that charitable giving is a social process shaped by the relationship between donors and beneficiaries (see also Andreoni & Payne, 2013; Chapman et al., 2018). Participants respond to charities differently, depending on the beneficiary that those charities are perceived to represent. Specifically, people give to animal, international, and social welfare charities because of their concerns for beneficiaries that they perceive to be important, powerless, and needy. However, people give to religious, medical research, and health charities as a reflection of their personal values and experiences, as well as the needs of the important social groups that they belong to. These differences may reflect inherent motivational differences for helping different targets, or simply the tendency for certain categories of charity to more concretely highlight their beneficiaries, thus stimulating other-oriented motives. Animal, international, and social welfare charities may highlight their distinct, visualizable beneficiaries more prominently, while religious and medical research charities may be a step further removed from any particular beneficiary. Future research could use experimental techniques to see if other-oriented motives can be activated for typically self-oriented charities (e.g., religious, research) when beneficiaries are made more prominent in those charities' campaigns.

In the current analyses, identities (social and shared) were more frequently mentioned explanations for giving than motives that have traditionally been highlighted in the philanthropic literature, such as values, benefits, and need (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Konrath & Handy, 2017; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007). This finding highlights the importance of considering charity preferences alongside giving in



**FIGURE 1** Prevalence rates of self- and other-oriented motives for giving across most common categories of charity supported. Pies represent all participants preferring a charity in the particular category

general, as different mechanisms may promote giving to charities that are more or less important to the individual.

#### 4.2 | How donors use identities to justify giving preferences

Donors frequently named or implied specific social identities when explaining their giving. These results are in line with the view that identities influence charitable decisions (Aaker & Akutsu, 2009; Chapman et al., 2018; Kessler & Milkman, 2018; Maki et al., 2019).

These preliminary results also highlight the identities that are most relevant for giving.

The social identity approach (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987) proposes that people have a range of identities, which may be more or less important in different contexts. But not all identities are equally likely to inform giving. Until now, research has rarely considered which of multiple donor identities may be most relevant in giving contexts. Previous research has focused mostly on geographic, gender, age-based, or broad “donor” identities (Charnysh et al., 2015; James, 2019; Kessler & Milkman, 2018; Maki et al., 2019; Shang et al., 2008; Winterich et al., 2009; Zagefka, Noor, & Brown, 2013). The current results identify religious, family, organizational, friendship group, human, and health-related identities as also relevant. However, the findings also are clear that donors’ identity motives matter more in some contexts than others.

When giving was explained in relation to the other, participants also focused on identities—this time those of the beneficiary. When describing the beneficiary, themes of *importance* (I/we like them), *power* (they are powerless), and *neediness* (they are in need) were common. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) proposes that people show a strategic preference towards people within their own groups, and the prevalence of shared identity motives in the current data support that notion. However, people also appear willing to help outgroup beneficiaries that they identify as important, powerless, and needy (see also Cuddy et al., 2007).

These results align with studies showing that status differences promote giving to outgroup targets (see also Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Nadler, 2002, 2016). The present findings highlight particular beneficiaries—animals, children, the poor—as especially likely to evoke a helping response in the absence of self-oriented reasons to give. Although giving to help these targets is framed by donors as other-oriented, it is nonetheless possible that vulnerable, needy, or highly valued beneficiaries also receive help because offering such help aligns with strategic group motives—for example, allowing the donor to restore their group’s esteem, maintain their high status position, or signal to observers that the group is kind or generous (see van Leeuwen, 2007, 2017; van Leeuwen & Harinck, 2016). Indeed, helping beneficiaries who are widely valued or visibly needy would allow self-interested donors to accrue the greatest social benefits. Future research should consider explicitly when some beneficiary identities attract norms of helping while others—arguably equally needy—do not.

Finally, some giving was explicitly explained as occurring because of a relationship between the donor and the beneficiary. Participants who explained their giving preferences in terms of self-other unions talked about shared identities, supporting the social identity perspective, which proposes that distinctions between self and other are fluid and contextual (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987). Shared and superordinate identities have previously been shown to promote giving and other helping behaviors, and to influence consumer brand preferences (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Charnysh et al., 2015; Choi & Winterich, 2013; James & Zagefka, 2017; Levine et al., 2005; Tarrant et al., 2009; Zagefka et al., 2013). Yet again, the present

results provide a richer understanding of when shared identities may and may not elicit gifts or helping. Donor responses show that shared identities were most often related to gender, nationality, and identities born of suffering. Attempts to construct other shared identities may not be as effective. Future research could consider why and when shared identities are likely to form.

To summarize, the current findings advance our theoretical understanding of charitable giving in three key ways. First, we lay the groundwork for a new theory of charity preferences. It has previously been demonstrated that who gives depends in part on who receives (Chapman et al., 2018). In addition, we show here—for the first time—that *why people give* also depends in part on which charity or beneficiary will receive the donations. In other words, donor motives appear to be multiple and dynamic, reflecting not just the donor's personal priorities but also interacting with the needs or qualities of the beneficiaries or causes in question. Second, we show that identity motives are prevalent among donors. People frequently evoke identities when describing their charity preferences. Indeed, identity motives are as common or even more common than many of the motives that have traditionally been studied. Third, we advance fledgling theory on the importance of identities for charitable giving (see Aaker & Akutsu, 2009) by documenting which identities donors most commonly use to explain their charity preferences.

### 4.3 | Strengths, limitations, and future directions

Strengths of the current study include the size and breadth of the participant sample—1,849 participants from 117 countries—and the mixed-method approach. Although students in a large online psychology course are not representative of the broader community, such sampling begins to move beyond the traditionally WEIRD research samples (western, educated participants, from industrialized, rich, and democratic countries; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) to ensure a range of voices are present in the data. Further, quantitative comparisons of theme prevalence allow us to answer a question never before examined in the literature: do people have different motives for giving to different kinds of charities? We find that they do.

The qualitative data analyzed for this article were collected as part of a larger survey. As such, these data are not as rich as traditional qualitative data, which are often collected during interviews or focus groups. However, what the data lack in depth, they make up for in breadth. By surveying donors from all around the world, we are able to provide foundational knowledge of the ways that people use their identities to articulate their relationships with different kinds of charities. It was noticeable that themes appeared to be broadly universal—similar explanations for giving were found in diverse countries. Nonetheless, a fruitful avenue for future research would be to build off the current findings by examining if and how charity preferences (and their underlying motives) vary as a function of key cultural factors such as collectivism vs individualism, or with

societal factors like GDP, corruption, or prevalence of welfare programs.

Finally, the current research considered identity motives in relation to the question of whether a person gives at all. Future research could consider how identity motives relate to the value of giving. For example, does the strength of identification relate to the how much money people donate to causes that are aligned with the identity?

## 5 | MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

A key finding of the current research is that the underlying motives for giving—oriented towards helping some “other,” benefiting the “self,” or reflecting an important shared identity—depend on the charity in question. Past research has presented inventories of motives, but not all of these will be relevant to each particular nonprofit. The results here suggest that donors to religious and medical research charities are more motivated by the concerns of their social groups and personal values, while donors to animal, welfare, and international charities are motivated to help groups they perceive to be important, powerless, and needy. Nonprofit marketers must understand which motives are most likely to be driving their particular donors to act. Fundraising staff at religious organizations should stress religious identity and values. Marketers at medical research and health charities may choose to target the families of previous patients, provide opportunities for in-memorial gifts, and highlight donations as a reflection of the importance of family. Stereotypical fundraising campaigns, such as those highlighting need, will be most effective for charities who have low-power beneficiaries that are considered important to protect, especially animals and children. Nonprofit marketers may also wish to consider if their organization is neglecting motives that might appeal to donors interested in supporting their particular beneficiaries.

The current research also provides an inventory of the identities that donors consider most meaningful for their giving choices: nationality, religion, family, organizational (based on their experiences working for or volunteering in the nonprofit), and health-related identities. Nonprofit marketers should look to these identities to inform their approaches to targeting and segmentation. Evoking these identities in campaign copy may also lead to greater engagement and higher response rates. When these identities can be used to leverage a shared identity—such as when the nonprofit's beneficiaries share a national, religious, or health-related identity with the potential donor—campaigns may be especially powerful.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The first author was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship but the authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The study received ethical clearance from the University of Queensland (15-PSYCH-PHD-29-JH). The authors wish to thank Josephine Previte for her thoughtful comments on an earlier version of this article.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

## ORCID

Cassandra M. Chapman  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8488-6106>

## REFERENCES

- Aaker, J. L., & Akutsu, S. (2009). Why do people give? The role of identity in giving. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 19(3), 267–270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.010>
- ACNC. (2020). Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission website. Retrieved from <https://www.acnc.gov.au>
- Andreoni, J., & Payne, A. A. (2013). Charitable giving. *Handbook of Public Economics*, 5, 1–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53759-1.00001-7>
- Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. (2011). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy: Eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 40(5), 924–973. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010380927>
- Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2003). Consumer–company identification: A framework for understanding consumers' relationships with companies. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(2), 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.2.76.18609>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Breeze, B. (2013). How donors choose charities: The role of personal taste and experiences in giving decisions. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 4(2), 165–183. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204080513X667792>
- Chapman, C. M., Louis, W. R., & Masser, B. M. (2018). Identifying (our) donors: Toward a social psychological understanding of charity selection in Australia. *Psychology and Marketing*, 35(12), 980–989. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21150>
- Chapman, C. M., Masser, B. M., & Louis, W. R. (2019). The champion effect in peer-to-peer giving: Successful campaigns highlight fundraisers more than causes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 48(3), 572–592. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018805196>
- Charnysh, V., Lucas, C., & Singh, P. (2015). The ties that bind: National identity salience and pro-social behavior toward the ethnic other. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(3), 267–300. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414014543103>
- Choi, W. J., & Winterich, K. P. (2013). Can brands move in from the outside? How moral identity enhances out-group brand attitudes. *Journal of Marketing*, 77(2), 96–111. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.11.0544>
- Christensen, G., Steinmetz, A., Alcorn, B., Bennett, A., Woods, D., & Emanuel, E. (2013). *The MOOC phenomenon: Who takes massive open online courses and why?* Retrieved from SSRN <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2350964>
- Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2007). The BIAS map: Behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(4), 631–648. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.4.631>
- Halabi, S., & Nadler, A. (2017). The intergroup status as helping relations model: Giving, seeking and receiving help as tools to maintain or challenge social inequality. In E. van Leeuwen & H. Zagefka (Eds.), *Intergroup helping* (pp. 205–221). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3), 61–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X>
- Hibbert, S., Smith, A., Davies, A., & Ireland, F. (2007). Guilt appeals: Persuasion knowledge and charitable giving. *Psychology and Marketing*, 24(8), 723–742. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20181>
- James, R. N., III (2019). Using donor images in marketing complex charitable financial planning instruments: An experimental test with charitable gift annuities. *Journal of Personal Finance*, 18(1), 65–73.
- James, T. K., & Zagefka, H. (2017). The effects of group memberships of victims and perpetrators in humanly caused disasters on charitable donations to victims. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 47(8), 446–458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12452>
- Joireman, J., & Duell, B. (2007). Self-transcendent values moderate the impact of mortality salience on support for charities. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 43(4), 779–789. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.02.003>
- Kessler, J. B., & Milkman, K. L. (2018). Identity in charitable giving. *Management Science*, 64(2), 845–859. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2582>
- Klein, J. G., Lowrey, T. M., & Otnes, C. C. (2015). Identity-based motivations and anticipated reckoning: Contributions to gift-giving theory from an identity-stripping context. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(3), 431–448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.01.003>
- Konrath, S., & Handy, F. (2017). The development and validation of the motives to donate scale. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 47(2), 347–375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764017744894>
- Kulow, K., & Kramer, T. (2016). In pursuit of good karma: When charitable appeals to do right go wrong. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(2), 334–353. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucw018>
- Lehman, J., & James, R. N., III (2019). Charitable bequest importance among donors to different types of charities. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, e1657. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1657>
- Levine, M., Prosser, A., Evans, D., & Reicher, S. (2005). Identity and emergency intervention: How social group membership and inclusiveness of group boundaries shape helping behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(4), 443–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204271651>
- Mahapatra, D. (2014, February). India witnessing NGO boom, there is 1 for every 600 people. The Times of India. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-witnessing-NGO-boom-there-is-1-for-every-600-people/articleshow/30871406.cms>
- Maki, A., Dwyer, P. C., Blazek, S., Snyder, M., González, R., & Lay, S. (2019). Responding to natural disasters: Examining identity and prosociality in the context of a major earthquake. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 58(1), 66–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12281>
- McCarthy, M. B., Collins, A. M., Flaherty, S. J., & McCarthy, S. N. (2017). Healthy eating habit: A role for goals, identity, and self-control? *Psychology and Marketing*, 34(8), 772–785. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21021>
- McKeever, B. S. (2015). *The nonprofit sector in brief 2015: Public charities, giving, and volunteering*. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/nonprofit-sector-brief-2015-public-charities-giving-and-volunteering>
- Nadler, A. (2002). Inter-group helping relations as power relations: Maintaining or challenging social dominance between groups through helping. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(3), 487–502. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00272>
- Nadler, A. (2016). Intergroup helping relations. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 11, 64–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.05.016>
- Nadler, A., & Chernyak-Hai, L. (2014). Helping them stay where they are: Status effects on dependency/autonomy-oriented helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(1), 58–72. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034152>
- Nadler, A., Harpaz-Gorodeisky, G., & Ben-David, Y. (2009). Defensive helping: Threat to group identity, ingroup identification, status stability, and common group identity as determinants of intergroup help-giving. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(5), 823–834. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015968>

- Neumayr, M., & Handy, F. (2017). Charitable giving: What influences donors' choice among different causes? *Voluntas*, 30(4), 783–799. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-017-9843-3>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Oyserman, D. (2009). Identity-based motivation: Implications for action-readiness, procedural-readiness, and consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 19(3), 250–260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.008>
- Park, K., & Lee, S. S. (2015). The role of beneficiaries' group identity in determining successful appeal strategies for charitable giving. *Psychology and Marketing*, 32(12), 1117–1132. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20852>
- Pinna, M. (2020). Do gender identities of femininity and masculinity affect the intention to buy ethical products? *Psychology and Marketing*, 37(3), 384–397. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21298>
- Reed, A., Aquino, K., & Levy, E. (2007). Moral identity and judgments of charitable behaviors. *Journal of Marketing*, 71(1), 178–193.
- Rucker, D. D., Dubois, D., & Galinsky, A. D. (2010). Generous paupers and stingy princes: Power drives consumer spending on self versus others. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(6), 1015–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1086/657162>
- Sargeant, A., & Woodliffe, L. (2007). Gift giving: An interdisciplinary review. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(4), 275–307. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.308>
- Shang, J., Reed, A., & Croson, R. (2008). Identity congruency effects on donations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45(3), 351–361. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.45.3.351>
- Stevenson, C., & Manning, R. (2010). National identity and international giving: Irish adults' accounts of charitable behaviour. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 20(4), 249–261. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1029>
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarrant, M., Dazeley, S., & Cottom, T. (2009). Social categorization and empathy for outgroup members. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(3), 427–446. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466608X373589>
- Taylor, L., & Hanna, J. (2018). Altruism born of suffering among emerging adults in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 10(3), 157–169. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JACPR-01-2017-0271>
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- United Nations Statistics Division (2003). *Handbook on non-profit institutions in the system of national accounts*. New York: United Nations. [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/SeriesF\\_91E.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/SeriesF_91E.pdf)
- van Leeuwen, E. (2007). Restoring identity through outgroup helping: Beliefs about international aid in response to the December 2004 tsunami. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 37(4), 661–671. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.389>
- van Leeuwen, E. (2017). The SOUTH model: On the pros and cons of strategic outgroup helping. In E. van Leeuwen & H. Zagefka (Eds.), *Intergroup helping* (pp. 131–158). Cham: Springer International.
- van Leeuwen, E., & Harinck, F. (2016). Increasing intergroup distinctiveness: The benefits of third party helping. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 42(10), 1402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216662867>
- White, K., & Peloza, J. (2009). Self-benefit versus other-benefit marketing appeals: Their effectiveness in generating charitable support. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(4), 109. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.4.109>
- Wiepking, P. (2010). Democrats support international relief and the upper class donates to art? How opportunity, incentives and confidence affect donations to different types of charitable organizations. *Social Science Research*, 39(6), 1073–1087. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.06.005>
- Winterich, K. P., & Barone, M. J. (2011). Warm glow or cold, hard cash? Social identity effects on consumer choice for donation versus discount promotions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(5), 855–868. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.48.5.855>
- Winterich, K. P., Mittal, V., & Ross, W. T., Jr (2009). Donation behavior toward in- groups and out-groups: The role of gender and moral identity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(2), 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.1086/596720>
- Zagefka, H., Noor, M., & Brown, R. (2013). Familiarity breeds compassion: Knowledge of disaster areas and willingness to donate money to disaster victims. *Applied Psychology*, 62(4), 640–654. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2012.00501.x>

**How to cite this article:** Chapman CM, Masser BM, Louis WR. Identity motives in charitable giving: Explanations for charity preferences from a global donor survey. *Psychol Mark*. 2020;37:1277–1291. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21362>