Identifying (Our) Donors: Towards a Social Psychological Understanding of Charity Selection in Australia

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Abstract

Gender, age, religiosity, and political orientation are often associated with a propensity to give to charity. However, these broad associations mask inconsistencies that are not yet understood. Just as identity plays an important role in shaping consumer choices generally, donors' identities could explain diverging associations between demographic social categories and the types of charities supported. Two studies, with confirmed workplace giving donors ($N = 675$) and a community sample of self-reported donors ($N = 376$) in Australia, provide evidence that associations significantly vary across categories of charity. Specifically: older donors are more likely to support religious and health charities; religious donors are more likely to support religious, welfare, and international organizations but less likely to support animal charities; and politically conservative donors are less likely than liberal donors to donate to international organizations. The findings are interpreted through the lens of identity, with a focus on how group priorities and relevant norms may affect charity selection. Results have implications for non-profit marketing practice, including targeting, channel selection, and framing of fundraising appeals.

Introduction

Non-profit organizations provide services in areas as diverse as education, sports, religion, environment, arts, social services, and health. While research continues to examine donor motivations (e.g., Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011) and profiles (e.g., Casale & Baumann, 2015), it remains largely silent on the question of donor choices. There are an abundance of non-profits to select from—including more than 55,000 registered in Australia (ACNC, 2018), over 165,000 in the United Kingdom (Keen & Audickas, 2017), and in excess of 1.4 million in the United States (McKeever, 2015). Understanding not just if someone will give but which causes they will support is therefore an essential task for non-profit marketers. However, charity selection has rarely been investigated explicitly and remains largely untheorized. The current paper addresses this gap by presenting two studies with community samples of donors that demonstrate how supporter profiles vary across charity targets. Results are discussed in light of psychological theories of identity and suggest donor identities influence charity selection in systematic ways.

Identifying Donors

Philanthropic research often uses demographic social categories to identify probable donors (e.g., Casale & Baumann, 2015). Because group membership on the basis of gender, religion, or age is often observable and accessible via secondary sources, these social categories are commonly used by non-profit organizations to segment supporters and target campaigns (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008). Research shows that women are generally more likely to donate to charity than men (e.g., Mesch, Brown, Moore, & Hayat, 2011); people are increasingly likely to give as they age (e.g., Steinberg, Crow, Cain, & Milford, 2005); and religious people give more to charity (e.g., Brooks, 2003). These associations, however, may not be universal.

Researchers are yet to actively engage with the question of how and why donors choose to support certain charities and neglect others. However, by considering research that examines supporters of specific causes or compares a discrete collection of charity missions, evidence emerges that demographic associations actually vary widely depending on the charity in question. For example, women are more likely to support animal charities than men (Piper & Schnepf, 2008; Srnka, Grohs, & Eckler, 2003), while men are more likely to support sports (Piper & Schnepf, 2008) and political organizations (Showers, Showers, Beggs, & Cox, 2011). Increasing age has been associated with greater support of religious, welfare, and health charities (James & Sharpe, 2007; Nilsson, Erlandsson, & Vastfjall, 2016; Srnka et al., 2003; Wiepking, 2010), while younger donors show greater support of environmental and animal charities (National Australia Bank; NAB, 2014). Finally, more religious donors show disproportionate support for religious organizations (Forbes & Zampelli, 2013; Helms & Thornton, 2012; Hill & Vaidyanathan, 2011), as well as international and welfare charities (Casale & Baumann, 2015; Wiepking, 2010). This highlights an important direction for research in non-profit marketing. We must ask not just who gives to charity but *who gives to which types of charity, and why*?

Despite the evidence for diverging charity preferences summarized above, researchers have rarely engaged with the question of charity selection directly (see only Breeze, 2013; Wiepking, 2010). As a result charity selection, and the psychological mechanisms that drive it, remains largely untheorized. Identity concerns may help explain donors' charity choices.

Identity and Charity Selection

Consumers both communicate desired and avoid undesired identities through product choices and gift giving (Berger & Heath, 2007; White & Argo, 2009). Identities thus appear to play a significant role in consumer decision-making. Indeed, marketing researchers have been encouraged to examine the influence of identity on consumer behavior (Aaker &

Akutsu, 2009; Oyserman, 2009; Reed, 2002). Psychological theories of identity can shed light on donor decision-making.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) proposes that people hold both individual (personal) and group-based (social) identities that are malleable and become activated in different contexts. The social groups that a person belongs to shape their self-definition and prescribe their attitudes and behavior as group members (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). When a given identity is salient, perceptions of what other people in one's group approve of or do (i.e., group norms) have been shown to influence a range of socially desirable behaviors (see, for example, Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). An emerging body of research on charitable giving finds that identities and associated norms affect donor choices such as the decision to donate or the value of gift (Charnysh, Lucas, & Singh, 2015; Croson, Handy, & Shang, 2009; Hysenbelli, Rubaltelli, & Rumiati, 2013; Kessler & Milkman, 2016; Zagefka, Noor, & Brown, 2013) as well as the effectiveness of charity marketing strategies (Park & Lee, 2015). However, research has not yet explored how identities affect charity selection.

Identities that are salient, important to the consumer, relevant to the object being considered, and that assist the consumer to select between product choices are most likely to influence consumer choices (Reed, 2002). When an identity is perceived as relevant in a given context, it can influence the range of responses that are considered appropriate (Turner et al., 1987). This may include decisions about which charities or beneficiaries are prioritized and the kinds of help that are offered. As such, an essential first step for non-profit marketers is to understand which identities are salient in different charitable domains.

The Current Research

To date, the question of how and why donors choose to support certain charities over others has remained largely untested and untheorized. The literature discussed above

suggests that donors who belong to different social categories tend to support different types of charity. From a social identity perspective, donors' identities would be expected to influence which types of organizations they choose to support through their charitable giving, with different identities being relevant to different types of giving.

This article takes a first step towards understanding the role that identity plays in charity selection by testing whether the previously documented relationships between broad social categories (or identities) and charitable giving are consistent across all categories of charity. The primary hypothesis is that the nature of associations between social categories and giving will differ as a function of the type of charity being considered:

H_1: Different social categories will predict support for different types of charity.

The current research is the first to explicitly test the role of social categories in charity selection. As such, the authors make no specific predictions as to the nature of the associations. However, based on social identity theory (outlined above) the following exploratory hypothesis is proposed:

H_2: Associations between social categories (groups) and types of charity will reflect group priorities and values.

Study 1

Secondary data were analyzed to identify the preferred charities of 675 confirmed donors. Respondents were free to name any charity and were not prompted by either brand or mission, ensuring they had complete liberty to spontaneously name the charities they supported. Named charities were later coded into categories for analysis using the national charity register. It was hypothesized that members of different demographic social categories—based on gender, age group, and religion—would preferentially support different categories of charity (H_1), in ways that reflected group priorities (H_2).

Material and Methods

Participants and Procedure

In 2015, 6,000 Australians who had donated to charity through a workplace giving program in the previous year were emailed an invitation to participate in market research. Data were subsequently anonymized and shared with the researchers for analysis. In total, 1,159 (i.e., 19% of those approached) voluntarily completed the survey and 821 named the main charity they supported. An additional 146 participants were excluded from analyses due to incomplete data on the focal predictors: three participants did not declare their gender and a significant minority (17%) chose not to answer the question about religious identification.[1] The final sample therefore comprised 675 active workplace giving donors, of whom 405 were female and 270 were male. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 74 years, with 12% aged 18-29, 27% aged 30-39, 32% aged 40-49, 29% aged 50-64, and less than 1% aged over 65 years. Participants reported low levels of religious identification ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.26$, on a 5-point scale) with almost half (48%) indicating that they were not at all religious. Key measures of interest for the current study are outlined below and a copy of the full questionnaire is available on request.

Measures

Participants identified their gender (coded female = 1, male = -1), age bracket ("Which age bracket do you fall into?", coded under 18 = 1, 18-29 = 2, 30-39 = 3, 40-49 = 4, 50-64 = 5, and 65 to 74 = 6) and religiosity ("Please indicate for each description how like

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[1]Given the exploratory nature of Hypothesis 2, we have chosen to be conservative and exclude incomplete responses from analyses. Mean-replacement is not recommended for two reasons. First, because of the large minority of participants with missing data (17% of responses), introducing mean-replacement would lower the variability in the dependent measure excessively, producing a potential problem of kurtosis. Second, because respondents tended to either be high or low in religiosity, the average does not represent participants well conceptually. However, when analyses were run using mean-replacement for the missing values of participants who saw the question but elected not to respond, an identitical pattern of results was returned. The only change observed was that the association between gender and giving to welfare charities ($Exp(B) = 1.20$, $p = .046$) became non-significant ($Exp(B) = 1.16$, $p = .088$).

you that person is: A religious person", 1 = *not at all like me*, 5 = *just like me*). Participants

were also asked to name their principal charity ("What is the main charity, or most recent,

charity you supported through workplace giving?"), using a free response format. Responses

were then coded into categories using publically searchable data on the Australian Charities

and Not-for-profits Commission website (ACNC, 2016). Each named charity was coded for

each category under which the charity had registered and whether or not they served

communities overseas (each coded 0 = is not, or 1 = is in this category). Hybrid charities—

those with multiple missions and beneficiary groups—were accounted for in the data as

charities could nominate multiple categories. More detail about charity categories is included

in the Appendix.

Results and Discussion

The four most frequently mentioned charity categories were selected for analysis:

international; health; welfare; and public benevolent institution (PBI; a category that could

include, for example, hospices, disability services, and aged care). In addition, religious and

animal charities were included because previous research has highlighted these categories

(e.g., Breeze, 2013; Hill & Vaidyanathan, 2011). Over half (56%) of participants named a

PBI, 37% a health, 31% an international, 30% a welfare, 12% an animal, and 11% a religious

charity.[2] Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations between all variables are

presented in Table 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

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[2] Charities could register under multiple sub-types, resulting in overlap between some
categories. Analyses were first run controlling for alternative categories of charities.
Inclusion of these controls did not substantively change results however, so the direct
associations are presented here for simplicity. More detail about categories and observed
overlap is provided in the Appendix.

Six binary logistic regression analyses (presented in Table 2) were conducted to examine how gender, age, and religiosity were associated with preferring a charity that was registered under the international, health, welfare, religious, PBI, and animal categories respectively. The model significantly predicted respondents' preference for international ($\chi^2(3) = 24.70, p < .001$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .05), welfare ($\chi^2(3) = 16.21, p = .001$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .03), religious ($\chi^2(3) = 26.26, p < .001$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .08), and animal charities ($\chi^2(3) = 30.08, p < .001$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .08). Taken together, however, gender, age, and religion did not help explain preference for either health charities ($\chi^2(3) = 0.89, p = .829$, *Nagelkerke R^2* < .01) or PBIs ($\chi^2(3) = 4.76, p = .190$, *Nagelkerke R^2* < .01).

Inspection of the coefficients showed that female donors were significantly less likely than male donors to prefer an international charity, *Exp(B)*[3] = 0.84, $p = .037$, 95% CI [0.71, 0.99], but significantly more likely to prefer an animal charity, *Exp(B)* = 1.68, $p < .001$, CI [1.26, 2.24], or welfare charity, *Exp(B)* = 1.20, $p = .046$, CI [1.00, 1.42]. Older donors were significantly more likely to prefer a religious charity, *Exp(B)* = 1.58, $p = .001$, 95% CI [1.20, 2.07], and significantly less likely to prefer an international charity, *Exp(B)* = 0.78, $p = .003$, CI [0.66, 0.92], or animal charity, *Exp(B)* = 0.64, $p = .001$, CI [0.50, 0.83]. More religious donors were significantly more likely to name an international charity, *Exp(B)* = 1.26, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.11, 1.43], welfare, *Exp(B)* = 1.25, $p = .001$, CI [1.10, 1.42], or religious charity, *Exp(B)* = 1.42, $p < .001$, CI [1.18, 1.70], as their preferred charity, and significantly less likely to name an animal charity, *Exp(B)* = 0.64, $p = .001$, CI [0.50, 0.83].

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

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[3] The odds ratio, *Exp(B)*, indicates how much the likelihood of the participant naming a charity in the target category increases or decreases for each unit change of the explanatory variable and is scale dependent. For example, an odds ratio of 1.20 indicates a 20% increase while 0.80 indicates a 20% decrease in the odds of naming a charity in the target category.

This data from a sample of active donors that documents real-world charity preferences provides preliminary evidence that the relationships typically observed between social categories and charitable giving vary across charity targets (supporting H_1). However, by restricting the study to workplace giving, analyses omitted retiree-aged donors, a category shown to include some of the most generous donors (Steinberg et al., 2005). Furthermore, as only 19% of targeted donors completed the survey and a significant portion of the respondents (17%) returned missing data on religiosity, the sample is unlikely to be fully representative of the wider donor population. In addition, the study did not assess political orientation, which is another donor characteristic that has been associated with both religiosity and charitable giving (e.g., Forbes & Zampelli, 2013; Van Lange, Bekkers, Chirumbolo, & Leone, 2012). These limitations are addressed in the second study.

Study 2

Using a wider community sample of donors, Study 2 again investigated how social categories based on gender, age, and religiosity were associated with support for a range of charity categories. Several amendments were made to the design in order to address the limitations of the first study. First, political orientation (the preference for more conservative or more liberal political policies) was included as a potential predictor of support. Religiosity often correlates with conservatism (e.g., Sibley & Bulbulia, 2015; Van Lange et al., 2012) and Brooks (2003) argued that the relationship between religiosity and giving may be at least partly explained by political identity. Yet studies including political orientation as a predictor of charity have either failed to find significant differences between liberals and conservatives or have produced contradictory results (Mesch et al., 2011; Sibley & Bulbulia, 2015; Van Lange et al., 2012). These inconsistent results suggest that associations between political identity may vary across charity targets. Early evidence supports this contention: conservatives report giving more to religious causes than people with other political

affiliations (Forbes & Zampelli, 2013); international charities may receive more support from progressives than conservatives (Nilsson et al., 2016; Wiepking, 2010); and donors are more likely to support charities whose missions align with guiding moral foundations relevant to their political identity (Winterich, Zhang, & Mittal, 2012). Study 2 therefore included political orientation as a fourth social category expected to be associated with charity selection.

Next, giving outside of the workplace was also considered. This allowed donors to consider charities they support via all channels and ensured that retiree-aged donors were not excluded from the sample. Finally, participants were compensated for their time to reduce the likelihood of returning missing data on key measures, such as religiosity. By addressing the sampling concerns raised in Study 1 and adding political orientation as a predictor of charity support, Study 2 provided a more rigorous test of the hypothesis that associations between social categories and charitable giving will vary as a function of the category of charity being considered (H_1), and in ways that reflect group priorities (H_2).

Material and Methods

Participants and Procedure

In 2015, 743 market research panelists from South Australia completed an online survey about charitable giving. Of these, 60% stated that they had made a donation of money to a charity in the last 12 months and were asked to name up to 10 charities they had donated to. Of the 86% of donors who named at least one charity that could be coded, 9 participants (2%) returned missing data on both the religiosity and political orientation measures and were therefore excluded from analyses. The final sample ($N = 376$) included 177 males and 199 females, ranging in age from 18 to over 65 years (17% aged 18-29, 13% aged 30-39, 14% aged 40-49, 34% aged 50-64, and 23% aged over 65 years). On average, participants were low in religiosity ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.22$) with 44% indicating they were not at all religious.

Regarding political orientation, 53% indicated they were politically more progressive and 47% indicated they were more conservative. Participants were recruited though a market research panel and completed a 15-minute online survey in exchange for payment of approximately AUD$5. Data was subsequently anonymized and shared with the researchers for analysis. Key measures of interest for the current study are outlined below and a copy of the full questionnaire is available on request.

Measures

Gender, age, and religiosity were measured as per Study 1. Political orientation was assessed with a single forced-choice item (*Politically I am more to the left* or *Politically I am more to the right*, coded conservative/right = 1 or progressive/left = -1). Participants were asked to name up to 10 charities that they had supported to in the last 12 months ("Which charities have you donated to in the past 12 months? Please list all those you have made monetary donations to including any direct debits or credit card donations"), using a free response format. The coding procedure was identical to that employed for Study 1.

Results and Discussion

Participants reported donating to an average of 2.5 charities ($SD = 1.99$) in the previous 12 months. Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations between all variables are presented in Table 3.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

Six binary logistic regression analyses (presented in Table 4) were conducted to examine whether gender, age, religious, and political social categories were differentially associated with support of different types of non-profits.[4] The model significantly predicted support for international ($\chi^2(4) = 15.84$, $p = .003$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .06), religious ($\chi^2(4) =$

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[4] As in Study 1, controlling for support of other categories of charity did not affect the pattern of results and therefore the direct associations are reported for simplicity.

19.32, $p = .001$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .07), and animal charities ($\chi^2(4)$ = 9.74, $p = .045$,

Nagelkerke R^2 = .04), but only marginally predicted support for health organizations ($\chi^2(4)$ =

9.20, $p = .057$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .03). Taken together, gender, age, religion, and political

categories did not significantly explain support of welfare charities ($\chi^2(4)$ = 5.81, $p = .210$,

Nagelkerke R^2 = .02) or PBIs ($\chi^2(4)$ = 4.55, $p = .336$, *Nagelkerke R^2* = .02).

Inspection of the coefficients showed that no unique associations were observed

between gender and support of any category of charity. Older donors were significantly more

likely to support health charities, *Exp(B)* = 1.23, $p = .008$, 95% CI [1.05, 1.42], and also

showed a trend towards supporting religious charities, *Exp(B)* = 1.16, $p = .064$, CI [0.99,

1.36]. More religious donors were more likely to support international charities, *Exp(B)* =

1.32, $p = .002$, 95% CI [1.11, 1.57], welfare, *Exp(B)* = 1.23, $p = .028$, CI [1.02, 1.48], and

religious charities, *Exp(B)* = 1.38, $p < .001$, CI [1.16, 1.64], but significantly less likely to

support animal charities, *Exp(B)* = 0.69, $p = .004$, CI [0.53, 0.89]. Conservative donors were

significantly less likely than liberal donors to support international charities, *Exp(B)* = 0.78, p

= .017, 95% CI [0.63, 0.96].

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

A survey of the categories of charity supported by a wide community sample of

donors replicated the key finding of Study 1: that donors' social group memberships are

associated more strongly with supporting some types of charity than others. Using a paid

panel to recruit participants, no substantial missing data was returned on religion, and all

significant results from Study 1 pertaining to religion were replicated.

General Discussion

Two studies of charity preferences among active donors supported the hypothesis (H$_1$)

that charitable giving is not a universal response. Instead, different identities are associated

with supporting different types of charities. Thus, who gives to charity depends in part on the

type of charity in question: a point that has not been systematically tested before now. Some

consistent patterns emerged across samples of both workplace giving (Study 1) and self-

reported (Study 2) donors: older donors are more likely to support religious organizations;

more religious donors are more likely to support international, welfare, and religious causes,

but less likely to support animal charities; and politically conservative donors are less likely

to support international charities. These patterns support the notion that donors give in ways

that reflect the priorities of groups they belong to (H_2), which is elaborated below.

However, several inconsistencies also emerged across the results of these two studies,

highlighting the importance of understanding how identity and other socio-contextual factors

affect donor decision-making. Large-scale category memberships such as those employed

here—specifically gender, age, religion, and political orientation—are especially important

sources of social identity (Turner et al., 1987), and previous research suggests people give to

causes that are relevant to their priorities and values (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Sargeant,

1999; Srnka et al., 2003). Indeed, we put forward the argument that charitable giving could

be understood as a group process, with charity selection influenced by the priorities and

norms related to salient donor identities. This identity-based approach helps us to understand

the emergent patterns in charity support, as articulated below.

Older donors were more likely to support religious charities (corroborating James &

Sharpe, 2007; Wiepking, 2010). Older people are more likely to participate in religious

activities, independent of their religiosity per se (Sargeant, 1999). It is therefore proposed

that they give more to religious causes for three inter-related reasons: higher exposure to and

solicitation by religious causes; more religious social networks; and supportive social norms.

In an extended community sample (Study 2) older donors were also found to be more likely

to support health charities (consistent with Nilsson et al., 2016; Srnka et al., 2003). As health

problems increase with age, this association may reflect older donors' donations to

organizations that their (age) group members are most likely to benefit from, or simply memorial giving as friends and family pass away. Thus, older donors may give to religious charities because of the way their social groups are integrated with religious activities. Futher, they may give to health charities because they see their own social group as directly benefiting from such gifts. These propositions remain to be tested in future research.

In both studies, religiosity was associated with an increased likelihood of supporting religious, welfare, and international organizations (supporting Casale & Baumann, 2015; Wiepking, 2010), and reduced likelihood of supporting animal charities. To the authors' knowledge the latter relationship has not been previously reported. Support of religious charities can be most clearly understood in terms of identity: more religious donors contribute to causes that directly spread the values associated with their group. The other associations can also be understood in terms of group norms and values. Given Australian national demographics, the religious respondents were likely to be primarily Christian. Dominant beliefs of Christianity help explain religious respondents' greater support of charities that serve the vulnerable and needy, and tendency to prioritize human beneficiaries over animals (McLaughlin, 2014). As a limitation, however, the measure of self-report religiosity employed did not identify specific faith backgrounds. Further, Australia is relatively less religious than many other countries. According to the latest census data, 30% of Australians identify with no religion (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In comparison, just 15% of Americans claim no religious ties (US Census Bureau, 2015). While the results obtained here are theorized to be driven by identity concerns that should cross borders, it is possible that results will not translate to all contexts. Future research should investigate these associations in other national contexts and actively consider the potential role of specific religious affiliations.

Donors who identified with a conservative political orientation were less likely to support international charities (supporting Nilsson et al., 2016; Wiepking, 2010). Potentially this can be explained by values and tendencies more likely to be shared by people who identify as conservative—such as stronger nationalism (van Der Toorn, Nail, Liviatan, & Jost, 2014), more prejudice against outgroups (e.g., Webster, Burns, Pickering, & Saucier, 2014), or justification of inequality (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Results therefore suggest that donors choose charities that reflect the worldviews that are priorities of their political identities. A more granular examination of different types of international charity, however, would allow marketers to identify any types of international aid that conservatives would support.

Finally, mixed support was found for diverging gender associations. In Study 1, men were more likely than women to nominate an international charity and less likely to nominate an animal or welfare organization as their preferred. However, these associations were not replicated in Study 2, where no significant associations were observed between gender and the charity categories supported. It should first be noted that those categories of charity previously found to be supported more by males (e.g. sports, politics; see Piper & Schnepf, 2008; Showers et al., 2011) are not included as sub-types in the Australian charity register and, therefore, could not be analyzed. Nonetheless, gender differences in giving may be more likely for confirmed donors (Study 1) than self-reported donors (Study 2); or may play out more strongly in selection of preferred charity (Study 1) than all charities supported (Study 2). Alternatively, gender may simply not be a very salient identity in the context of charitable giving, resulting in weaker and more inconsistent gender effects.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

Overall, the results highlight the importance of understanding the identities that inform consumer choices in the charitable domain. The evidence presented here suggests

that identities do matter and that charitable choices may reflect the priorities of relevant social identities. As such, this paper has highlighted a missing piece of the donor psychology puzzle: the role identity plays not just in motivating overall charitable giving, but in delineating which charities an individual chooses to support. The evidence presented here—a systematic comparison of identities in relation to charity selection—shows that identities related to age, religion, and political affliations appear to structure giving in meaningful ways. Gender, however, may not be a meaningful identity in charitable contexts. Future research is needed to determine which other identities matter and in which charitable domains.

This new knowledge about the role identities play in charity selection can aid non-profit marketers in three key ways. First, identity research will help fundraisers understand which identities a particular type of charity should make salient in campaign materials to uplift response rates. Second, marketers can prioritize identity-relevant channels based on identities core to a particular charity's donor base. Finally, once better understood, identities and associated norms and values can be used to help charities frame fundraising appeals to ensure they resonate with donor priorities.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The current studies are unique in that they surveyed active donors and asked them to name their favourite charities without prompt. Each charity was coded using objective data available in the local charity register, in which charities self-nominate their charitable purposes. This data allowed for overlap between charity missions, a strength given that non-profits are becoming increasingly hybrid (Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005). Demographic categories were used to understand associations between social categories and charitable choices. Demographics provide a practical method to segment donors and therefore have applied value for non-profit marketers. Using social categories as a stand-in for identity is

nonetheless problematic because identity is complex, subjective, and relies primarily on an individual's self-categorization as a group member (Turner et al., 1987). Future research will benefit from employing measures designed to capture both degrees of identification (how important the group is for the individual) and the norms attached to those groups (how much the group is perceived to support this type of charity), in order to test the identity processes proposed here. Specifically, understanding both explicit (self-reported) and implicit (behavioral) relationships between identities and charity targets will be important. Qualitative research can be employed to unravel the complex ways that donor identities may interact with beneficiary identities to motivate charity responses. Experimental work is also needed to evaluate the potential causality of the associations observed here. Finally, building a richer landscape of the charitable sector, which includes perceived normative targets of giving attached to different social identities will be essential to moving research on identity in non-profit marketing forward.

Conclusions

        This paper makes an important contribution to the psychological understanding of donor behavior, by presenting clear evidence from two community samples of donors showing how associations between social categories and charitable giving vary as a function of the target charity considered. This suggests that different identities motivate support of different types of charity: an intuitive point yet one that has rarely been emphasized in the literature. The research contributes to a growing inter-disciplinary movement seeking to empirically test how social concerns affect consumer behavior in the charitable domain. The data highlight that charitable giving is not only an individual tendency, but a social response prompted by an interaction between aspects of the donor and the beneficiary. These findings have implications for fundraising practice, especially donor recruitment and appeal framing.

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Appendix 1

Charity Categories and Coding Procedure

Nominated charities in both studies were coded by volunteer research assistants into categories using publically searchable data on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website (www.acnc.gov.au). During the process of annual registration with the commission, charities select at least one charity sub-type from 14 potential options (see Table A1) and also specify the communities their organization serves. Each named charity was coded for all mentioned sub-types and whether or not they served communities overseas (each coded 0 = is not, or 1 = is in this category). Two sub-types ("Advancing health" and "Health promotion") explicitly related to health and were combined to make one category ("Health") for analyses.

Sub-type	Examples
Preventing or relieving the suffering of animals	Animal protection societies, shelters
Advancing health	Hospitals, medical research, support groups
Advancing education	Kindergartens, universities, scholarships
Advancing social or public welfare	International aid, soup kitchens, elder care, disability services
Advancing religion	Religious congregations, buildings, or education
Advancing culture	Museums, ballet, theatre
Promoting reconciliation, mutual respect and tolerance between groups or individuals	Promoting equality, restorative justice
Promoting or protecting human rights	Promoting rights and freedoms
Advancing the security or safety of the Australian public	Neighbourhood watch, volunteer emergency services
Advancing the natural environment	Protecting flora and fauna
Advancing public debate	Promoting change that aids one of the other charitable purposes
Health promotion	Community healthcare, medical research, awareness raising
Public benevolent institutions	Hospices, disability services, aged care
Other	Any other purpose beneficial to the general public
International	Serves: communities overseas

Table A1: *List of current Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission registration sub-types*

Note. Charities self-identify as having missions under each category. Charities can register under multiple sub-types.

Analysis

Charities could register under multiple sub-types, resulting in overlap between some categories. For example, significant rates of cross-registration were found among charities self-categorized as international, welfare, religion, and PBI ($r = .20-.28$, $p < .001$). Given this overlap, analyses were first run controlling for alternative categories of charities. Inclusion of these controls did not substantively change results in either study, so the direct associations are presented for simplicity.

Table 1

Descriptives and Zero-order Correlations Between Demographic Social Categories and Charity Category Preference (Study 1)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Female (-1/1)	0.20	0.98								
2. Age (category)	3.79	1.00	-.14***							
3. Religiosity	2.03	1.26	-.10*	.06†						
4. International	0.31	0.46	-.08†	-.10*	.14***					
5. Health	0.37	0.48	-.02	.02	-.03	-.10**				
6. Welfare	0.30	0.46	.07†	-.04	.12**	.19***	-.05			
7. Religion	0.11	0.31	.03	.13**	.15***	.29***	.18***	.29***		
8. PBI	0.56	0.50	-.04	.05	.07	.20***	-.21***	.21***	.22***	
9. Animal	0.12	0.32	.14***	.00	-.14***	-.19***	-.21***	-.20***	-.13**	-.32***

Note. †$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ (2-tailed); charity categories are coded 0/1.

Listwise $N = 675$

Table 2

Binary Logistic Regressions with Demographic Social Categories Predicting Preference for Different Charity Types (Study 1)

	International Exp(B)	Health Exp(B)	Welfare Exp(B)	Religion Exp(B)	Benevolent Exp(B)	Animal Exp(B)
Individual Predictors						
Female (-1/1)	.84*	.95	1.20*	1.24	.95	1.68***
Age	.78**	1.01	.90	1.58**	1.07	1.11
Religiosity	1.26***	.95	1.25**	1.42***	1.12†	.64**
Model Fit						
Model Chi Square	24.70***	0.89	16.21**	26.26***	4.76	30.08***
Cox & Snell R^2	.04	.00	.02	.04	.01	.04
Nagelkerke R^2	.05	.00	.03	.08	.01	.08
Correct Classification						
Overall	67%	63%	70%	89%	56%	88%
Donor	8%	0%	4%	42%	100%	0%
Non-donor	97%	100%	99%	98%	0%	100%

Note. †$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 3

Descriptives and Zero-order Correlations Between Demographic Social Categories and Charity Categories Supported (Study 2)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Female (-1/1)	0.06	1.00									
2. Age (category)	4.32	1.39	-.14**								
3. Religiosity	2.10	1.22	-.05	.05							
4. Conservative (-1/1)	-0.05	1.00	-.02	.05	.08						
5. International	0.49	0.50	-.06	.02	.16**	-.11*					
6. Health	0.52	0.50	.04	.13*	-.07	.01	-.06				
7. Social Welfare	0.26	0.44	-.10	.05	.12*	.01	.31***	.07			
8. Religious	0.39	0.49	-.06	.11*	.19***	-.04	.16**	-.20***	.11*		
9. PBI	0.85	0.36	-.08	.08	.04	.02	.35***	.00	.16**	.27***	
10. Animal	0.18	0.39	.20	.00	-.15**	-.02	-.05	-.14**	-.10*	-.07	-.21***

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (2-tailed); charity categories are coded 0/1.

Listwise N = 376

Table 4

Binary Logistic Regressions with Demographic Social Categories Predicting Support of Different Charity Types (Study 2)

	International Exp(B)	Health Exp(B)	Welfare Exp(B)	Religion Exp(B)	Benevolent Exp(B)	Animal Exp(B)
Individual Predictors						
Female (-1/1)	.90	1.11	1.00	.91	.82	1.04
Age	1.02	1.23**	1.08	1.16†	1.13	1.02
Religiosity	1.32**	.89	1.23*	1.38***	1.08	.69**
Political Orientation	.78*	1.03	.99	.88	1.05	.97
Model Fit						
Model Chi Square	15.84**	9.19†	5.81	19.32**	4.55	9.74*
Cox & Snell R^2	.04	.02	.02	.05	.01	.03
Nagelkerke R^2	.06	.03	.02	.07	.02	.04
Correct Classification						
Overall	58%	59%	75%	64%	85%	82%
Supporter	58%	73%	0%	23%	100%	0%
Non-supporter	58%	44%	100%	90%	0%	100%

Note. †$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$