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**OPERATIONALIZING KEY CONSTRUCTS OF CONSTRUAL  
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TOWARDS ADVERTISING MESSAGES**

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**OPERATIONALIZING KEY CONSTRUCTS OF CONSTRUAL LEVEL THEORY TO  
MAXIMIZE DONOR GENEROSITY TOWARDS ADVERTISING MESSAGES**

**By**

**Clay Steven Dedeaux**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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## ABSTRACT

### OPERATIONALIZING KEY CONSTRUCTS OF CONSTRUAL LEVEL THEORY TO MAXIMIZE DONOR GENEROSITY TOWARD ADVERTISING MESSAGES

By

Clay Dedeaux

Designing messages which appeal to the generosity of prospective donors is critically important to those in harm's way, and secondly to those who advocate for their care, such as nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Contributions needed to combat disease and malnutrition are far in excess of the relief agencies' financial resources.

Donors typically respond first to the appeals of family and friends, before those of strangers. This suggests that people categorize others as socially close or distant. Donors also typically respond first to urgent appeals for humanitarian aid in response to large-scale natural catastrophes, before they will donate to less urgent appeals such as economic development or a capital campaign. This suggests that people categorize situations on a temporal basis. Two psychological distances (social and temporal) are theorized by construal level theory (CLT) to create different mental representations of an object. CLT's explanation of this phenomenon is based on a representational theory of the mind, rooted in cognitive science, which takes on the form of semantics to describe mental states such as the accuracy and truthfulness of thoughts, beliefs, desires, perceptions, and images about an *object*. CLT theorizes that mental representations are formed in concrete language (low-level construals), or abstract language (high-level construals). The main hypothesis is that donors evaluate charitable messages more favorably when the diction matches their construal.

A 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design successfully manipulated three independent variables into contrasting levels: social distance (near-distant) as the between-subject variable; with temporal distance (urgent/less-urgent) and diction (abstract-concrete) as the two within-subject variables. The dependent variables are: (a) financial donations toward the charitable appeal, and (b) self-report of motivation based upon the value-expressive attitude function versus the utilitarian attitude function. Data was solicited among 2,076 employees of a major international firm headquartered in the Mid-Atlantic region and randomly assigned to one study: a manipulation check (N=124), a revised check (N=26), a pretest (N=26), and the main experiment (N=221). A random drawing for \$1,000 allowed respondents to realistically consider their allocation to a charity, as if the money were their own. Evidence to support the presence of mental representation as defined by CLT would have appeared as higher donations in the treatments which matched the diction (level of abstraction) to the construal. A three-way ANOVA of mean donor contributions determined that social distance and temporal distance interacted to significantly influence donor behavior independently of the use of abstract or concrete language in the stimuli materials, which appear in the form of magazine advertisements. Evidence does not support the contention that people produce low- or high-level construals. Significant but low correlations were observed between larger contributions and (a) higher household incomes, (b) extrinsic religious orientation, (c) interdependent self construal, and (d) personal involvement with charitable issues; but none for (e) value-expressive attitudes.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Katie and daughter Jennifer, for their love, support, and patience during my academic journey.



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## KEY TO SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

	<u>First Use</u>
A <sub>AD</sub>	122
AFI: Attitude Function Inventory	54
CLT: Construal Level Theory	8
IOS: Inclusiveness of Other into Self	92
IV: Independent Variable	15
MC1: Manipulation Check I	96
MC2: Manipulation Check II	104
NPO: Nonprofit Organization	105
PD: Psychological Distance	8
SD: Social Distance	8
TD: Temporal Distance	8

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Providing for the well-being of the poor and afflicted has been an issue of practical and philosophical importance since antiquity. Ancients debated the role of reason, duty, morality, and virtue in response to the harm faced by others, and their theories have had a lasting influence on crafting a civil response to this age-old problem. The philosophical works of Aristotle, Plato, Hume, Kant, and Rawls, on subjects of benevolence, social justice, and self-interest tap into fundamental aspects of our humanity as viewed from a Western perspective. Plato argued that moral judgments follow from divinely inspired objective truths, to which the ancient academic skeptics, including Sextus Empiricus, disagreed in their contention that morality was merely a subjective human convention (Fieser & Dowden, 2009). Plato's position favors welfare as a collective moral duty to serve others; whereas Sextus Empiricus' position rejects norms that obligate, in favor of personal agency that is norm-free, so much so that self-interested outcomes, including pleasure, are morally good. Heeding the sages' counsel is well-advised in the formation of contemporary perspectives on social policies toward the welfare of others and the stability of the state. Their viewpoints and those of latter-day **philosophers** and scientists will be consulted as they pertain to the study of charitable **giving** at the individual level of analysis.

Moral judgments regarding behavior toward self and others provide an insight as to **how** a society treats chronically disadvantaged persons and suddenly compromised **persons**, whether they live within or outside of that society's borders. Welfare debated as **charity** or duty at the societal level can be reframed as inclination versus obligation at the **individual** level. Charity is a deeply personal experience as every adult has been both a

recipient and benefactor of charity; therefore the study expects informed responses from our survey sample of employed adults; the results should be immediately fruitful and ultimately suggestive of preferences at the societal level. This research agenda is ultimately interested in studying conditions in which persuasion may have an effect: a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state and/or behavior through communication in a circumstance in which the persuader has some measure of free choice (Smith, 2006). Situations in which provision of assistance is necessarily due are evaluated here in terms of social justice, and as such, impose moral obligations which deny the donor's free will, agency, or volition. In these situations, the act cannot rightfully be described as a donation (Hunt, 1975). This study is situated in the public sphere, where the solicitor is non-kin or a stranger. Donor preference for members of in-groups over less similar others is well established in literature ranging from social psychology (e.g., social identity theory) to evolutionary biological sciences (e.g., survival of kin). Therefore this study situates the donor at a social distance from the recipient. Helping others is valued in every society; however, there appear to be rules for how the benefice is to be applied. The rules addressed in this study are sociological, mostly **concerned with: (1) donor's welfare orientations primarily directed toward outcomes that favor self or others; (2) donor's general pattern of favoritism toward in-groups and discrimination toward out-groups, which is related to the moral inclusiveness of others into self, and social distance; (3) donor's activation of specific attitudes based on whether the design of a persuasive appeal (message) fits their expectations (schema) of the charitable situation.**

The study is especially interested in the encounter between a potential donor and someone less familiar. Exchanges between strangers are less commonplace and therefore less studied. An economic exchange without the promise of repayment can be expected to occur among family and close others; however the normative expectation is that strangers will enter into formal arrangements that guarantee the terms and conditions of the payment and reimbursement (Clark, 1981). Strangers do receive aid, but as just noted, far less in comparison to those who are familiar to the donor. The goal is to develop message-design strategies that activate the donors' value-expressive motivations, including the prosocial values of benevolence and social justice (equality) more so than the utilitarian motivations that are less often associated with charitable behavior and less likely to be generous. Our contention is that donors are more likely to activate prosocial attitudes when the charitable appeal makes appropriate use of language, based on two key criteria: (a) the personal closeness the donor feels toward the recipient, and (b) the urgency of the request.

### Background of the Problem

Poverty and its negative effect on the immediate health of individuals and future **welfare** of groups and society are of great interest and importance to individuals, **societies**, and governments throughout the world. Poverty takes its toll on a personal **level**, and leads to starvation, disease, and the stigmatizing of entire groups of similarly **afflicted** people. The number of humans who die of hunger or hunger-related disease is **large** at 26,500 per day and growing (Shah, 2008). Human deprivation persists **throughout** history and in every region, and even today vexes the most economically **developed** countries. The plight of being born in war-torn or economically savaged

country makes a child far more likely to die, a situation demanding more public awareness, outrage, and response. As Bono, the singer and activist, said in his National Prayer Day proclamation (2006): “Where you live should no longer determine whether you live.”

#### *Donor Bias Toward In-Groups*

Prosocial acts and charity are far more common between people when they know each other: People are more sympathetic toward victims who belong to their in-group rather than their out-group (e.g., Dovidio et al. 1997; Flippen et al. 1996; Levine et al. 2002), who are similar to them (Krebs 1975; Stotland & Walsh 1963), or who have the same vested interest in a cause (Miller & Ratner 1998; Ratner & Miller 2001). The case of a donor and familiar others is studied to the extent that this interaction yields clues useful for promoting aid for the disadvantaged members of society—those most dissimilar to the dominant members of society. Evidence in support of in-group bias would provide partial evidence that people categorize others along a continuum between personal closeness and distance.

#### *Inadequate Donor Response*

Benefice as a sentiment may be difficult to quantify; however welfare as a **tangible** benefit can be directly accounted for. Americans provided \$300 billion in private **do**nations to national and international causes, the largest of any country. International **de**velopment officials regard that sum to be too small relative to the wealth of the nation. **Th**e criticism is that Americans are stingy, giving just 2.2% of their average disposable (**aft**er-tax) income (Thomson, 2007). They also argue that American donations of \$13.22 **bill**ion, at 4.3% of total giving, represent a general unwillingness to support international **and** foreign affairs; and further cite that Americans directed three times (33%) as much to

religion-related causes, most often their local congregation (Giving USA, 2007). This paper takes up the challenge to better tap into donor's willingness to help others; the paper focuses on giving behaviors in the United States between donors and unfamiliar others who will be referred to as "strangers" (Schuetz, 1944). The notion of the stranger may later prove to be analogous to an outsider or foreigner within a cross-cultural research setting (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). This research is directed at understanding the structure of prosocial attitudes and how they change depending on the donor's appraisal of the situation (donor-stranger interaction depicted in stimuli material), and normative influences.

#### *Depressed Giving During Domestic Economic Downturns*

The hardships faced by nonprofit organizations (NPOs) during the economic downturn of 2008–2009 were expressed by a trade association executive who said, "While nonprofits are working feverishly to accommodate increased demand, they are facing severe financial constraints that are threatening their ability to go on, much less expand their services" (Strom, 2008).

Major trends in the economy are signs of a long-term downturn that first began to appear in the final quarter of 2007, with its sharpest decline in gross domestic product since 2003. This downturn is making managers at social service charities afraid that if past recessions are a guide, then many charities can expect donations to tumble an inflation-adjusted average of 1.4%, as compared to a rise in donations of 4.3% during non-recessionary periods since 1973. The impact is expected to hit hardest on charities that rely on \$100 to \$300 donations from less affluent households seriously affected by the meltdown in the housing market. Larger gifts from more affluent donors are slowing too, as the donors are asking for more time for the housing market to recover before

honoring their pledge (Hall & Kean, 2008). American donors with middle incomes reduced giving by 45% in a 2001 Independent Sector study; giving dropped 23% among less affluent households and 32% among the most affluent. Industry publications report that overall revenue is down 1.8% during the first quarter of 2008 versus the prior year, and cite a reduction in the number of donors and the average amount donated.

### *Ineffective Nonprofit Communication Campaigns*

The study seeks to contribute insights that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of fund-raising campaigns. The design of charitable fund-raising campaigns appears to lack the marketing discipline common in the for-profit business sector. Common marketing practices include understanding consumer (donor) behavior, conducting market analyses, selecting target markets, and developing comprehensive marketing strategies and tactics, all of which would improve the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the fund-raising campaign. Charitable giving is better regarded as a *transfer* of value from donor to recipient, rather than a *transaction* of two valuable objects between equal partners (Kotler, 1980); the significance is that charity remains uninformed by the discipline of marketing. The non-economic factors most often cited in marketing text books to explain charitable giving include: (a) altruism as an unconditionally benevolent desire to help others, (b) egoism as a self-interested desire for a good feeling that comes from donating, (c) drive reduction as relief from a sense of guilt for withholding a donation, and (d) compliance tactics to obligate the recipient who can't reciprocate. One of the few recommendations that marketers have for NPOs is to offer a nominal gift (e.g., candle, pen, note pad) in exchange for a donation, a suggestion of suspect value.



Critics also claim that NPO managers design their donor appeals with “...nothing more than a few rules of thumb” and “intuition” that often does not seem to be insightful given the large volume of junk mail (Leonhardt, 2008, p. 43). Messages often include grim statistics and stark images of a multitude of poor, sad, and malnourished victims that leave the prospective donor appalled and coolly indifferent (Obler, 1986). Nonprofit organizations rarely possess the financial resources needed to attract full-time communication experts and must rely on for-profit advertising agencies to provide expert help on a pro bono basis; however that help is often suspect as the advertising firm’s best creative talent is assigned to the highest paying clients. Nonprofit ads have also been criticized as “pointless cleverness,” as well as “confusing” and “off point” (Merkle, 2006). A notable exception is the Leo Burnett Chicago advertisement for Greenpeace, which was recognized as a finalist during the Magazine Publishers of America annual **Kelly Awards** (Magazine Publishers Association, 2008).

Managers of NPOs are much like their counterparts in the business sector, as both **attempts** to maximize revenue while minimizing expense. Both managers have **competitors**, armed with compelling arguments, who vie for a limited pool of donor **funds**. Both managers also risk unemployment if their efforts are deemed by their **superiors** to be unsatisfactory in accomplishing the organization’s stated goals and **mission**. Charitable fund-raising is a business, yet few organizations or scholars treat it as **such**. Benefits of this sort are better regarded as a *transfer* from donor to recipient, rather than a *transaction* of two valuable objects, typically a product or service in exchange for **money**, that is mutually satisfying.

Communication managers at NPOs may unwittingly deploy a “one size fits all” marketing campaign that fails to recognize that people possess a schema to guide their donor behavior, and that messages which don’t support the schema produce (a) uncertainty, (b) the activation of risk-averse cognitive process and, (c) less generous attitudes and behaviors.

#### *Limited Academic Interest*

Charitable fund-raising is a highly competitive business, yet academics and practitioners are reluctant to consider consumer behavior to better understand donor motivation. Despite the social and economic value of charitable giving to our economy, there is a dearth of research in this domain (Leonhardt, 2008), and as a result there is a lack of agreement on the conceptualizations and theorization of even the most standard concepts in the prosocial literature (Collett & Morrissey, 2007).

Solicitation tactics are not theoretically informed beyond the recognition that **a**ppeals concerning the well-being of others are more persuasive than inner-directed **a**ppeals (Small & Simonsohn, 2008). The NPO’s solicitation skills may improve now that **s**ocial scientists are becoming increasingly interested in philanthropy and helpful **b**ehaviors, caused in part by the large and growing amount of funding available to **n**onprofit institutions (Leonhardt, 2008).

#### The Purpose of the Study

The focus of this dissertation is to validate the theories of psychological distance, as **th**ey relate to construal level theory (CLT) and psychological distance (PD). **P**sycho**l**ogical distance is theorized to exist as near or far along four dimensions, two of **wh**ich are studied here: social distance (SD) and temporal distance (TD). Social distance **r**efers to the relationship of the recipient to the donor: as close as two people familiar with

one another, or moving along a continuum, as far apart as two strangers. Temporal distance refers to the elapsed time between the payment of a donation and how soon the benefit will be realized by the recipient. An urgent appeal for a donation places survival at the forefront, promising that aid will purchase food or medicine in response to an emergency. A less urgent appeal, but one which requires immediate funding, will yield its benefits in the long-term, as is the case with educational endowments and economic development. Near psychological distance (PD) is associated with low-level construals; whereas greater PD is associated with high-level construals. This is significant in that donors evaluate the charitable message as favorable when the lexicon is matched to their construal for that situation, as either concrete or abstract. Concrete representations are called low-level construals, whereas abstract representations are called high-level construals (Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006; Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008; Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007; Todorov, Goren, & Trope, 2007).

Construal level theory predicts that donors' evaluations of situations vary and **their** language expectancies change accordingly. The significance of this association is **that** messages typically produced by NPOs do not account for differences in construal, **the** consequences of which sub optimize donations. For example, features of all charitable **messages** include reference to the recipients, their needs compared to the desired **condition**, and a request for aid; the situation is depicted in a uniform manner, although **donors** will differ in how they construe the situation. The construal level is theorized to be **predicted** by the perceived psychological distance between the donor and the recipient (Lewin, 1951; Bar-Anan et al., 2006; Eyal et al., 2008; Liberman et al. 2007; Todorov et al., 2007).

The research goal is to develop communications strategies and tactics that tap into a prospective donor's most generous attitudes, while recognizing that generosity is conditional, meaning that some messages will appeal more than others. It is hypothesized that a donor will donate more when the message matches the internal language/dialogue that they typically use to make sense of the charitable situation. The cognitive processing of a situation is theorized to produce representations which vary on a continuum from highly concrete to highly abstract.

The objective of this study is to design a persuasive message, with special attention to specific text and semantic, that donors will readily recognize as matching the internal language/dialogue that they use to make sense of the situation.

#### Gaps in the Literature

Social psychology has underserved the study of prosocial behaviors and generosity toward others because it concentrates on transient situational cues that "...promote prosocial *acts*, instead of focusing on the attention on stable social psychological process that foster prosocial *traits* (Collett & Morrissey, 2007, p.25)." The goal of the research is to close gaps in the existing literature that lead to better understanding of stable psychological processes.

1. Literature does not address the message-design features that may be manipulated to match the donor's construal of the situation. Attitudes that support one of the value-expressive, social-adjustive, or knowledge functions may dominate others depending on the psychological distance between donor and recipient.
2. Construal level theory predicts a positive correlation between psychological distance and the level in which an event is construed when all dimensions are

measured as near or far, but fails to test a condition in which the dimensions are not uniformly near or far. The conditions in which the social and temporal distances are mismatched will be tested for the presence of the generosity outcomes related to the value-expressive or utilitarian attitude function.

3. Construal level theory predicts an equal allocation of benefits for in-groups and out-groups when semantic abstraction matches the donor's construal of the situation; however this finding is contrary to a well-established pattern of giving that favors in-groups. This experiment tests whether message design can overcome in-group bias that appears to be a sociological constant.
4. Preparing improved designs of existing NPO campaigns has largely been ignored from a theoretical perspective. Members of the communication industry may benefit from having their work assessed from a social psychological perspective.

#### Research's Social Significance

Philosophical consideration of such an important matter as social welfare is irrelevant if it does not lead in some meaningful way to the improvement in the well-being of needy others, to the exclusion of none but the fraudulent and truly undeserving. This paper will contribute to the body of knowledge concerning helping behavior and health communication to the extent that finding help will alleviate human suffering. The research goals are to develop recommendations that:

1. Government social planners will consider when developing programs for the public good.

2. Communication managers at public charities and their agencies consult will consider when planning fund raising campaigns for recipients who live within, and outside, the donor's country or culture.
3. Religious leaders and public opinion leaders will consider in their advocacy of prosocial attitudes among their congregations and the general public.

People are pleased to experience and witness positive social attitudes toward others, and are troubled by antisocial behavior such as neglect, violence, prejudice, and racism. Dehumanizing others allows for mistreatment without risk of self-condemnation (Diener, 1977). These behaviors can and must be unlearned through a concerted effort to change underlying negative attitudes. Withholding help is not an innate behavior, and it must be unlearned using the same process in which helpful behavior is learned. Not helping is not always callous and uncaring as doing so may bring harm or is illegal (e.g., giving money to purchase illegal drugs, helping rob a bank, aiding a terrorist or escapee). The goal of the study is to cultivate prosocial attitudes that redress the most egregious omissions, as when a prospective donor refuses to alleviate great suffering of others though at little cost. The solicitor who utilizes language most consistent with the donor's construal of the event is more likely to be rewarded with greater donations as compared to the solicitor who constructs messages in a uniform manner.

## Research Scope and Approach

Research data will be collected from subjects residing in the United States. Conceptualization, analysis, and conclusions will be made at the individual level of analysis and from the author's emic Western societal perspective, though sensitive to a broader etic perspective should the research finding have relevance to worldwide audiences.

Single-factor explanations have been constructed to explain the linear trend in donating, which are now known to be just part of the picture. Any single-factor theory will have to account for both the linear and nonlinear trends (Froming, Allen, & Underwood, 1983). The factorial survey methodology is strongly recommended by Will and Cochran (1995) as it offers important insights for future research and theoretical developments associated with understanding the role of religiosity and religious faith groups regarding compassion.

An attempt was made to quantify generosity beyond the single measure of most interest to NPO fund raisers—the dollar amount of the donation. Seven factors tapping into various relevant attitudes and behaviors were examined using confirmatory factor analysis to explain the broader phenomenon called generosity; it is acknowledged that many factors were potentially excluded, some perhaps obscured by researchers' Western cultural bias. Further research in this vein will be proposed as worthy of future study.

Philosophy, sociology, and psychology serve as theoretical foundation to study how humans respond to the pleas of others who suffer from poverty or disaster. The extent to which a charitable response is morally obligated or a matter of personal inclination is addressed from a philosophical perspective in chapter 2.

The hypothesized relationships in chapter 3 are rationalized in social and psychological terms. The general attitudes and motivations of donors are studied and categorized based on the functions they serve, which are most often value expressive. Donors evaluate their behaviors on the degree of social distance which is operationalized in chapter 4: Methods as a measure of difference in perceived similarity between donor and recipient. That chapter also describes the stable psychological processes that people possess for evaluating a charitable appeal. The theorized relationship depends in part on the perceived social distance between the donor and the solicitor (socially near versus socially distant), and the time between the date of the donation and the date the benefit is realized (near-future versus distant-future). Tests are conducted in chapter 5 to determine if people consistently construe situations as abstract or concrete based on the social and temporal distances. The discussion in chapter 6 focuses on the hypotheses, emerging from construal level theory, that a charitable appeal for a situation construed as abstract or concrete will generate more donations when the abstract or concrete diction matches the abstract or concrete construal. Implication of the study for communication managers and topics for future research also appear in chapter 6.



## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Most people agree with the statement, if asked, that yes, “I am a generous person.” The examples they would offer as evidence would most likely include volunteering of time to benefit another, and charitable giving that includes financial donations. There are many other ways in which the well-being of one is improved by the actions of another, such as rescuing and cooperating; however this paper will study generosity as it relates to private financial aid. The problem recognized here is that generous attitudes don’t predict behavior at every level of analysis. For instance, a generous donor may, purposefully or unwittingly, reserve their generosity for family members or significant others who could reciprocate the benefit at a later time, as opposed to strangers who cannot reciprocate. Charity to strangers, while less common, does occur; therefore our study manipulated independent variables (IV) that situate the stranger in relation to the donor. The study seeks to identify the cognitive processes internal to the donor and external message strategies that yield the greatest donations.

Previous studies of charitable giving have shown that behavior is influenced by a wide variety of factors, ranging from internal dispositions or temperaments in support of (a) engagement with, or resistance to, prosocial acts (Eisenberg, 2000); or to (b) external processes such as operant conditioning, modeling, and role identity. Generosity is conceptualized as residing first in the individual and later manifested as helpful behavior. This study pays greatest attention to the stable psychological processes that result in the activation of generous attitudes. The theoretical basis for this approach is the functional perspective of attitudes rather than the identification of specific motivations linked to helpful behavior.

Care is given to distinguish the act of a donor's charity from a helpful act which is morally obligated. People do not regard helpful behavior of a parent to a child to be generous, nor is it generous to give in order to receive as is often the case in close communal and intimate relationships; these are examples of a *prima facie* moral obligation or clear intent to receive reciprocating benefits. These obligatory acts fall into a broader class of self-interested outcomes. Though not necessarily morally wrong, the obligatory act is not a generous act (Hunt, 1975). Donors who give to others to restore equality, as an exercise of social justice, would likely agree that their act is in fact *not* generous, but obligatory; though no communal relationship in the physical sense may necessarily exist. This view of charity to restore social justice is discussed in terms of religiosity and the social learning of attitudes, later in this paper. In recognition of egoistic motivations, there is a contention that generosity is still generosity when an individual benefits from giving.

Individuals within and across societies differ in the breadth and inclusiveness of their moral universe (Schwartz, 2007). Much of this variation among individuals reflects the prevailing beliefs and perceptions in the society or social groups that socialized them. In societies that socialize to a broadly inclusive moral universe, people should more often understand values such as justice and equality as applying beyond the in-group to all members of society. Thus, justice and equality should express the motivational goal of universalism as defined in the theory of basic values. In contrast, in societies that socialize to a concept of the moral universe as a narrower, more exclusive group of similar others, people are likely to understand the same value items of justice and equality as applying largely to the in-group (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

## Definition of Key Terms in Prosocial Literature

Conceptualization and theorization of helpful behavior is lacking because key terms and constructs, such as justice, benevolence, charity, and generosity are sometimes used interchangeably (Collett & Morrissey, 2008). A brief treatment of the key terms is provided here with additional detail and limitations to appear in the literature review.

### *Social Justice*

Social justice exists when all members of a society have the same basic rights, security, opportunities, obligations, and benefits (Pzaconsulting, 2008). It seeks to ensure the maintenance of a fair, equitable, egalitarian, and generally harmonious society.

Discrimination, persecution, prejudice, intolerance, and inequity are the antithesis of the goals of social justice (Planstats, 2008). Rawls regards justice as fairness to suggest that the donor be duty bound and morally obligated to provide assistance because the poor and afflicted have earned their right to fair treatments (Machan, 1998). The donor is not regarded as generous in response to fairness; they have simply done what they must do, to give someone their due.

Social justice is concerned with equality and moral inclusiveness as the opposite of what others have called “moral exclusion” (Deutsch, 1990; Opatow, 1990). Moral exclusion refers to people’s perception that others are outside, rather than included in, the boundary of rules, moral values, and fairness. Schwartz (1997) estimates the extent of moral inclusiveness in 66 societies by identifying the factors that produce societal differences and examining their consequences. Scores indicating high degree of moral inclusiveness of others were associated with the following items: (a) equality (equal opportunity for all); (b) social justice (correcting injustice, care for the weak); (c) broadmindedness (tolerance of different ideas/beliefs); and (d) a world at peace (free of

wars and conflict). Sagiv (1994) and Schwartz (1997) identified these items as conceptually associated more with concern for and action to promote the welfare of people outside one's in-group than the other universalism items.

### *Benevolence*

Benevolent behaviors and their consequences are collectively referred to as *prosocial*, and are defined as “voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 3).

Benevolent behaviors are directed toward the active protection or enhancement of the welfare of others (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). This study will focus on a specific caring act, *charity*, as distinct from among a range of related behaviors, such as *volunteering* of time, and *philanthropy* by wealthy individuals and corporations. Charity will be shown to be conceptually related to benevolence and not justice, as charity implies that the donor is not morally bound to aid; to provide what is rightfully due, as is often the case of parent to child, is a matter of justice and fairness.

### *Benevolence and its Contrast to Social Justice*

Benevolence is an other-regarding virtue, as contrasted to justice. Justice and benevolence are not mutually exclusive; they are logically correlated, as they imply each other and are derived from each other; to understand one requires knowing the other.

Benevolence is the desire and willingness to do good by those whom we pity (Boeree, n.d.) which takes on many forms and varying responses: compassion, mercy, kindness, or generosity, usually referring to acts of charity, which in turn is defined as a benefit freely bestowed by one individual with a surplus on another who is in need. Benevolence is also described as a feeling of concern for others, which Hume labeled a sentimental-based

value; **w**hereas the demands of justice are recognized by reason, and thus independent of vagaries **o**f individual emotional capacity (Taylor, 2002).

*Sentimentality Contrasted to Reason*

**S**amuel Clark's (Honderich, 2005) rationalist response is that reason acquaints us with **moral** duties that are part of the natural order of the universe, independent of divine will and **any** social contract. A requirement of reason is that each person should deal with every **man** with the reasonable expectation the other will deal with us in a like manner, and **endeavor** by universal benevolence to promote the welfare and happiness of all men.

**A**ristotle identified the distinctive function of humans as reason, and noted that to reason **w**ell is to be accomplished in pursuit of happiness, the attainment of which is a state **o**f excellence. There are intellectual excellences owed to birth and growth in **teaching**, such as wisdom in philosophy, understanding, and practical wisdom; and there is a **moral** excellence that is moral temperance arising from habit, as it does not naturally occur **t**o humans.

Humans acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity; that which can't be **initially** done is accomplished through learning. Excellences are adapted by nature to **receive** them, desiring and acting with reason, and made perfect by training from young age (**moral** habituation), and made perfect with repeated virtuous acts. So too, people **become** just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. **L**egislators make the citizens good by forming good habits in them. This makes for a **good** constitution. It makes no small difference, then, whether people form habits of one **k**ind or another from their very youth; in fact it makes all the difference.

The whole matter of conduct and what is good is given in outline form and is not **precise**, or rule bound, as each case considers what is relative to and appropriate to the

**occasion** - The appropriate objective response is to be temperate, to not be excessive or **deficient**, even in matters of courage as too little is cowardly and too much is rash whereas **a** proportionate (mean) response both produces, increases, and preserves it. **Altruism**, in this regard, is an example of too much justice. Moderation does not apply to **absolute evil** (e.g., murder) and **absolute good** (e.g., wisdom).

### *Generosity*

**Generosity** belongs to a family of benevolent virtues; generosity is a morally **commendable** trait, a “quality absorbed and ready to go” in the appropriate setting, which **leads to** spontaneous acts (Machan, 1998, p. 2). Generous acts are spontaneous, whereas **charitable** acts will be shown to be deliberate. Generous acts flow from character, which **in turn** is a collection of traits, an aspect of the person acquired through childhood rearing and **practiced** in a sustained effort so to act in an unself-conscious way in accordance to one’s **goals** (see section on social learning of attitudes). Generosity conveys munificence, or **liberality**, in the act of giving or bestowing a benefit. Generosity is an acquired trait as **opposed** to an inherited one, and as such, can be developed over time.

### *Generosity as a Trait*

Generosity is a trait, and if inherited, then all are presumed to possess it even if only **one** generous person is discovered; however there is ample evidence of miserliness **among** humans. The generosity trait, if acquired, means that one person alone may learn the **value** of generosity, practice it, and gain command of it through some effort, so it **becomes** a sublime aspect of their character. In contrast, all other persons may have been **disinclined** toward that task. The more someone perfects the target behavior, the more it **becomes** a stable aspect—in the case of the generous person it is the agreeable

personal **i**ty trait of the person (Goldberg, 1968), predisposed to act, and resistant to countervailing influences. The contention that personality traits are stable and relatively permanent is opposed by situationists, including Mischel (1968), who argued that personality traits and behaviors are not stable but vary by the situation. Mischel repeatedly tested the degree to which personality traits could predict relevant behavior, which were only shown to be correlated to the degrees of 20% to 30%. Personality and social psychologists now generally agree that both personal and situational variables are needed to account for human behavior.

*Conflicting Traits Possessed by Donor*

Traits, like attitudes, are many in number and sometimes contradictory; attitude does **not** necessitate action, nor is a trait displayed on every occasion. Generosity, as a virtuous trait, must coexist with other virtues. Fulfilling one's moral obligations to one's family takes precedence over being generous to a neighbor or stranger; in other words, paternity and fraternity come before generosity, and kindness and compassion (pity) comes after it (Machan, 1998). Generosity is a human trait and virtuous act associated with charity, but are there other virtues that influence attitudes and behaviors toward others? Virtues which coexist and conflict produce moral dilemmas, including: Must every person who requests aid receive it, and if so, must the aid be equally applied? Is it moral that a donor derives benefit from their charity, or must the motivation be entirely selfless?

## *Charity*

**C**harity, as previously defined here, is a benefit freely bestowed by one individual with a **surplus** onto another who is in need. Charity has been considered a major virtue since **medieval** Christian philosophers added it, *caritas*, to a list of theological virtues that included **faith** and **hope**. Virtue has been considered since ancient times of the Greeks to be a **human** disposition, or as Plato described it, an inner state. Aristotle described the **virtuous person** as someone who perceives and fairly effortlessly acts upon unique moral **requirements** that vary by the situation. Charitable giving was universally shown by **Schwartz** (1992) to be motivated by other-directed values of benevolence (in-groups) and **universalism** (e.g., social justice, toward out-groups). The motivation for such giving is **theorized** to be the desire of the donor to express a highly cherished value, consistent with **friendship**, loving, forgiving, or helpfulness for others (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

## *Charitable Attitudes and Acts*

An act of charity occurs when some benefit is freely bestowed by one individual with **a surplus** on another who is in need. Machan (1998) argues that charity differs from **generosity** in that charitable acts are the result of discipline and deliberation of risks and **rewards**, whereas generous acts are spontaneous and devoid of self-interest. Machan's **description** of generosity shares similarities with altruism as unselfish intentions toward **others**, whereas charity shares similarities with egoism as self-interested motives that **underlie** donations.

This study uses the word "generosity" to describe the quality of the intent or merit with **which** the gift is given. This study will use the word "charity," in its conventional **sense**, to measure the size of the benefit the donor is willing to donate to another person.



To summarize: both charity and generosity are measured as dependent variables, unique from one another.

Finally, recipients of charity are referred to in this paper as “clients,” a word that follows the naming conventions of the NPOs responsible for raising funds on the needy person’s behalf.

### Ethics of Charity

Philosophers, social scientists, and laypeople alike see morality as concerned with actions that affect the welfare of others directly or indirectly (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1984). Schwartz, 2007) defined *helpfulness, protecting the environment, insuring justice for the weak, and preventing harm doing* as moral values. The ethics of charity with its roots in religious and social life since antiquity helps us to understand the influence of morality, virtue, and duty on the formation of benevolence and social justice which are the values most often associated with prosocial behavior. A brief and selective account of ethics as it pertains to charity from a Western philosophy is presented based on the references from Honderich (2005), Law (2007), Paineau (2004), and Pojman (2003).

#### *Morality and Ethics in Western Philosophy*

Morality and ethics are closely related. Ethics is a specialized area and subset of morality. Professional groups draw upon a code of moral obligations for their members. Ethics are an aspect of morality concerned with the moral obligations of the group. Ethical thought to formulate codes and principles of moral behavior has been a necessary feature of human cultures, but more precisely is said to originate with the Sophists of Greece in the fifth century B.C. They thought rhetoric and persuasion invited charges that wrong could be argued right.

**P**rotagoras defended the idea of moral codes as useful human creations, sets of customs and conventions that make social life possible, but was committed to ethical relativism and denial of universal code or absolute moral truth. He thought that traditional moral standards were mere conventions, had no binding force, and were a rational way to pursue one's own interests. Possession of material goods is presumed to show an ability to know what makes for a good life.

**P**lato wrote that a good life consists of harmony in the soul: reason, spirit, and appetites playing their respective roles and providing for flourishing and happiness made possible by the morally good life lived in accordance with the virtues that emphasize character and reason over moral rules and consequences.

Contemporary virtue ethics trace ancestry to Aristotle, rights-based ethics to Immanuel Kant, and utilitarianism to Thomas Hobbes. The Aristotelian conception of morality is not a set of fixed rules, but depends on the situation. Virtue ethics as an evaluation of right and wrong is captured by what inner motives or states are fundamentally good and admirable (Plato, Hume). Rights-based ethics are concerned that all people receive equal and just treatment.

#### *Aristotle on Moral Virtues*

Aristotle wrote "Nicomachean Ethics" claiming that the ultimate end of all human action is happiness (eudaimonia). The distinctive function of human beings is to attain happiness in accordance to reason as distinguished from instinct. Truth and problem solving is attained through reason, which is the defining characteristic of human beings.

Moral virtues are dispositions, in that feeling and emotions are guided by reason so that our behavior is appropriate to the situation. Aristotle cautioned against excess in all things and noted that virtue is achieved at the intermediate position, whereas vice is in

the **excess** or deficient position. For instance, rashness is a vice as too much courage is displayed **given** the circumstances; cowardice is a vice as too little of the virtue is on display **given** the same situation.

### *Limiting Moral Obligations*

**C**onditions that promote and limit moral obligations will also be noted and generally explained from a sociological perspective that recognizes the favored status that society confers upon recipients who are most similar. The ordering of preferences for the conveyance of limited duties is based on a special relationship (Hume, 1888), and to do otherwise would be supererogatory as to represent an inclination to provide aid, more so than **an** obligation.

Hume spoke of a limited duty of benevolence when he noted that man's charity is guided by his affinity for others that follow a natural order, such that, "A man naturally loves **his** children better than his nephews, his nephews better than his cousins, his **cousins** better than strangers, where everything else is equal." Hence, Hume continued, "arise (sic) our common measures of duty, in preferring the one to the other. Our sense of duty **always** follows the common and natural course of our passions (pgs. 483–484)." Hume describes a communal, symbiotic, dyadic relationship where social rewards and **benefits** seem to flow naturally even as donor-recipient roles are effortlessly reversed, as **necessary**. Hume begins his litany with a father's unconditional support for his children, a **sentiment** that is beautiful, even sacred. That favored relationship need not remain **mysterious** if closer inspections of the elemental, interpersonal relationship provide the **key to** unlock a broad array of social welfare issues, such as entrenched poverty, racial **discrimination**, and economic development. This filial relationship, upon closer

inspection, operates on a variety of levels, love being just one; a fuller understanding of the dynamics becomes useful when predicting donor behavior toward the other, especially toward the stranger who lives beyond the boundaries of familial love. It will be argued here that social life within the communal relationship provides an insight that the outsider can use to construct a mediated appeal for financial assistance.

Hume describes a continuum from familiar to less familiar, from the inside of the family to the outside. The concept of distance is familiar reading in the social sciences, including Borgardus' (1925) Social Distance Scale, Rubin's (1970) Love Scale, Berscheid et al.'s (1989) Relationship Closeness Inventory (RCI), and Mills and Clark's (2004) Communal Strength Scale.

*British Moralists' Philosophy of Charity (1650–1800)*

Is morality grounded in self-love or benevolence: are moral judgments products of reason or sentiment? Hobbes is an egoist and political philosopher rather than moral philosopher. Morality must be supported by political authority. All human passions are manifested for the desire of good for oneself. People are in relentless competition with others in the pursuit of their own happiness. It is a war of every man against every man. It is a natural law that it is in everyone's self interest to escape this war. Justice or injustice, right or wrong, has no place within a state of natural law with rules of reason directed at self preservation. Hobbes argued that a social contract balances the restriction of liberty for the sake of peace, provided that others agree to this condition; however, in a state of nature there are no morals to abide with the contract. Constraints of morality, though in everyone's interests, are binding when backed by political authority in the form of the sovereign responsible for enforcing the contract.

**H**utcheson contended that benevolence is the foundation of moral virtue, “that action **that** produces the best happiness for the greatest number.” The principle here is of utility: **A**ctions are right or wrong to the extent that they tend to increase or decrease the general **h**appiness. For Hutcheson the morality of the intentions mattered little compared to the **o**utcome. Critics considered Hutcheson’s theory too simplistic as it was merely a sum of **a**ll pleasurable values minus the pains. Critics doubted that the quantity and **d**uration of the values could be quantified or measured.

**H**utcheson also claimed that all moral virtues flow from feelings of benevolence with **n**o need to trace back to self-love (egoism). Happiness is experienced through **s**atisfaction of our particular passions for external (apart from self) things. Self-love is not the **o**nly passion and does not exclude benevolence as affection for the good of fellow **c**reatures. Hume wrote about moral judgments and beings as naturally benevolent: they have **a** natural liking for the virtues that Shaftsbury called a sense of right and wrong. **H**utcheson later described virtue as a moral sense, to feel things to be naturally right or **w**rong rather than to reason it so. Hume regarded feelings and emotions to be consistent with **g**ood judgment if they remain disinterested and based on the good tendencies of such **a**ctions. The capacity to regard moral qualities of good and evil is uniquely human. **S**ympathy that Hume called humanity, and a fellow feeling, is a capacity to share others’ **f**eelings of happiness and misery. Sympathy may lack the strength to have decisive **i**nfluence on our actions; all humans are moved by it. Qualities such as courage and **i**ndustry are useful to the possessor; benevolence and justice are useful to others. Moral **j**udgments stem from sentiments rather than from reason. Reason by itself is no motive to

**act**, however (not motivation enough); sentiment is decisive in forming moral **con**clusions.

*Utilitarian Philosophy Following the British Moralists*

Right action came to be understood in terms of human good or well-being, and **on ly** later in terms of hedonism that is pleasure, desire, satisfaction, or more generally, as **happ**iness. Right action leads to the greatest balance of human pleasure over pain (**pr**inciple of utility). Less monolithic conceptions of instrumentality or consequentiality **re**cognize intrinsic human goods other than pleasure, to consider equality and fairness and **e**ven natural beauty beyond quantitative measures. Fairness in outcomes may not **re**present the greatest benefit to all, contrary to the position held by act-utilitarians.

Jeremy Bentham advocated a view of universal benevolence which did not **requi**re feeling and right action but was more like justice. Justice marks boundaries **betwe**en what must be done and what can be done. Justice is obligated, whereas **ben**evolence is morally desirable but optional, similar to Hume's notion of charity as an **act** **fre**e from obligation when directed to those with whom a special relationship does not **exist**. Bentham claimed that a provision of a particular good will provide more utility for **thos**e who already have less than for those who already have more; hence a general **tend**ency toward providing goods for the less well off, ending when each party is equal in **pos**session of the good.

Stuart Mill allowed that pleasure differs in quantity and quality; higher pleasures **be**ing pleasures of the intellect, feelings, and imagination; a good human life is one in **wh**ich such pleasures are predominant.

Immanuel Kant held that morality must be understood independently, that moral **ri**ghtness in behavior is a matter of acting consistently and rationally, and that

indifference to the welfare of others is a form of conative or practical inconsistency. Too little or too much is morally wrong, just as Aristotle advocated temperance in all things. Kant endorsed the notion that if one gives out of fellow feeling, then it lacks all moral worth as it was not performed out of a sense of duty and respect of moral law. This view is, however, considered harsh even among Kant's contemporaries. Kant's morals are deontological or duty-based with emphasis on intentions and disregard for consequences. It's the thought that counts, and the only thing that counts.

Utilitarianism is an aggregative theory (net of benefits from pain) that does not recognize separateness of individuals, allowing the interests of one group to trump interests of another, and allowing for inflicting of pain if the outcome provides good for most. Hegel argues that willing (e.g., contradictions of morals such as false promises) it to be does not make it so, that moral lives are drawn from ethical life, and from the ethical institutions of families, civil society, and the states. Ethics are a social phenomenon. Moral requirements have the form of categorical imperatives that prescribe what is to be done regardless of what one may want. Moral laws are promulgated in holy texts such as The Bible's Ten Commandments. Nietzsche saw no such thing as morality, only different moralities: master moralities (nobility, courage, honesty) versus slave morality (duty and self sacrifice).

### *Morality of Charity in Modern Society*

Private charity did not disappear when public charity appeared on the social scene in America during the early 1900s. Private charity was associated with the deserving poor whereas public charity included the undeserving poor. A textual analysis of charitable appeals appeared regularly in The New York Times from 1912–1992 (Loseke, 1997) and

it **read** as a liberal education in wise and discriminating giving. The editors, charity **executives**, readers, and clients (the poor) contributed stories that served the purposes of **educating** readers, cultivating an attitude of charity, and raising private contributions. The **analysis** reveals a consistency in the presentation of human values within charitable **campaigns** that were embedded in historical time; details differed depending on the **economies**, during peace and at war, as discourse favored either morally charged (**religious**) or scientifically neutral language; yet the campaigns reflected an unchanging **morality** of charity. Clients were consistently depicted as morally worthy, needy of **material** aid and deserving of help as they were not responsible for suffering their bad **luck**. Clients were depicted as striving for achievement and independence, through **determination** at work and school. The worthy poor fell just outside the emerging public **welfare** system. The propriety of aid was extended to include an undeserving family **member** (e.g., taking alcohol or drugs) if that person would reform their ways. These **notions** reflected the bourgeois flawless (character) morality of the dominant class in that era.

The politics of charity seized on the notion that social progress can not quite **displace** private charity. Charity is produced as morality of the political and economic **order** as given. Charity fits the individual into this order. Loseke's (1997) analysis of the *New York Times* supported the poor in stating that rehabilitation is more important than **relief**, that producing normal, self-supporting life and useful citizens is the role of charity. **Charity** was consistently promoted by the editors of the *New York Times* as "...the **morality** of transforming cultural outsiders into cultural insiders," with the promise to **make** better Americans of recent immigrants.



The economics of charity required that charitable organizations be efficient and **accountable**. The textual analysis of the *New York Times* charity feature column showed **that** a high percentage of those helped were able to hold their ground and that donations **wisely** used resulted in taking welfare cases off the public rolls. Charity was depicted as a **practicality** for the political and economic well-being, and the stability of the social order (**Schram**, 1995). Social control and normalcy were rewards for a friendly and **compassionate** way to help those in need.

Charity as morality of human values goes beyond practicality to advocate a “**virtue of the heart**” thought to be a concern of middle class Americans. Campaigns were **directed** at feeling rather than thinking, to emotion rather than knowledge. During the **Great** Depression, private donations were promoted as individual actions consistent with **American** beliefs about the sacredness of individuals (Loseke, 1997). Forming clients as **persons** produces client happiness and social usefulness as dominant class beliefs where **individual** autonomy and self reliance are unquestioned values at the core of American **culture**. Charitable giving provided Americans with a sense of community in a world of **increasing** individualism and singularity (Bellah et al., 1985); charity unites by promising **that a** nostalgic community can be found by sending money.

The twentieth century ethics of G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell rejected a **factual** basis for moral beliefs. They searched for, but could not locate, facts about **features** of human existence or metaphysical fact about the nature of reality that entails **any** conclusion about what is good. These are value judgments when viewed from the **con**text of Logical Positivism of philosopher A.J. Ayer with his demand for empirically **ver**ifiable propositions and analytic truths. Moral theories of R. Grice, Gauthier, and John

**R**awls are based on rights, and obligations are labeled as Contractarian, with agreement **that** pursuit of morality must not violate one's basic interest. To abandon the rights of **others** indicates a lack of moral integrity.

### *Egoism and Altruism*

A word closely associated with charity is altruism, which is a concept coined by **Auguste Comte** (1852). It suggests that everyone has a moral obligation to serve the **interests** of others or the "greater good" of humanity, and to do so require that people **place** others' interests above their own. Altruism is referred to as an act of selfless giving **and** considered a theological virtue among the world's major religions. Altruism's rival **concept** is psychological egoism and is exemplified by seventeenth century British **philosopher** Thomas Hobbes, who argued that everything that people do, no matter how **noble** and beneficial to others, is really directed toward the ultimate goal of self benefit. **The** **benefits** include external rewards such as (a) social status and money; and internal **rewards** such as: (b) pleasure, (c) avoidance of punishment for not helping, and (d) **avoidance** of distressful situations and negative arousal (Batson & Shaw, 1991).

Sober (1991) discounts the notion of an empathically evoked psychological **altruistic** motivation and insists that a prospective donor weighs the relative benefit **against** the cost of helping. The donor directs behavior toward a reward for helping or **finding** someone else who will help. The Western acceptance of egoism as the motivating **factor** for benevolent behavior is strongly supported, and subsumes altruism as a **specialized** form of egoism. A less pure form of altruism recognizes a sincere empathetic **concern** for others as well as a satisfying "warm glow" (Andreoni, 1990) or "joy-of-**giving**" (Ribar & Wilhelm, 2002) as a psychological reward. Batson and Shaw (1991) **and** Archer (1991) advanced theories that provide a role for altruism and egoism, as they

concluded that under certain circumstances an individual will sometimes act with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of another. These authors advance an assumption that universal egoism must be replaced by a more complex view of prosocial motivation that allows for altruism as well as egoism.

### *Social Learning of Prosocial Attitudes and Behavior*

Learning a new skill requires motivation. This section describes the motivations that drive someone to voluntarily give to other people. Prosocial behavior has been researched from many different perspectives including biological (evolutionary) science, psychology, sociology, religion, and economics, with explanations ranging from biological imperatives, to norms of reciprocity, and onto selfless altruism and selfish egoism (Michalski, 2008).

The evolutionary theory presents a highly competitive environment where organisms vie for resources needed for reproductive dominance, in explaining that helping behavior is reserved for kin. Altruism, in contrast, is maladaptive and incompatible with reproductive success. Biosocial theory proposes that altruism is an interaction between biologically based altruistic dispositions and cultural inputs. Evolved, subjective, self systems enable humans to transcend biological constraints and develop sympathy and sense of identity with a broader range of others. Genes provide a range of possible behaviors, yet culture shapes the selection within that range. Genetic and socio-cultural evolution provide an innate capacity for restraint that modifies dominance striving and provides the basis for morality (Batson, 1992).

Consumer behavior researchers have identified perceived benefits of making a donation include feelings of self esteem, signaling of wealth (Glazer & Konrad, 1996), public recognition, gratitude for their own well-being, and relief from feelings of

indebtedness and guilt. Some donors are believed to give without regard for any benefit, while others are motivated to some degree by intrinsic benefits.

Helping others is not an innate human behavior; it is not encoded in our genes to be passed from generation to generation, nor is it performed in the same way each time by an individual (Meyer, 2006). Helping others is a behavior acquired by observing how others perform the act, and coding the information to serve as a guide for action. This process is a reciprocal interaction among cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences described by Social Learning Theory, and alternatively by Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1963). Rushton and Sorrentino (1981) cite evidence that charity or benefice is a learned behavior that results from socialization. Traits associated with charity, such as generosity, are acquired as opposed to inherited, and as such can be developed through practice, or deteriorate through negligence.

Humans are not born generous or hurtful; rather, they learn these behaviors and express them as the situation warrants. The acquisition of related values, attitudes, and behaviors is a characteristic of a general trait. Humans learn desired behaviors which are not inherited. If the behavior can be learned, then it can be unlearned, though the task is initially difficult. Practice helps to establish and strengthen associations; failure to practice helps associations to disassociate, or lose strength. Someone who learns to help will practice that behavior if they wish to strengthen their conviction to prosocial outcomes; likewise, the person who learns to hate will continue to do so if, though misguided, to improve their antisocial character.

A common idiom in the United States is that “charity begins at home;” It describes a social norm to help family and friends before helping other people. However,

the phrase also locates the home as the place where charitable attitudes are learned and cultivated; the home is also the place where charity ends if the same lessons are not learned. Social Learning Theory is the theoretical framework for studying the process in which attitudes are introduced by parents, siblings, and teachers to young children. Certain social scientists provide evidence that charity or benefice is a learned behavior that results from socialization (Rushton & Sorrentino, 1981). Responsible adults serve as models for the child's emulation of prosocial attitudes, which ideally lead to prosocial behaviors as the child matures. Other early life lessons include: (a) Behave like your parents showed you how to behave, (b) do what is best for yourself, (c) do what makes you happy, (d) don't hurt anyone, (e) obey the law, and (f) obey your conscience.

Sharing is typically associated with good consequences (positive feedback) that reinforce the behavior and increase its likelihood of occurrence in the future, a process that expectancy-value learning theorists describe as instrumental conditioning (Fishbein, 1967; Rosenberg, 1956); negative consequences of sharing, though rare, have the opposite effect.

Even the most persistently selfish child will soon learn that cooperation with other children will advance their own interests, and will develop positive attitudes for sharing, though the motive differs from those of other children who enjoy the friendships that develop during the give and take of playtime. The pattern of helpful behavior can change over time, ideally in a positive direction, as the child matures into a teenager, then adult, progressing in their ability to make wise decisions about sharing their time, talent, and resources. A habit of sharing is cultivated in the child with age-appropriate lessons that grow in complexity and abstractness. Simple directives to share with others later become

specific lessons in the values that are the basis for the attitudes, customs, and behaviors of an entire society.

### *Values within Religious Context*

Social learning often takes place within a religious setting where charitable values are often the topic of instruction. A brief review of charity from a religious perspective provides insight into the exposure to and learning of prosocial behaviors.

Value, as discussed among religious sociologists, is “the quality of recognized desirability founded on goodness.” Helping others, which includes charity, is considered good because this act possesses the capacity to satisfy needs, where and when desire or need point to it (Park & Burgess, 1924). Charity is a central feature in religious and social teaching and is generally regarded as a sacred duty and moral imperative, with many examples to model one’s behavior. Noteworthy illustrations of charity from across the globe include (a) the Good Samaritan who unselfishly aided the stranger from a rival land in the Bible (Luke 10:25–37); (b) the Judaic observation that aid, money, and assistance, called Tzedakah, is *not* an inclination toward charity, but instead an obligation rooted in righteousness, justice, and fairness due the poor (Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Laws of Contributions to the Poor, Chapter 10:7). Muslims also view aid as a moral imperative such that all Muslims heed the duty to pay the obligatory yearly tax (Zakât) to pay for the poor and needy (The Noble Qur’an At-Taubah 9:60).

A social prescriptive on proper relations appears in Confucius’s Analects (Lunyu 12.2, 6.30) as, “Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself.” This sentiment appears often in the texts of many different religions in the form of *The Golden Rule*: “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” This is paraphrased from “Treat others as you wish to be treated.” The Golden Rule may commonly be understood

to suggest that charity and volunteering may not be entirely selfless as help given to others may be returned in your time of need. The Golden Rule suggests that a reciprocal exchange of benefits is vital in maintaining an ordered social life (Mullis, 2008), so much so that exchanges can't be considered altruistic, but instead instrumental.

A shared belief in the ethics of reciprocity among so many cultures, religions, ethical systems, and philosophies (Religious Tolerance, 2008) allows us to study how reciprocity is practiced within a specific country and its dominant cultural perspective. For instance, gift exchange as a form of reciprocity is ritualized action (or *li*) in China and East Asia through Confucian ethics, with references to it as a Golden Rule in the *Analects* (Lun Yü). Reciprocity is also referred to as the Golden Rule in Christianity commonly expressed as, "Do unto others as you would wish them do unto you." Of particular concern is that reciprocity is not extended to all humans as often as it is extended to kin relations or "fellow believers." The decision to include or exclude individuals or groups of people so they can enjoy social goods that emerge from a reciprocal exchange network may not be overt or not.

Buddhist economic ethics address charity primarily through the ideas of karma, religious giving (*dana*), and compassion (*karuna*). These perspectives are less focused on changing the overall existing distribution of wealth, than on cultivating the proper ethical attitudes toward wealth and giving. Lay economic ethics taught early in Buddhism is focused on three areas: (1) accumulating wealth through hard work, diligence, and setting certain restraints on one's own consumption; (2) choosing and pursuing the right occupation (e.g., avoiding occupations such as killing animals, trading weapons); and (3)

sharing wealth honestly with family, friends, and the sangha (monks-clerics) (Ornatoski, 1996).

There are similarities in the ethics of Buddhism and the dominant Christian faith of the United States where almost 55% are Protestants (Luo, 2006). Buddhists and Protestants place a high value on hard work and sacrifice; however, there appear to be differences on matters of compassion, as Puritan values stress that hard work leads to material prosperity which is a sign of a superior man (Meyer, 1999).

### *Religiosity*

The relationship between religiosity and donations to charity has frequently been the subject of research and has focused on four different dimensions: practice, belief, experience, and consequences. Studies have shown a positive relationship between church attendance and donations (Reitsma, Scheepers, & Grotenhuis, 2006); however, other studies have shown intrinsic religious motivations to be associated with intentional prosocial behavior more so than extrinsic motivations (Benson, 1980). Intrinsic motivation is the tendency to engage in tasks because one finds them interesting, challenging, involving, and satisfying. Extrinsic motivation is the tendency to engage in tasks because of task-unrelated factors such as promise of rewards and punishments, dictates from superiors, surveillance, and competition with peers (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Tang et al. (2008, p. 871) claim that most people do not help others for extrinsic rewards as "...they are more concerned for themselves and are less likely to offer help to others if there are no immediate rewards or financial gains." Tang concluded that loss-adverse motivation is stronger than the motivation in pursuit of possible gains among extrinsically motivated individuals.



A measure of the respondent's intrinsic motivation toward religion, rather than religious behaviors such as church attendance and religious reading, will be assessed in this study using Hoge's (1972) 10-item Validated Intrinsic Religious Motivation scale that was based in part on Allport and Ross's (1967) measurement of the same construct.

### CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES AND JUSTIFICATION

The proposed model for this study predicts that language congruent with the donor's construal of the event as psychologically near or distant will activate the value-expressive attitude function that is more often associated with charitable giving than is the utilitarian attitude function. Messages incongruent with the donor's construal of the situation do not provide the donor with a familiar context/experience; the violation of the charitable schema leads to the activation of the less generous utilitarian attitude function where risk associated with the unfamiliar situation is scrutinized.

1. Functional matching of arguments should "bias recipient's evaluations of the persuasiveness of the arguments that contain functionally-irrelevant information" (p. 583) (Lavine & Synder, 1996).
2. CLT is introduced to argue that value-expressive outcome should also be matched to the donor's construal of the event which varies along the dimension of psychological distance (PD). CLT theorizes that psychologically near events are construed in concrete words, whereas distant events are construed in abstract terms.
3. The charitable message that matches the donor's value-expressive attitude function, by matching the diction level (abstract or concrete), will be more effective at generating donations than will a message which lacks congruency of attitude function matched to psychological distance, which is finally matched to diction level.

Paradoxically, donors can make more sense of a certain situation when abstract rather than concrete information is presented; in this case, the message presented "*in*

*plain English*” will be less effective than a message that is florid because the concrete message was inconsistent with the donor’s high-level construal. Conversely, the message that uses concrete diction, with descriptions available to the five senses, further bolstered with facts and figures including statistics (Friedlander, 2009), will be consistent with a low-level construal.

### Attitudes Toward Charity

A communication campaign to strengthen attitudes toward the advocated position typically begins with an assessment of the target’s current attitude toward that object. An attitude is a learned orientation, or disposition, toward an object or situation, that provides a tendency to respond favorably or unfavorably to the object or situation (Rokeach, 1968). It is not necessary to publicly express attitude as it can be private or anonymous (Hullet & Boster, 2001).

Attitudes are important to the extent that they influence the specific behavior being investigated. Quantifying the attitude establishes a baseline to measure the degree and direction of attitude change in response to a persuasive message. Studies on the relationship between attitudes and behavior show that attitudes don’t always guide action but may do so under specific situations.

Qualities of the attitude, behavior, person, and situation interact and influence the degree to which attitudes are correlated with behavior, and have been observed above the .30 level specified by Wicker (1969) to be statistically significant. Donor A, unknown to Donor B, both decide to donate the same amount of money, though their motivations differ.

### *Utilitarian Attitude Function*

Donor A is asked to make a donation to a specific person, for a specific reason, in a specific amount. He considers this to be a highly complex situation because the request is larger than he is used to making under similar conditions. He requires time and is given the opportunity to carefully analyze the facts, while being mindful of his emotions, beliefs, values, and the opinions of important people. Donor A is learning an attitude toward an unfamiliar object before making a decision. Donor A does not associate the object with reward and therefore needs time to think so as to not risk making the wrong decision. It will be shown during the main experiment (ME) that Donor A's dominant attitude function is Utilitarian.

### *Value-expressive Attitude Function*

In contrast, Donor B assesses the same situation with clarity and decisiveness because he experienced similar situations, though the details of the new scenario differ somewhat. He considers this to be a simple situation, and therefore doesn't need a lot of time to form an opinion. Donor B renders an immediate judgment, based on existing attitudes, values, and beliefs as guides for his behavior (Fazio & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1992). Donor B refers to an established attitude in making a decision, and is ready to answer. It will be shown during the main experiment that Donor B's dominant attitude function is Value-expressive.

The recipient and the charitable nonprofit fund raiser may be satisfied with the outcome, though their gratification is short lived when informed by a researcher that one or both donors would have raised their contribution had the message been more

compatible or sensitive to the donor's prime motive for giving to charity. This is compelling information as any one charity in the United States competes against 1.4 million other nonprofit organizations. It is apparent that Donor A and Donor B differ in how much time each needs to arrive at their respective decisions. Donor A is described as being deliberate in decision making, and is contrasted to Donor B who appears to make spontaneous decisions.

Deliberate decision-making processes include Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA). Its proposition is that behavior follows closely from intentions. TRA explains that people believe their intended behavior will lead to certain outcomes, and that outcome must be weighed against their conviction that important people or groups endorse or reject that behavior; attitude toward the behavior is weighed against social norms. Conformity with, or the resistance to the adoption of in-group norms toward the "correct" social distance, moderates an individual's attitude toward others. The actor's willingness to conform their attitudes to societal norms is theorized to differ to the degree to which their self representations resemble the representations of significant others (Triandis, 1989).

Understanding the attitude toward the attitude object is not the same as understanding why that attitude is important to a specific person. This distinction is critical for the purposes of attitude change that McGuire theorized is dependent on identifying the motivational pattern supporting cognitive representations. Proponents of the functional perspective believe that persuasive messages are most effective when their content matches the bases of the attitudes under attack. A persuader cannot effectively design a message if they don't know why an attitude is held and what function that

attitude serves. Selecting wrong motivation as the target will be ineffective, or worse, will result in negative persuasion.

### *Functional Perspective of Attitudes*

The authors present 24 propositions regarding the relationship among nine factors including source (NPO's reputation), motives, and outputs (size of gift and donor loyalty). The motivations listed in the gift behavior model (Sargeant & Woodiffe, 2007) provide a clue as to the type of attitude function served by it; not surprisingly, the descriptions of the first four items suggest value-expressive functions more than utilitarian.

1. **Empathy:** This is an emotional arousal in one person on the occasion of another person's expression of a felt emotion. Empathy has a strong impact on giving behavior and is most effective when not so powerful as to personally distress the donor. For instance, an empathetic response to someone's misfortune may result in sadness that does not lead to proactive coping (donation) as much as an empathetic response such as caring would. Empathy is a trait but can be heightened through prior experience and emotional attachment to the cause, as is the case with volunteers.
2. **Sympathy:** This is a value-expressive function of an attitude, which allows the donor to conform to salient values. Heightened sympathy is associated with intent to donate.
3. **Fear, Pity, and Guilt:** These factors operate much as do empathy and sympathy with higher levels associated with stronger donor behaviors.
4. **Social Justice:** Witnessing undue pain and suffering violates one's belief in a "just" world. This motivation may also lead to the donor's own social judgment

regarding the victim's role in causing their own suffering. A donor may be more inclined to penalize a smoker who contracted lung cancer in favor of an otherwise-healthy person who is suffering from heart disease.

5. **Prestige:** Donating to a cause in a highly public manner may be an attempt to demonstrate or signal wealth to those of the same or higher social status (Glazer & Konrad, 1996). Donors rarely make anonymous donations to foundations where they are members or alumni. They will choose the lowest level contribution if ranges are made public, but will opt for donations far larger than average if given the opportunity to publish the exact amount of the contribution. Conspicuous consumption in the form of a fine home or expensive automobile does not always avail the donor the opportunity to display their wealth; therefore, a flashy donation may be the only avenue by which to impress others with whom they do not have regular social contact.

It is hypothesized here that donors who have an opportunity from an attitudinal perspective to express (privately or publicly) their other-directed values are more generous than those given an opportunity to express only their most inner-directed values.

Donors' attitudes toward charity serve a value-expressive function as well as a utilitarian function. The significance is that the former is associated more often with benevolence generosity, whereas the latter is associated with risk-aversion frugality. Value-expressive attitude functions will be primed when the message conforms to the donor's construal of the situation, whereas utilitarian attitude functions will emerge when there is a violation of the donor's expectancies for the specific situation. Two key

dimensions of psychological distance will be manipulated in this experiment, as will the semantic abstraction theorized to best fit the donor's construal of the situation depicted in the charitable advertisement. Donors are theorized to be more receptive to messages that emphasize central and superordinate features of the situation when psychological distance is great, and prefer messages presented in a concrete and less schematic manner that include incidental and subordinate features identified as low-level construals (Trope, Liberman, & Wasalk, 2007).

A specific prediction is that people form concrete (low-level) or abstract (high-level) construals of a charitable situation along the dimensions of perceived psychological distance (Lewin, 1951). Social values, including equality, are easily associated with abstract issues and abstract target groups; whereas factual data including statistics are associated with concrete issues and specific target groups. Donors will make better predictions or correct attributions of psychologically distant targets, including strangers, using abstract instead of concrete information (Watt et al., 2007). Watt further observed that egalitarian motives are expressed in discussions of prejudice at abstract levels and they may not be reflected in attitudes toward more concrete targets. CLT predicts that people prefer messages constructed from a concrete lexicon when the situation is psychologically close, as compared to a preference for an abstract lexicon when the situation is psychologically distant (Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007). It is interesting to note that two people may form different construals of the same situation; therefore, a charitable NPO must tailor their persuasive appeals to meet the differing needs of important donor subsets.



This study extends CLT to show that message congruency with the donor's construal of the situation will activate the more benevolent attitude function that is value-expressive as compared to the risk-averse and self-enhancing utilitarian attitude function. Our experiment depicts the situation as a charitable appeal, in that (1) the donor is either personally close or distant, and (2) the benefit is derived in the near or distant future. The situation is conveyed within a mediated setting similar to a magazine advertisement sponsored by a nonprofit charitable organization.

Specifically, we will test whether a donor's attitudes toward charity serve a value-expressive function as well as a utilitarian function. The significance is that the former is associated more often with benevolence generosity, whereas the latter is associated with risk-aversion frugality. Value-expressive attitude functions will be primed when the message conforms to the donor's construal of the situation, whereas utilitarian attitude functions will emerge when there is a violation of the donor's expectancies for the specific situation. Schwartz (1992) cross-cultural study of values verified the existence of 10 different clusters of similar values, with further grouping into negatively related clusters. Higher order domains of self-enhancement were inversely related to self-transcendence, as was openness to changes opposed to conservation; the first pair was also unrelated to the second.

Schwartz further argues that the value-expressive attitude function is related to self-transcendence, whereas the utilitarian attitude function is related to self-enhancement; someone who values self-transcendence is less likely to value self-enhancement. Value-expressive attitudes are more strongly associated with prosocial behavior and generosity than are utilitarian attitudes; however, it is suspected that

nonprofit campaigns inadvertently use words and images that trigger utilitarian attitudes instead of the more generous value-expressive attitudes.

Furthermore, value-expressive functions are theorized to be expressed as benevolent attitudes toward in-groups, whereas social-adjustive functions are expressed as universal (social justice) attitudes toward out-groups; these relationships hold regardless of the cultural orientation of individualism and collectivism (Schwartz, 1992). A person can, however, hold multiple attitudes toward attitude object; utilitarian, value-expressive, or social-adjustive functions (a subset of value-expressive functions) may coexist and become activated depending on the donor's assessment of the cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

There are many research perspectives to help explain what motivates a person to give to others. This study is guided by the cognitive-structural perspective that behaviors are motivated by the actor's underlying value and belief system. This study tapped into the literature of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1963) to present donor decisions as emerging from a pattern of behavior, consistent with the values and beliefs learned within a social setting, and experienced repeatedly over time. Subjective experiences are organized into a general cognitive structure which Kelly (1955) referred to as a *construct* and which European psychologists called a *schemata* (Barone, Maddux, & Synder, 1997). These terms are referred to in this study as the donor's *construal* of the situation, as specified in CLT (Liberman, Sagristano, & Trope, 2002; Trope & Liberman, 2003). CLT adopts the understanding that schemata are based on an individual's general expectations for an event, which Schank and Abelson (1977) called scripts. This research is premised on the expectation that messages conforming to a donor's expectations of an

event are more persuasive and lead to activation of prosocial attitudes, more so than messages not matching the donor's scripted expectations for that charitable event.

Understanding the attitude toward the attitude object is not the same as understanding why that attitude is important to a specific person. This distinction is critical for the purposes of attitude change which McGuire theorized is dependent on identifying the motivational pattern supporting cognitive representations. McGuire's (1985) so-called functional theory attempts to first answer "why" a particular attitude is held, and only then constructs an attitude change appeal.

Proponents of the functional perspective on attitudes believe that persuasive messages are most effective when their content matches the functions of the attitudes targeted in the message (Gregory, Munch, & Peterson, 2002; Hullett & Boster, 2001). A persuader must know why an attitude is held so as to effectively design a message to change the attitude. The reasons or function for holding the same attitude (e.g., positive toward charity) vary among people. The value-expressive function is served when an attitude is formed because it is useful in maintaining a person's value(s). Their study provides further evidence that values will be related to attitudes in the social-identity condition but NOT in the utilitarian condition. The overall results support the moderating role of attitude function in the value-attitude relationship. Similar to Maio and Olson (1994, 1995), value-attitude correlations were significant in the social-identity condition that is conceptually similar to Maio and Olson's value-expressive condition, but not in the utilitarian attitude condition.

The basis for the functional approach is that two people may regard the same situation favorably but for very different reasons or motives. As motivation differs, so

does the persuasive technique best suited to change the individual's intention toward the advocated position. Proponents of the functional perspective believe that persuasive messages are most effective when their content matches the bases of the attitudes under attack. A persuader cannot effectively design a message if they don't know why an attitude is held and what function that attitude serves. Selecting the wrong motivation as the target will be ineffective, or worse—can result in negative persuasion.

The best known theory about possible functions of the attitude is Katz's (1960). Katz explained that attitudes have dimensions which are distinct from values. People have affective and cognitive evaluations or beliefs about the qualities of object. The attitudes are organized into a hierarchal structure, called a value system. At the top of the value system are attitudes comprised of numerous and unique beliefs, which are central to the person's self-concept. Attempts to change attitude may be directed at affect (e.g., liking a candidate) or cognitions (e.g., accepting new policy ideas).

Katz posited that motivations serve four major attitude functions, which are:

1. *Utilitarian (adaptive function)*, which helps individuals maximize rewards and minimize punishments.
2. *Ego-defensive (externalization function)*, which helps individuals defend the self-image from others and protect the self from acknowledging basic truths, internal anxieties, and harsh external realities.
3. *Value-expressive (self-realizing function)*, which provides satisfaction through the expression of attitudes that reflect central values and the need for self-development and self-expression. It is not necessary for the attitude to be expressed or recognized by the subject to operate as value-expressive. Attitudes

that serve a *social-adjustive* function do so by helping people develop their place in the social world and by promoting relationships with important others. (Smith, Bruner, & White 1956). This function is a specific form of value-expression, though it is explicitly defined as directed toward others and is rooted in conformity.

4. *Knowledge function*, which helps an individual to organize and understand information and events, organizing the stimuli into cognitive categories to simplify and make sense of a chaotic world.

Attitude function has also been used to clarify the relation between values and attitudes. The two most common approaches used in advertising to influence consumers are the value-expressive and utilitarian appeals, respectively (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). The authors recommend a creative strategy that features an idealized image of the generalized user of the product to tap into attitudes supporting value-expressive outcomes. In contrast, the creative strategy which taps the need to make rational consumer choices will highlight the features and benefits of the product. The instrumental function provides information about the attitude object, and how that object can serve the individual's self-interest, whereas value-expressive functions express one's identity, and social-adjustive functions express group identity needs.

#### *Charity and the Value-Expressive Function*

The value-expressive attitude function, more so than any of the other functions cited by Katz, is most relevant to the discussion of persuasion within a charitable setting. Maio and Olson (1995) tested value-expressive against utilitarian attitude functions in predicting donor intentions toward cancer research. The topic, they wrote, is relevant to

values because donating is an act that can affirm values of altruism and helpfulness, or conversely, a utilitarian concern that a cure may one day benefit the donor if stricken. Their study showed intention to donate was more often associated with value-expressive as compared to the utilitarian attitude function (e.g., concern over the affordability of the donation). Maio and Olson (1995) eliminated ego-defensive and knowledge functions as irrelevant to the topic of charity. The desire to express attitudes that reflect central values and the need for self-development emerges from the research literature as the function served by favorable attitudes toward charities. Motivations to donate are weighted more toward prosocial values of social justice and benevolence and both are classified as self-transcendent (Schwartz, 2007). Schwartz identifies universalism (e.g., social justice, equality) and benevolence (e.g., helpfulness, loyalty) as values most associated with giving behaviors.

Values provide a standard of conduct and are potentially powerful explanations of human behavior. Values are an evaluation of abstract ideas in terms of their importance in pursuing goals, and because they are abstract, values have the ability to influence many different attitudes (Maio & Olson, 1995). Adler (1956) recognizes that the value concept in sociology falls into five basic types: (a) Values are considered absolutes, existing in the mind of God as external ideas, as independently valid; (b) values exist in the object, material or non-material; (c) values are located in man, originating in his biological needs or in his mind; (d) values exist collectively among groups, societies, culture, state, and class; and (e) values are equated with action.

Values serve as an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to its opposite (Rokeach, 1973).

Instrumental values are referred to as the means to the end that is the attainment of terminal values, which in the case of charity are universally regarded as preference for “a world at peace” “a world of beauty” and “equality” (Rokeach, 1973). Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) showed that structural relations among the 18 instrumental values and 18 terminal value types were similar (universal). The study was conducted across seven different societies, with values loaded onto the dimensions of achievement, enjoyment, maturity, prosocial, restricted conformity, security, and self-direction. Donating is an act that can affirm values of altruism (Maio & Olson, 1995) and value-expressive attitude conditions were significantly more conducive to donor intentions than were utilitarian conditions (e.g., concern over the affordability of the donation).

The simultaneous pursuit of values in the following sets of domains is contradictory: (a) prosocial versus achievement—emphasizing concern for others interferes with pursuing personal success, (b) enjoyment versus prosocial—emphasizing own pleasure and comfort contradicts devoting oneself to others’ welfare (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). A donor need not have strong prosocial motivations; however, their contribution is likely to be smaller than someone who does.

The desire to express attitudes that reflect central values and the need for self-development emerges from the research literature as the function served by favorable attitudes toward charities. Motivations to donate are weighted more toward prosocial values of social justice and benevolence and both are classified as self-transcendent (Schwartz, 2007).

#### *Attitude Function Inventory*

Herek (1986) described two broad categories of attitude functions: the expressive function that underlies symbolic attitudes, as compared to the evaluative function, that

underlies instrumental attitudes. Expressive attitudes derive their affective content from personal needs that are met by the attitude's expression— needs broadly related to affirmation of identity that are largely symbolic. In contrast, evaluative attitudes (e.g., utilitarian, schematic, proximal) function to the extent that symbolic and instrumental variables explain significant portions of their variance.

Herek's (1987) Attitude Function Inventory (AFI) is a set of statements describing the reasons why an individual holds her or his attitudes in a particular domain, with each statement keyed to a particular attitude function. Respondents indicate the extent to which each statement describes their own attitudes. The AFI scale was adapted in this paper to identify the value that donors hold toward charitable giving. The scale is used during the pretest and main experiment and is reproduced in the appendix.

The terms functional consensus and functional divergence are used to differentiate between an attitude domain that elicits, respectively, one function or multiple functions within a particular population (Herek & Capitanio, 1998). The authors cite attitudes toward the Christian Bible as probably serving a value-expressive function for most citizens of the United States. Though one may hold positive or negative attitudes toward the Bible and its contents, people most likely base their attitudes on value considerations rather than utilitarian ones. Value-expressive attitude functions are expected to dominate prosocial considerations more than the utilitarian function.

Attitude function has been shown to play a moderating role between attitudes and values. Values have a significant relationship to attitudes when the purpose of the attitude is to express a value; however, values become less important when the attitude is directed toward a self-gratifying outcome (Maio & Olson, 1995). Charity is a topic that can elicit



value-expressive or utilitarian attitudes that are hypothesized to result in significantly more generous behaviors in the value-expressive condition. The experimental stimuli material is written so that each treatment primes an attitude consistent with either one of the two functions. Researchers have employed various techniques to elicit the targeted attitude function, and to make salient the reasons for holding that function (e.g., self interest or values). Young et al. (1991) showed the value-expressive attitude function associated with the topic of government policy (i.e., symbolic; Kinder & Sears, 1985; Young et al., 1991) to become more utilitarian when respondents were exposed to recorded messages that advocated a self-interested perspective regarding social policy.

The hypothesized relationship between values and donor behavior based on the literature review of functional perspective of attitudes is that charity is motivated by other-directed intentions, which in turn indicates a desire to express values more so than to receive rewards.

H1: Donors of larger sums of money are more frequently motivated by their value-expressive attitude function as compared to their utilitarian attitude function.

H2: Donation behavior such as preference for anonymity, sincere giving, and low need for requited gift (gift in exchange for donation) are more often motivated by the value-expressive attitude function as compared to the utilitarian attitude function.

*Norm of self interest.*

The previous sections addressed the internal processes that lead to the formation of charitable attitudes. This section addresses the normative influences that may have a

bearing on the prospective donor's willingness to give to someone who is not a member of their social group. Someone may possess favorable attitudes toward charity, yet be highly selective in terms of who is to receive those benefits; more often favoring in-groups over out-groups with larger donations.

The norm of self-interest is proposed to exist most strongly in Western, individualistic cultures, and is powerful enough to lead people to act and speak as if they care more about their self interest than they really do (Miller, 1999); however, it is expected that donor-stranger exchanges require a higher degree of justification as compared to donor-family exchanges. Giving to a stranger, instead of to a friend or neighbor in similar need, is a violation of the norm and triggers penalties such as ostracism.

The act of giving is often cast as an irrational behavior out of character with the reputation of the consumer as *homo economicus*, who is the calculating, utility maximizing actor portrayed in business text books (Clotfelter, 2002). This actor has internalized the belief that it is socially acceptable, and in fact, necessary to require justification for their acts of charity because to do otherwise would be to risk exposure as a "bleeding heart" or "do-gooder" even when their private thoughts oppose that stance (Wuthnow, 1991). The prospective donor is more likely to give them the justification that some material benefit, however nominal, was received.

Individuals in Western cultures are conditioned to believe that these attitudes have attained normative status. This syndrome is described as the "The Norm of Self Interest" by numerous scholars (Miller, 1999; Ratner & Miller, 2001; Holmes, Miller, & Lerner 2002; Simpson, Irwin, & Lawrence 2006). The normative expectation is readily observed

in Western-Individualistic cultures (emphasis on self-benefits) and in Eastern-Collectivist cultures (emphasis on in-group members to the exclusion of out-groups).

The norm requires that donors have a vested interest and a material incentive great enough to justify their contribution, without repayment, to a stranger. Ratner & Miller (2001) reported that donors are less comfortable acting on their attitudes toward social causes in which they do not have a vested interest, though they may feel empathy for the victims. A person who wishes to give to a stranger may be motivated by a sense of empathy; however, those holding to the norm of self-interest will discount the act as motivated by self-esteem or guilt reduction, both of which are non-material gains and thus a violation of the logic that governs this rational choice model.

Holmes, Miller, and Lerner (2002) recommend allowing the donor to make an anonymous gift as that option increases the contribution among those who did not have a vested interest in the social cause. Simpson, Irwin, and Lawrence (2006) join the above-mentioned authors in a caution against slavish application of the norm in predicting donor motivations; they agree that the norm of self interest is a fiction that masks privately held altruistic attitudes and acts of compassion. This fiction is dispelled when the donor is offered a token gift as it represents the tangible benefit, the *quid pro quo*, of a socially acceptable economic transaction. It is argued here that the fiction can be dispelled when messages conform to the donors' expectations regarding their construal of the situation, as theorized by construal level theory (see next section).

The hypothesis that a product exchanged for a charitable contribution would increase contributions was supported during an experiment with 44 male and 44 female undergraduates (Holmes, Miller, & Lerner, 1999). Donations increased as the urgency of

the situation was experimentally increased, but only when a nominal gift was offered. The gift of a wax candle was represented as worth more, less, or the same as the amount of the requested donation. The value of the candle proved to be inherently useless as pricing did not affect the donor's contribution in the low urgency condition. Miller (1999) concluded that the candle did not represent an incentive as much as it represented justification; the *quid pro quo* alluded to earlier, in the form of a tangible benefit. Miller (1999), in the same article, concluded that peoples' willingness to express compassion for a victim will increase if it can take the form of an economic transaction as opposed to an unconditionally altruistic act. The significance of this observation for this study is that a donor may view the recipient's willingness to conform to the donor's values as an incentive to give. This provides incentive to the NPO to construct messages that match the donor's values, and to do so in a way that conforms to the donor's construal of the situation (i.e., psychological distance).

### *Reciprocity*

Cultural orientations toward Communal or Exchange relationships both require that stranger relations be governed by explicit conditions of reciprocity (Clark & Mills, 1993). Communal societies tend to reserve their charity for in-group members while individualistic societies treat nearly all their relations with a need for an equitable exchange. Strong communal relationships are rare except in the case of family members, romantic partners, and close friends where non-comparability of benefits given and received in a relationship serves as an indicator of the existence of a communal relationship (Clark, 1981). The strength of the relationship is based on the costs the person is willing to incur to meet the other's needs. The largest benefits come at the highest cost and are reserved for the most important relationships. Weak communal

relations with most people do not provide the motivation for costly giving. Aiding a stranger is an example of a very weak communal relationship. Benefits in a communal relationship are often reciprocated; however, their form and timing are not dictated to the same high degree as in an exchange relationship where receipt of a benefit incurs an obligation to return comparable benefits.

The donors must justify their donation to a stranger against their self interest and normative influences for personal wealth maximization and in-group favoritism. An encounter with a stranger is often fraught with anxiety as the participants are unable to say how the other person is likely to behave, are unable to give a reasoned explanation for another's behavior, and simply don't know much about the other person or their culture (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). A request from a stranger is more likely to provoke careful consideration of the situation, the distant relationship with the recipient, and the imagined urgency, with scant time for an assessment of the costs and benefits, all weighted so as not to make the wrong decision. The motivation to give to the stranger is qualitatively different from the motivation to give to someone close; the first is more likely motivated by benevolent values, whereas the second may be based on notions of equality and social justice, but more likely, on the desire to not make a mistake or be taken advantage of, as evidenced by the relatively minuscule aid given to international charities.

### Psychological Distance

The literature on psychological distance consistently shows that factors reducing feelings of distance will promote sympathy and helpful behavior (Lowenstein & Small, 2007). Dimensions of psychological distance are: (a) spatial—how distal in space the

target is from the perceiver; (b) temporal—how much time (past or future) separates the perceiver’s present time and the target event; (c) social—how distinct the social target is from the perceiver’s self (e.g., self vs. others, friend vs. stranger); and (d) hypotheticality—how likely the target event is to happen, or how close it is to reality, as construed by the perceiver. Our study requires that distance between donor and recipient be manipulated along the social and temporal dimensions.

People may possess a number of different attitudes toward charity, selecting the one that is most appropriate depending on the perceived (temporal) urgency of the situation and the personal relationship or closeness of recipient to the prospective donor.

### *Social Identity*

The literature on social distance consistently shows that factors that reduce feelings of distances will promote sympathy and helpful behavior (Lowenstein & Small, 2007). Social distance, as opposed to spatial (geographic) distance, describes the personal closeness between members of diverse social groups, such as different ethnic groups (Borgardus, 1925). Groups of people represent social units that exist within two major realms: those which are functional and organized toward industry and those described as structural and organized toward fraternity and social togetherness (Lindeman, 1930). Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) recognized the two social units to be communities based upon place/commerce (*Gesellschaft*), or upon kinship (*Gemeinschaft*), or as an intangible community of the “mind.” The central theme in the definition of community is that shared values and ideas represent a social web as distinct from any one-to-one bond (Sergiovanni, 1994). Shared values and common goals are the basis for group solidarity, social cohesion, and group viability, all of which increase the value of membership in this collectivity (Parsons, 1951).

Social identity theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) to better understand the sociological and psychological bases to predict when and why individuals identify with, and behave as members in, a social group; the theory is often applied in the study of intergroup discrimination. Sherif and Sherif (1979) defined intergroup relations as whenever individuals belonging to one in-group collectively or individually interact with another group or its members in terms of their group identification. An out-group is a social unit that a person is not psychologically a part of or with which he does not identify himself. Intergroup realities are formed upon comparative relations and social histories (Hogg, 1992).

Social identity theory is concerned with how much the individual incorporates the group into the self-concept, needs the group, and considers the group important. Commitment to that identity by others is the basis for an emerging collectivity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The collectivity as a social structure is marked by a boundary through which new members located at the periphery (social boundary) must pass. The difference between the values expressed by the applicant and those of the target group can be considered an approximation of the social distance between the two.

Individuals evaluate membership in a social group on the value and emotional significance attached to the group membership along the following criteria: (a) categorization (labeling on some criteria), (b) identification (e.g., similarity of values), (c) comparison (in-group bias), and (d) psychological distinctiveness (ability to express a unique identity distinct from and positively compared with other groups) (Tajfel, 1981). The framework for conceptualizing social identity developed by Jackson and Smith (1999), which promised greater conceptual clarity is: (a) perception of the intergroup

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context (rivalry contrast with out-group), (b) in-group attraction (desire for acceptance into group), (c) interdependency beliefs (common fate), and (d) depersonalization (subjugation of self to a group identity). Jackson's study measured social distance by comparing helpful behaviors expected from: (a) residents who live in-state as compared to out-state, and (b) students at Purdue University, IN as compared to students from other universities. Jackson expected and confirmed that reciprocity, obligation, and expectation of aid are expected from and by in-group members.

#### *Key Constructs Lack Operational Definitions*

A review of the social-psychological literature shows that interest in measuring social distance dates to 1928 when Borgardus prepared a series of statements intended to reveal the perceived distance between the subject and another person. Borgardus' scale was ordinal and later modified by researchers during the mid-1950s, into an equal-interval scale upon which parametric techniques, such as factorial analysis, are used to study the underlying structure of the social distance construct. The results of such a study in the United States, by Triandis and Triandis (1962), indicated that 77% of the variance in social distance scores is accounted for by race, about 17% by occupation, 5% by religion, and 1% by nationality. Measuring social distance is complex because the views of the in-group may be hard to ascertain, and a long host of factors may exert main and interactive effects (e.g., age, gender, political views, philosophic views, friend and neighbor relations, and physical disabilities) (Triandis & Triandis, 1962). It was further shown by these authors that social distance varied by social class; upper-class perceptions of social distance were based upon perceived difference in religion, whereas lower-class individuals emphasized race more than did the others.

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More recently, the researcher team of Bakke, Cao, O'Loughlin, and Ward (2007) experienced difficulty in developing survey questions to capture how members of different ethnic groups feel about members of other specific ethnic groups. They studied social distance in Bosnia and the North Caucasus Region of Russia as a means of reducing ethnic tension and restoring peace after war. Their study, using multidimensional scaling, did not find evidence for clear attitudinal cleavages among members of different ethnic groups in Bosnia or North Caucasus, but did reveal significant social distance between Russians and ethnic minority groups. Their conclusion is that members of different ethnic groups do not necessarily view the world all that differently when it comes to religion and ethnicity.

A cross-cultural study of Americans and Chinese showed that emotional intensity felt toward the self, father (or brother), best friend, and stranger in each scenario reflects greater psychological distance as one moves away from the self and as one compares targets farther apart in the implied relationships (Wong & Bagozzi, 2005). Wong's cross-cultural study of psychological distance showed the Chinese to experience closer relations among in-group members and greater distinctions from out-group members, than did the Americans in the sample. Wong explained the finding in terms of the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism.

Power differential in a social setting between subjects is another form of social distances, specifying that elevated social power increases the psychological distance from others. The significance of this to this study is that power priming leads to abstract representations and broader representations (e.g., more inclusive of others in self) (Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007).

The authors of CLT and PD theories outlined in the literature review did not operationalize their constructs; therefore new scales and measurements are needed to recreate conditions specified in CLT. The goal is to test the hypotheses, which are plausibly derived from this theory. Social distance appears in the literature as a presumption that does not need to be quantified. Conceptual definition for social distance appears to be formed on a nearly universal consensus that similarity begets personal closeness beginning with family and extending outward, lastly to strangers. The significance of personal closeness in the context of charity is that aid is given first to family, then friends, and lastly strangers. The ordering of this preference is expressed by Dr. Samuel Johnson of London, England, as noted by his biographer, James Boswell (1889): “A man should first relieve those who are nearly connected with him, by whatever tie; and then if he has anything to spare, may extend his bounty to a wider circle (p. 389).”

Scales exist in medical literature to gauge familiarity with someone who has mental illness, but those scales are not appropriate for the measurement of social distance. The study does not contend with the distinctions known to polarize people: race, ethnicity, gender, politics, philosophy, and occupation. The study of neighbors and strangers living within the same community requires a nuanced approach because in this setting, it is more difficult to cleave people apart, than in a situation where race politics are more salient. The best known scale to measure social distance is the Borgardus (1926) scale which measured social distance between people on racial and ethnic terms.

This study incorporates another method to estimate social distance, which is to quantify the degree to which donors perceive another person to share values, goals and

interests. Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992) argue that closeness in relationships affects the resource-allocation strategy because the outcomes are perceived to be interdependent, as suggested by communal versus exchange relationships (Clark et al., 1987). Perceived similarity enhances empathetic and vicarious reactions when an individual perceives another as human (Bandura, 1992). Dissimilarity is one form of social distance, suggesting that the less similar someone is to oneself, the more socially distant they typically seem (Liviantan, Trope, & Liberman, 2006).

The survey items developed for the manipulation check of social distance are expected to show that respondents will anticipate that in-groups depicted in the stimuli material will share their values more so than will out-groups. However, personal closeness based on shared values proved to be difficult to establish in this study. Findings suggest that values and interests shared by friends do not correlate significantly with personal closeness as measured by the Inclusiveness of Other into Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) during the manipulation checks and main experiment. Situating someone as a member of the neighborhood may lead to a casual observation that that person belongs to the in-group; yet geographic proximity does not always confer personal closeness. Close habituation may have led to social alienation and diffusion of personal responsibility to explain why neighbors ignored the repeated pleas of Kitty Genovese who died in the lobby of a New York City apartment building in 1964.

Social distance in this study proved to be an elusive task, but it was accomplished through manipulation checks by the time of the main experiment. Careful attention to the choice of words and examples and \$600 in art design fees helped to establish contrasting

levels for social distance and the other two independent variables, as required for a factorial experiment.

Researchers should be wary when associating the relationship of shared values to personal closeness. The key to establishing intimate relations remains elusive, and may require the efforts of sociologists to update their conceptualizations of *community*.

### *Temporal Distance*

CLT proposes that temporal distance changes people's response to future events by changing the way people mentally represent those events, specifically that values of outcomes are discounted or diminished as temporal distance from those outcomes is increased. Individuals often place a higher premium on near-term rewards, even when the distant-future event promises a larger reward. The value of events is always discounted over a time delay as described in economic terms, such as the time value of money where a dollar is worth more today than it will be tomorrow due to the effect of inflation and lost opportunity of an immediate investment. However, the anticipation of a favorable outcome, which can only be attained through concerted, effort builds value for a distant future event. A donation for the human development of skills is an example of the time-enhanced outcome, whereas a donation to alleviate pain and suffering of others is a benefit realized in the short term. A time-enhanced outcome is an example of a future event associated with a high-level construal, which has been shown to be represented in abstract terms; whereas the immediate realization of a benefit is associated with a low-level construal, and representation in concrete terms.

The greater the temporal distance, the more likely events are to be represented in terms of a few abstract features that convey the perceived essence of the events (high-level construals) rather than in terms of more concrete and incidental details of the events

(low-level construals). The reasons for pursuing a goal or end-state are more often construed in superordinate and abstract terms (e.g., donation intended to foster independence); whereas the means of pursuit is conveyed in subordinate terms (e.g., donation in the form of financial aid, or abeyance of a prior loan) (Trope & Liberman, 2003). The informational and evaluative implications of high-level construals, compared with those of low-level construals, should therefore have more impact on responses to distant-future events than near-future events.

The hypothesis is that high-level construal concepts are associated more with distant-future concepts than with near-future concepts; furthermore, low-level construal concepts are associated more with near-future concepts than with distant-future concepts. The results of both studies supported this hypothesis. These results are consistent with past CLT research findings that an abstract, high-level construal is linked to distant-future cues, whereas concrete, low-level construal is linked to near-future cues.

Another important difference among the distances is their relation to valence. Whereas social distance reduces positivity (e.g., in-groups are perceived as more positive than out-groups), temporal distance typically enhances positivity (people are more positive about the more distant future). Further, Lynch and Zauberman (2006) point out that there is less within-person variation (and thus, correspondingly, less opportunity for intrapersonal preference reversals) for the dimensions of social and spatial distance than for the dimensions of temporal distance and uncertainty.

### Construal Level Theory

Construal level theory provides us with the insight that people are more willing to process messages that use abstract language when distances are far, whereas they prefer

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concrete language when distances are near. CLT suggests that an outcome will be more favorable when an appeal for a distant stranger is based on abstract values in the distant future, such as aid that leads over time to advancement and independence, as compared to the more common grim depiction of poverty and starvation, dispassionately matched with cold mortality statistics. Our contention is that most charitable appeals do not recognize the psychological distance dimensions and opt for a “one-size-fits-all” perspective more common among selling organizations (product focused) as compared to marketing organizations (customer-need focused). This study contends that flaws in the message design of current charitable fund-raising campaigns may inadvertently act as an impediment rather than stimulator of donations. Furthermore, it argues here that charities could forego the common practice of a gift-for-donation, if they would design messages that more readily tap into the donor’s motivation schema. This paper focuses on identifying communication strategies that foster positive adaptations in that the donor is made to see the stranger as more attractive; that is, *less* strange.

CLT is closely related to the theories of psychological distance (Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006; Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008; Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007; Todorov, Goren, & Trope, 2007). CLT and PD appear to be derived from a representational theory of the mind which is a broader theoretical perspective also from the cognitive sciences. The basis for these related theories is that mental representations take on the form of semantics needed to form and share thoughts, beliefs, desires, perceptions, and images about an *object* (Pitt, 2008). These representations are used to express an evaluation of the properties of the object as consistent, truthful, appropriate, and accurate. CLT’s mental representations are grouped into low-level and a high-level

properties as described in Table 1. CLT is premised on the condition that mental representations are constructed in semantics terms which are abstract or concrete.

**Table 1**  
*Distinguishing High-Level and Low-Level Construals*

High-level construals	Low-level construals
Abstract	Concrete
Simple	Complex
Decontextualized	Contextualized
Primary, core	Secondary, surface
Superordinate	Subordinate
Goal relevant	Goal irrelevant

CLT provides the theoretical basis for the hypothesis that donors prefer messages that use abstract language, such as values (e.g., benevolence) and feeling, and desirable goals to present abstract objects and situations. Concrete language is theorized to best address the feasibility of practical matters of immediate concern (Trope & Liberman, 2003).

Charitable appeals for outsiders and their future needs are more difficult to cognitively process as the donor has less experience (context) in which to make sense of the situation. Conversely, appeals for insiders and their immediate needs are far more common experiences that provide the context necessary for the donor to construe (make sense of) the situation; therefore the message should use concrete language to present simple situations.

H3: Donations to socially near recipients are higher when the benefit occurs in the near future, as compared to the distant future, when the message uses concrete language instead of abstract language.

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A scenario of an outsider's distant need in terms of concrete language is likely to trigger utilitarian attitudes instead of value-expressive attitudes that are, theoretically, more effective. A formal statement of that relationship is:

H4: Donations to a socially distant recipient are greatest when the benefit occurs in the distant future, as compared to the near future, when the message uses abstract language instead of concrete language.

Construal level theory specifies that one of the factors that affect construal level (high/low) is the psychological distance between the perceiver and target. The greater the psychological distance, the more likely perceivers are to form high-level (abstract representations) rather than low-level (concrete representations) construals of objects and events.

#### *Summary of CLT*

Circumstances conducive to a donor's generous response are hypothesized by construal level theory (CLT) in explaining how people form general expectations of an event, which Schank and Abelson (1977) called scripts. The construals are scripted in concrete language or abstract language depending on the donor's perceived personal relationship with the solicitor-client as near or distant, and with their perception of the benefit as impacting the solicitor in the near future or distant future. CLT predicts that messages that make use of concrete language will lead to activation of helpful attitudes and behaviors when the recipient is socially near and the aid provides immediate relief. CLT predicts that messages that make use of abstract language will lead to activation of helpful attitudes and behaviors when the recipient is socially distant and the aid provides eventual relief. The persuasiveness of the charitable message takes on heightened importance when communicating with someone who would agree with the statements, "I

would have donated; however, I didn't like the way they asked me," and/or, "I donated because I liked the way they asked me." This study searches out language and styles that are amenable to the charitable nature of the prospective donor, given the most common situations.

### *CLT and Moral Judgments*

People use simple intuitive rules to make moral judgments. Sacred and protected abstract values operate under the no trade-off principle whereas concrete situations are less rigid in implementing their sacred values. Moral principles are general and decontextualized as high-level construals. Judgments of proximal events are less likely to reflect moral principles. Pressing concern (proximal) may moderate a harsh judgment for a violation of a moral principle (distal).

It is more likely that morally charged actions are expressed in terms of abstract moral values rather than in terms of more concrete incidental terms when the actions are temporally distant (e.g., the striving appeal in this experiment), rather than near (e.g., survival appeal). Moral actions are judged more positively from a greater temporal distance. Moral judgments depend on when action takes place and by whom it is judged. Moral judgments, because of their general and schematic nature, are more influential in judgments of more distant events. Proximal considerations muddle the application of moral principles (Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008).

The social and temporal dimensions of psychological distance will be manipulated within an experimental setting in an attempt to replicate a social interaction in which prosocial attitudes, robust when directed to intimates, begin to deteriorate toward indifference, aversion, and abhorrence when directed to strangers. A research

question is posed here in hopes of reversing the donor bias against the distant solicitor:

Can the stranger be made less strange in the eyes of the donor?

### Dual Coding Theory

The fundamental attributes of words are examined by studying word representation and retrieval. Paivio theorized that two interconnected representational systems exist in the domains of (a) verbal-linguistics (logogen system), and (b) imaginal-nonverbal (imagen system). Paivio's dual coding model hypothesis is that concrete words offer greater sensory information. This notion is consistent with the direction offered by Strunk and White in their writing reference guide, "The Elements of Style" where they advise the use of definite, specific, and concrete language instead of abstract nouns because concrete words call up pictures that use the senses.

Altarriba and Bauer (2004) rated 48 concrete and 48 abstract words on a 7 point scale to qualities ranging from (a) context availability as highly abstract, difficult to imagine, and difficult to think of a context; to (b) highly concrete, easy to imagine, and easy to think of a context. Concrete words were shown in a test to be remembered better than abstract words, due to concreteness, high imagery, and context availability. Concrete words have high concreteness ratings ( $M = 6.3$ ) as well as high imagery ( $M = 6.6$ ) and context availability ( $M = 5.6$ ) ratings. Abstract words have low concreteness ( $M = 3.3$ ), imagery ( $M = 2.4$ ), and context availability ( $M = 4.6$ ) ratings. Emotional words were shown to activate different properties which were recalled more readily than were concrete or abstract words. Emotional words are less imaginable, less concrete, and less likely to activate context compared to concrete words.

### *Accessibility of an Attitude*

Not all social behavior is deliberate and reasoned; this observation led Fazio and colleagues (Fazio, 1986; Fazio, Powell, & Herr, 1983) to suggest that attitudes can guide a person's behavior even when the person does not actively reflect and deliberate about the attitude (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992). Semin (2002) reintroduces Benjamin Whorf's (1957) notion of *unconscious habitual thought* facilitated by the grouping of linguistics (grammatical and vocabulary) that are based upon the cultural conditioning of the inherited language (e.g., concrete or abstract description for a single concept which varies by culture). Hoffman, Lau, and Johnson (1986) refer to the groupings as *lexical categories*. The claimed existence of lexical categories is related to CLT's main contention that events are construed in either abstract or concrete language. The lexical process is conceptually similar to cognitive schema as both concern an individual's categorizing and ordering of life experiences in order to make better sense of their environment. The creation of the stimuli material and the choice of words used throughout the messages were based on observations of lexical categories as they relate to construal level theory.

### *MODE Model*

Events are organized into the MODE (Motivation and Opportunity and Determinants) which is an attitude-to-behavior model that integrates spontaneous and deliberate cognitive processes into a single framework. The key propositions are that two conditions must exist for in-depth cognitive processing: (a) motivation to avoid a costly mistake or assure a significant outcome, and (b) an opportunity to expend the necessary amount of time to process this information. A situation that lacks motivation and opportunity will follow the attitude-to-behavior process (Fazio, 1986). An observation

not made in the literature is that important but novel situations should be deliberately processed, and that experience produces finer attitudes; the significance is that every situation doesn't have to be processed as if it were new again. Another way of stating this is: A person must deliberate and reason to form an attitude, but once learned and rehearsed that attitude is stored in memory, ready for retrieval, to make decision making so effortless as to appear to be spontaneous. Spontaneous processing replaces deliberate processes when the situation is familiar; and this notion is consistent with the metaphor of the cognitive miser who is economy-minded, investing cognitive effort in a task only when given sufficient motivation and cognitive resources (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Spontaneity in decision making will be of low quality as indicated by the use of heuristics or 'mental shortcuts.' Use of heuristics often occurs when the attitude object is of low personal importance or of overwhelming complexity, as when the lay person is asked to make a decision based on highly technical scientific data. Spontaneity based on access to carefully vetted attitudes must not be confused with spontaneity based on aversive emotions elicited by an unpleasant situation. An example of spontaneous aversion is the donor who quickly agrees to give a small amount of money when solicited by a threatening stranger or pitiful beggar. A critical limitation of the attitude-to-behavior model is the processing of novel situations or abstract concepts, as a contextual setting is necessary to ground the situation in familiar terms. The quality of the heuristically processed decision is degraded because attention is drawn to immediately notable features, perhaps of subordinate importance, all of which may lead to a decision inconsistent with the established attitude.



## Control Variables

### *Cultural Orientation of Values Toward Self or Group Outcomes*

Hofstede (1980) identified the constructs of individualism and collectivism as opposite poles of a value dimension that differentiates world cultures. Societal norms are theorized to vary by the degree to which most members (a) define the self as directed toward personal or collective aspects (Triandis, 1989), or as independent or interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991); (b) prioritize either personal or in-group goals (Triandis, 1990; Yamaguchi, 1994); (c) emphasize either exchange or communal relationships (Mills & Clark, 1982); or (d) emphasize rationality rather than relatedness (Kim et al., 1994).

Studies have associated individualism (I) with values of competition, enjoyment, pleasure, an exciting life, a varied life, self-reliance, social recognition, freedom, equality, imagination, and broadmindedness (Grimm, Church, Katiobak, & Reyes, 1999). Grimm et al. found that collectivism (C) was associated with values of cooperation, equality, honesty, self-sacrifice, politeness, cleanliness, and family. Schwartz (1990) recognized the utility of this cultural distinction yet cautioned that the I-C “dichotomy promotes the mistaken assumption that individualist and collectivist values [both] form coherent syndromes that are opposed to one another” (p. 151).

### *Individual Level of Analysis: Self-Construal*

A self-construal is defined as the grouping of cognitions concerning the relationship of the self to others, and the self as distant from others (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Individuals who possess an independent self-construal are more likely to live in cultures oriented toward individualist outcomes; whereas people with an interdependent self-construal are more likely to live in cultures oriented toward collectivist outcomes

(Triandis, 1995), though features of both can be found within an individual and throughout any given society. The self-construal construct has a vertical dimension that emphasizes social hierarchy, and a horizontal dimension emphasizing social equality, predicting the degree to which an individual is attuned to the needs of others (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). This study considers the pairing of the collectivist cultural dimension and interdependent self-construal, and the pairing of the individualist cultural dimension and independent self-construal as two conceptually equivalent constructs, respectively. Individuals with a collectivist/interdependent self-construal may not necessarily exhibit prosocial behaviors toward an out-group member if that act is considered counter-normative by members of their dominant reference group.

A research subject's self-construal level will be measured in the pretest and again in the main experiment. The two dimensions of the self-construal construct were originally defined as a dichotomous variable but are now considered by most scholars as an orthogonal construct; theorizing about self-construal allows for the bicultural or multi-cultural person who may possess both types of self-views (Kim, 2005). Triandis and Gelfand's 16-item measurement of horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism will be collected in the pretest, as a potential alternative to Kim and Leung's (1997) 30-item measurement of self construal that will also be collected.

A statistically significant positive relationship between self-construal scores and social distance is hypothesized as showing that people with an interdependent self-construal are more likely to regard a target as socially close; whereas another respondent with an independent self-construal may regard the same target as socially distant.

### *Personal/Situational Involvement*

A person's receptivity to messages is predicted in part by the level of personal involvement with that attitude object. People make choices to attend to messages based on their needs and desires for personal relevance, need for cognition, and personal responsibility (Andrews, Durvasula, & Akhter, 1990). The assumption is that processing is goal driven, which requires the researcher and advertiser to ascertain the outcomes that the *actor* wants to accomplish by listening to a message that either attacks or reinforces an existing belief. The sender's response must be to identify the message variables that are likely to be relevant and predictive of the desired effects. This type of involvement depends on the recipient's motivations to process a message that conveys personal consequences (outcome-based issues), personal values (value relevant), or social interaction (impression management). People prefer messages that are congruent with their most salient attitudes, and they will seek information that reinforces the validity of their convictions. Processing of a message that is value-affirmative serves the primary purpose of reinforcing one's belief system (Slater, 1997).

Social scientists have described involvement in a variety of ways, ranging from the number and intensity of thoughts related to direct personal experience (connections) and message content (Krugman, 1965), to links or "bridges" between information presented and central values (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

Attitude change is much more dramatic in the high-involvement condition, arising from careful consideration of conflicting ideas and formed by conscious opinion, then culminating with firmly held, enduring attitudes that are readily accessible and lead to overt behaviors toward important outcomes. Houston and Rothschild (1977) predicted resistance to attitude change among those who are highly involved. Their reasoning is

that involvement is associated with complexity, arising from rich and varied experiences between the individual and the attitude object. Individuals are motivated to protect and maintain their attitude toward the object and thus narrow the range of acceptable positions, or conversely widen their “latitudes” of non-commitment, or rejection, in response to a message. The protective mechanism produces a social judgment that exaggerates the rejected positions held by others as being either closer to (assimilation effect) or further from (contrasting effect) the position that anchors the person’s position (O’Keefe, 1990). High involvement with an issue enhances message processing; specifically, increased involvement enhances persuasion for the strong message, but reduces persuasion for the weak one (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

Involvement is an important moderating condition in advertising research, and has been studied under four major groupings of involvement conceptualizations: (1) attention/processing strategies, (2) personal/situational involvement, (3) audience/process involvement, and (4) enduring/product involvement (Andrews, Durvasula, & Akhter, 1990). Personal/situational involvement represents a collection of involvement definitions based on the idea that issues, situations, or messages can have significant consequences for, or be personally relevant to, one’s own life (Apsler & Sears, 1968; Sherif & Hovland, 1961), so much so that concerns for immediate situational rewards are “dwarfed by outcomes connected with the topic itself” (Cialdini, Levy, Herman, Kozlowski, & Petty, 1976, p. 664). Issue involvement in our study pertains to the donor’s attitude toward charity, whereas situational involvement pertains to their attitudes given their construal of the situation along the dimensions of psychological distance.

The respondent's level of involvement with issues has been shown in most models of persuasion to be a key moderating variable (Rifon & Trimble, 2002). Involvement may prove to be a rival to construal level theory in explaining charitable behavior, if extreme involvement levels are shown to be associated with a predisposition to donate (high), or not donate (low), regardless of the respondent's construal of the situation. The Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) is a context-free, 20 item scale developed by Zaichkowsky (1994) to measure the motivational state of involvement with products and/or issues (Rifon & Trimble, 2002), and therefore is an appropriate tool to measure involvement toward the issue of charity in this study.

#### Research Questions

This research is directed at understanding the structure of prosocial attitudes and how they change depending on the donor's appraisal of the mediated situation (donor-stranger interaction depicted in stimuli material), and normative influences.

RQ1: Is the value-expressive attitude function more generous than the utilitarian attitude function?

RQ2: If the value-expressive attitude function is more generous, then is it possible to construct a message to activate it?

RQ3: Is a message more persuasive when, according to CLT, concrete terms are used to describe a socially near and temporally urgent situation?

RQ4: Is a message more persuasive when, according to CLT, abstract terms are used to describe a socially distant and temporally less urgent situation?

RQ5: Is a value-expressive message more persuasive to a donor than a utilitarian message that also offers a gift-in-exchange-for-donation?

### *Summary*

Donors construe events in abstract terms when the situation is psychologically distant, and thus will also be more generous in their response when the message is conveyed in matched-abstract terms. Similarly, it will be shown that donors construe events in concrete terms when the situation is psychologically near, and will be more generous when the message is conveyed in matched-concrete terms. Empirical evidence will reveal that higher donations are associated with messages that match the donor's construal of the situation based on psychological distance, which is further associated with the value-expressive attitude function, more so than any other attitude function.

The broadest implication is that a value-expressive attitude function is susceptible to the influence of a properly constructed and matched message; whereas an improperly constructed and mismatched message will fail to activate the generous value-expressive attitude, or worse, activate the less generous and risk-adverse utilitarian attitude function. A scenario that precludes an optimal solution is the situation in which the two psychological distances under study are variously construed as low and high; in other words, one dimension is perceived more often in abstract terms, and the other in concrete terms. An illustration of such is an abstractly represented distant-future benefit (e.g., educational endowment) directed toward a concretely represented, socially near recipient (e.g., an in-group member or class).

## CHAPTER 4: METHODS

### Research Design

Donor preferences are presented in this study as attitudes, and their expression as behavior. This research seeks to better understand how donors organize their cognitions into preferences toward charitable appeals. Our research utilizes a factorial 2 x 2 x 2 randomized block design to manipulate three dimensions (IV) that commonly appear in charitable appeals: (a) the donor's perceived social relationship to the recipient (near:distant); (b) the temporal urgency of the appeal (near future:distant future); and (c) the message design features (concrete:abstract). The first two dimensions belong to a set of four collectively referred to as psychological distances (Lewin, 1951; Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006; Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008; Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007; Todorov, Goren, & Trope, 2007).

A test will determine if donors form concrete or abstract representations depending on whether the situation is psychologically close or distant; the former condition is referred to as a low-level construal, whereas the latter condition is referred to as a high-level construal. This relationship is predicted by the relevant theories of psychological distance and construal level theory, respectively. The current study recognizes the aforementioned relationship as predictive of donor behavior. Donors will be shown to be more generous in response to the level of message abstraction that matches their expectations or construal of the situation.

This research's major contribution is the new prediction that congruency of the message to the donor's construal level will activate the value-expressive attitude function associated with other-directed outcomes more effectively than any of the other three

attitude functions identified by Katz (1960). Incongruence of message-to-construal is theorized to introduce uncertainty because the event represents a new experience for which a relevant charitable context is not available. The donor is forced to withdraw from the interaction or construct new cognitions based not on the pursuit of values, but rather on the pursuit of self-directed or risk-adverse outcomes associated most often with the utilitarian attitude function.

Generosity, as a dependent variable, is greater in either the psychologically near or distant conditions, provided the message lexicon is congruent with that condition. This study will test a claim that CLT would plausibly claim, which is that generosity weakens when representations of social and temporal distance are mixed. The reasoning is that a message design for the near dimension favors only concreteness, whereas the distant dimension favors only abstraction.

Generosity, as an underlying principle, is a difficult, elusive concept to measure and no scales were discovered in the literature review. A composite measure of attitudes and behaviors is tested here despite the inherent difficulty of measuring this construct. Seven aspects of generosity, with at least three items per factor, were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis and proof of convergent and divergent validity. Donors differed in their regard of welfare as a personally relevant social issue. Donor involvement served as a control variable, as high level may lead to less generous outcomes because incongruence between message design and donor's construal of the event was detected through careful reading of the message. Conversely, low involvement levels may lead to more generous outcomes because incongruence between the message design and construal of the event was not detected.



This is an experimental study and cross-sectional survey to better understand charitable attitudes toward common situations in which prospective donors are asked to contribute to charity. The survey is to be administered prior to the experiment, measuring key demographics, orientation toward self and others, personal involvement with charity, religiosity, and attitudes toward charity. The research seeks to establish ecological validity by replicating the materials, methods, and setting for the real-life situation of a donor considering a solicitation which appears in a print advertisement. Subjects are to be assigned to respond to a specific experimental treatment. The survey among 409 adults was conducted using the Internet as a data collection tool because of its widespread accessibility, cost efficiency (replacing mailed paper surveys), and respondent's ease of use.

As a factorial experiment, the design may be distended as a 2 (Social distance: near vs. distant) X 2 (Temporal distance: near future vs. distant future) X 2 (Construal level: low-level vs. high-level). Social distance, temporal distance, and construal level are between-subject variables manipulated in the experiment. The dependent variable is generosity for which scales were developed. Open-ended and Likert scales were devised to tap into attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the generosity construct. The scales were validated using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Subjects evaluated magazine solicitations for donations in which the lexicon differs on the basis of abstract versus concrete words. People are theorized to prefer messages which contain an abstract lexicon when their construal of the situation (social distance and temporal distance) is psychologically distant (high-level construal), whereas preference is for a concrete lexicon when their construal of the situation is psychologically near (low-level construal).

An online questionnaire asks subjects to indicate their willingness to donate to a particular appeal. In data analysis, three-way ANOVA was used to determine the main effects of lexicon with the construal, and their interaction.

#### *Random Assignment to Test Cells*

The employee database had 2,076 names. The list was organized into three groups for assignment to the manipulation check, or pretest, or main experiment. The groups were further broken down into eight equally sized subsets as there are eight treatments in the 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. The manipulation check and pretest had 66 respondents in each of the eight treatments. The main experiment had 124 respondents in each of the eight treatments. E-mail addresses were entered into separate rows in Excel, followed by the assignment of a five-digit random number between 0 and 100,000 (=randbetween (0, 100000)). The names were assigned to the three groups and eight treatments in the order of highest random number to lowest.

The first manipulation check consumed 524 respondents. The revised manipulation check and pretest surveys consumed another 66 each, which left 1,288 employees for the main experiment. It was essential to preserve a sufficiently large sample for the main experiment. The goal of 240 completed surveys (30 for each of eight treatments in the 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design) required a response rate of 18%.

#### Dependent Variables

##### *First Measure of Charity: Amount of Donation*

The amount designated for charity will be recorded as the first measure of charity. Each respondent is presented with a chance to win the same amount of money out of which they would allocate an amount of their choice to charity, with retention of the balance up to an award of \$1,000. For example, a gift of \$333 to the charity will mean

retention of \$667. A single respondent will be randomly selected and checks will be sent to the charity and the winner, based on their allocation decision. Respondents must submit their e-mail addresses to enter the drawing so that redemption instructions can be sent to them. E-mail addresses were entered into separate rows in Excel, followed by the assignment of a random number between 0 and 100,000 as previously explained. The name assigned to the lowest number was designated as the winner.

*Second Measure of Charity: Value of Gift-in-Exchange-for-Donation*

This measurement gauges not what is given by the donor, but what is not accepted by the donor. Charitable campaigns often include a small gift as an incentive to donate. The donor who accepts the gift is receiving a benefit, albeit a nominal one; he or she may be securing an item of tangible value as a form of reciprocity required of a non-communal/exchange relationship common among strangers, and as described by Clark and Mills (1993). The person who rejects the gift-in-exchange-for-donation may be viewed as more generous than the donor who accepts the gift. The questions and instructions appear in Appendix. A common response choice (7-pt. Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree) provides opportunity to test construct validity of the generosity scales via exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses.

*First Measurement of Generosity: Merit of Giving*

This scale measures the merit or sincerity with which the aid is given. There are different kinds of Tzedakah considered more meritorious than others (Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Laws of Contributions to the Poor, Chapter 10:7) based on the Talmudic tradition of charity as an expression of righteousness, justice, and fairness. Merit is a common theme in religious texts appearing, for instance, in the Bible—God was more

pleased with the poor woman who gave the last of her meager earnings than he was with the rich man who loudly proclaimed his charity: “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Mark 12:43–44).

*Second Measure of Generosity: Need for Recognition as Donor*

The desire to remain anonymous is hypothesized to be related to the merit of the act and as a motive that is other-directed rather than self-directed. The questions and instructions appear in the appendix.

*Attitude Function Inventory (AFI)*

The advertisements are written so as to activate attitudes consistent with the value-expressive or utilitarian function; this test seeks verification that the ad was successful in eliciting the target attitude function. The function that best matches the respondent’s attitude immediately upon reading the advertisement is identified by use of Herek’s (1987) AFI scale. The scale is used to identify one of four attitude functions identified earlier by Katz (1960), namely value-expressive which subsumes social-adjustive, utilitarian, ego-defense, and knowledge. The respondents are asked to respond to each of ten questions by selecting the point from a 9-point Likert-type scale, with end points ranging from “not at all true of me” to “very true of me,” to best describe their attitude toward the client/character(s) depicted in the charitable advertisement which appeared earlier in the survey. The questions and instructions appear in the appendix. Scores are summed, and then averaged for each of the two attitude functions; the utilitarian score is subtracted from the value-expressive score. The values are recoded into two categories suitable for a *t* test of two independent samples.

The hypothesized relationship between values and donor behavior based on the literature review of functional perspective of attitudes is that charity is motivated by other-directed intentions, which in turn indicates a desire to express values more so than to receive rewards.

### Independent Variables

#### *Social Distance*

Social distance in the near-distant condition is established with word reference to familiar people who live within the donor's community; whereas far-distant condition refers to unfamiliar others living within the donor's community. Social distance was not to be confused with spatial distance which is based on geography, but not included in this study. This study refers to the near-distant group as in-group, and the far-distant group as out-group.

#### *Temporal Distance*

Temporal distance in the near-distant (proximal) condition is established with word reference to the threat of poverty to health, as urgent as to require an immediate response; whereas the far-distant (distal) condition is established with reference to the eventual threat of poverty to welfare, though still requiring an immediate response. A proximal event is depicted as loss of food and housing with dire consequences for school-age children; whereas a distal event is illustrated by the concern for the long-term aspirations for a child's education.

#### *Construal Level*

The advertising copywriter was directed to create situations that comport with the conventions of high-level construal, and low-level construals along the dimensions previously outlined in Table 1

## Control Variables

### *Personal/Situational Involvement*

The Zaichkowsky Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) is used to measure attitude toward charities which benefit clients who variously live within or outside the respondent's community. A full description of involvement as it relates to charity as a social issue is included in the literature review. Five of the scales were selected for use so to tap into the respondent's involvement with charity issues; and to reduce the number of items so not to fatigue the participants.

### *Self-Construal*

Measurement will be made via Triandis and Gelfand's (1988) assessment of individualism and collectivism. Self construal and donor responses will be studied for correlations strong enough to suggest that self-construal is a stronger predictor of donor behavior than the congruency of the message with the respondent's expectations. A full description of involvement as it relates to charity is included in the literature review.

### *Intrinsic Motivation Toward Religion*

A measure of the respondent's intrinsic motivation toward religion, rather than religious behaviors such as church attendance and religious reading, was assessed in this study using Hoge's (1972) 10-item Validated Intrinsic Religious Motivation scale which measures the motivations behind faith and religion rather than the frequency of religious behavior. A positive relationship between intrinsic religiosity and prosocial attitudes and behaviors is hypothesized, as benevolent behavior is more common among people who are intrinsically motivated than those who are extrinsically motivated (Egbert, Mickley, & Coeling, 2004). The IRMS is also attractive because it is general enough to be applied to various religious groups (Bassett, 1999). Three of the items are negatively worded,

requiring reverse-scoring. The respondents are asked to share their attitudes about religion by selecting one item from a 5-point Likert-type scale, with end points ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” in response to the questions about their faith life.

#### Subjects/Sample

The population of interest is people living in the United States who are independent in making financial decisions. Subsets of the population include working adults, homemakers, and retirees. College students who are employed less than full-time were excluded as it is presumed that most are financially dependent on parents and thus lacking in discretion and experience with the contribution of funds to charity, though they may be highly involved with volunteerism.

#### *Sampling Frame*

The sampling frame is the employees of large international automobile distributor with offices in the United States. This firm was expected to be sufficiently large enough to reflect the distribution of age, income, education, and presence of children in household levels among other common demographics across households in the United States. The general demographics of the sample as compared to the profile of the general U.S. population are reported in the results section.

#### Procedures

The procedures described here are approved by the governing Institutional Review Board as adhering to ethical principles. Human Resource Directors at the targeted firms were contacted by telephone to seek electronic access to their employees as subjects in this research study. The directors were asked to distribute an e-mail message to their employees which introduced the study of charitable attitudes, but did not

mandate their participation. The employees were advised of an e-mail from the human resources department that directed them to a Web site where they would read about the project, their rights as a volunteer subject, and log in instructions should they agree to participate (Appendix 1). No financial incentive was offered for participation; however, one randomly selected respondent and their designated charitable organization would receive up to \$1,000 based on the respondent's allocation of funds in response to a survey question. This provision increased the ecological validity for a prospective donation, as the respondent was using real money instead of tokens. Participants were offered a copy of the general results. Respondents were excluded from the main experiment. The data was collected in February 2009.

#### *Pretest*

A pretest was conducted to a limited sample of 38 individuals to detect potential comprehension or response problems in the survey; none were reported. The participants in the pretest were excluded from the main experiment. The pretest was used to establish the construct validity of the independent variables: social distance, temporal distance, and construal level.

The returned responses were tabulated automatically using the Web Surveyor computer software program on the resident computer server equipment in the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing's offices at Michigan State University, and the information was downloaded to the researcher's computer for analysis. Responses were encrypted and stored in a secure location.



## Online Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (Appendix 2) had several sections: (1) measures of demographics; (2) measures of generosity as gauged by donor attitudes and behavior responses to the stimuli material; and (3) measures of control variables including (a) issue involvement toward charity and (b) measures of attitudes toward self and other (self-construal).

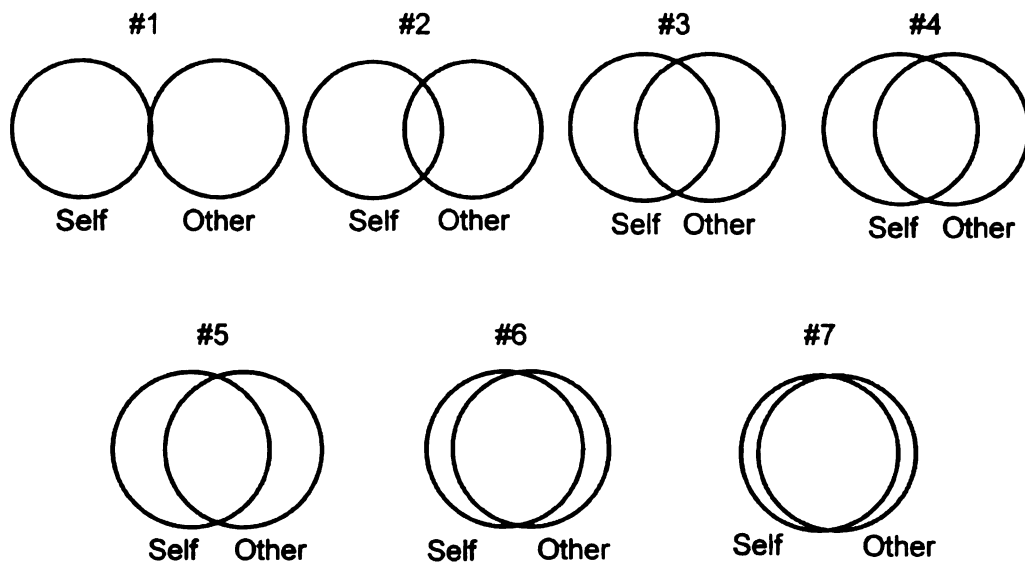
### Manipulation Check

#### *Social Distance*

A review of the literature reveals that researchers take a common sense view of social distance that does not require extensive manipulation. Nan (2007) wrote that a manipulation check of social distance may be desirable, but it may be less important since conforming to her instructions that some focus on oneself, their best friend, or an average undergraduate student when making judgments should not be difficult for the participants. Lambert's (1996) 5-point Likert scale measurement of social distance was comprised of just two questions to the respondent, a pharmacist: whether they knew well, and felt close to, a physician. Frohlich's (2001) dictator experiment on the costs of anonymity is based on Hoffman's definition of social distance as "the degree of reciprocity that subjects believe exists within a social interaction (p. 654)." Frohlich claims to have manipulated social distance by merely placing the research subjects in the same room, though it could be argued that proxemics (measurable distances in between people as they interact), or spatial distance, was manipulated instead.

New scales were developed to tap into the perceived similarity of values, goals, and attraction between the prospective donor and the recipient of the aid as a manipulation check for social distance. Also, a single-item pictorial measure called the

Inclusiveness of Other into Self (IOS) scale was developed by Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992). This scale is used to assess people's sense of interpersonal interconnectedness; respondents select the picture that best describes their relationship from a set of Venn-like diagrams, each representing different degrees of overlap of two circles ranging from close to distant (see Figure 1). The figures were designed so that (a) the total area of each figure is constant (thus as the overlap of the circles increases, so does the diameter), and (b) the degree of overlap progresses linearly, creating a seven-step, interval-level scale.



*Figure 1.* IOS Circles.

Social distance in the manipulation check and main experiment is ascertained first by asking a respondent to read a brief scenario in which a character is alternatively described as a close acquaintance or stranger. This procedure is intended to heighten the probability that the research subject will understand the nature of the personal relationship as familiar or strange. The respondent then selects the Venn circle which best represents their relationship with the character.

Modification to the survey instructions were made to identify the family in the stimuli materials as living in either the local neighborhood or wider community.

1. In-group: You are in a grocery store and you see a friend who you meet at a school, community, or religious function. You have been to their home, and they have been to yours. You call out their name, say hello, and chat for a short time, then say goodbye.
2. Out-group: You are in the checkout line in your local grocery store, standing behind a couple who you've never seen before. They are talking about events that take place in another community that is within the broader city limits. You are not sure why they are shopping so far from their own community, but think nothing more of it. They politely pay for their groceries and leave, as you move forward in line.

### *Temporal Distance*

This dimension is manipulated in the preparation of the stimuli material. Proximal events are depicted as a serious health risk to the client; whereas distal events are illustrated by the sponsor NPO advocating for the client's long-term aspirations for their children's education.

A pretest provides an opportunity to check for the successful manipulation of TD. Respondents are instructed to view a series of single photographs. The respondent is to indicate the degree to which they agree that the photograph illustrates a threat to the subject which is (1) urgent, (2) critical, and (3) serious. The choices appear in a 5-point Likert-type scale, with end points ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The image that evokes the least distance, and greatest temporal distance, respectively, will be used in the main experiment.

#### *Diction Associated to Construal Level*

The advertising copywriter needs to learn how to write advertisements that use high-level and low-level construals appropriately. The major distinction between concrete and abstract words is the ability to use the human senses. Concrete words describe persons, places, and things which may be *seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt*.

Abstractions include adjectives, concepts, ideas, and sometimes nouns. Abstract nouns may include ideas and feelings but are not available to the human senses. This class of words includes: love, hate, kindness, compassion, fear, anger, imagination, courage, intelligence, loneliness, happiness, sadness, bravery, cowardice, embarrassment, joy, beauty, ugliness, confidence, luck, misfortune, mischief, bitterness, justice, injustice, grief, boredom, and cheerfulness.

#### *Revised Stimuli Material*

Survey items were also added to the main experiment following the display of the stimuli material so as to ascertain the respondent's agreement with the intended social distance, temporal distance, and construal level. Passages that produced results consistent with social distance during the second manipulation check were reintroduced to the last set of stimuli materials used in the main experiment. Modifications to the final set of stimuli materials were designed to heighten the perception of social distance between the donor and recipient. Other changes to the copy were to produce the perception of slightly more temporal distance (urgency), while retaining the distinction between abstract and concrete language.

## Data Preparation

Data Preparation involves checking or logging in the data, checking the data for accuracy, entering the data into the computer, transforming the data, and developing and documenting a database structure that integrates the various measures. Data will be collected through websurveyor.com:

- Sample Web site of a manipulation check:

[http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable\\_Check\\_11.htm](http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable_Check_11.htm)

- Sample Web site for the pretest and main experiment:

[http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/dissertation\\_main\\_experiment1.htm](http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/dissertation_main_experiment1.htm)

Data will be analyzed with the standard statistical processing program SPSS. The data will be encrypted and retained in a data archive for at least 5–7 years. The codebook describes and documents the questions asked and items collected in this survey, including: variable name; variable description; variable format (number, data, text); instrument/method of collection; date collected; respondent or group; variable location (in database); item reversal; and notes. A respondent's missing data will be replaced with a value based on a discernible pattern to their responses to prior and related questions.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### Manipulation Check I (MC1)

The first manipulation check of the stimuli material shown in Figures 4–11 was performed on March 30, 2009. The respondents (n=124) indicated their agreement that stimuli material presented the situation as it was intended for two of the three variables. The temporal nature of the benefit to the recipient was understood as either near-future or distant-future events. The diction used in the message was recognized to be abstract or concrete as was theorized. However, the social relationship described in the in-group condition was not regarded as closer than that described in the out-group condition; a finding that required the revision of the stimuli material as shown in Figures 12–19. The following section describes the steps taken in preparing the survey scales used to measure these relationships in the manipulation checks.

### Scale Construction

#### *Concrete vs. Abstract Language*

The main applications of factor analytic techniques are: (a) to *reduce* the number of variables, and (b) to *detect structure* in the relationships between variables. The Eigenvalue of the varimax rotated solution reveals the first factor to represent nearly 50% of the total variance, with factor 2 extracting just 15%.

Table 2  
*Factor Analysis of Language Concreteness*

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.95	49.571	49.571	4.95	49.571	49.571	4.79	47.934	47.934
2	1.28	12.863	62.434	1.28	12.863	62.434	1.45	14.499	62.434
3	.988	9.884	72.318						
4	.808	8.082	80.399						
5	.609	6.094	86.493						
6	.436	4.359	90.852						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Showing 6 of 10 factors so to fit table on page

A Cronbach's alpha statistic of .804 indicates the presence of a single unidimensional latent construct. This statistic is a measure of scale reliability in that subjects are consistently providing the same answers to survey items. The principal components were rotated to reveal three items (bold text below) to load highly upon each other. The items were combined so as to form a single factor.

The higher scores indicated an agreement that messages using concrete language provided the context to make it easier to image the situation than the ads written in abstract language.

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean scores of the low-construal (concrete diction) and high-level (abstract diction) groups found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ( $t(122) = 2.29, p < .024$ ). The mean of the low-level construal group was significantly higher ( $m=4.77, sd = 1.47$ ) than the mean of the high-level group ( $m=4.16, sd = 1.44$ ).

*Temporal Distance*

Respondents recognized the scenarios regarding temporal distance to be either urgent or less urgent, as indicated by statistically different mean scores approaching .10 level of significance ( $p=.101$ ). Significant mean differences were attained when abstract diction was used to describe the varying temporal conditions; however, respondents failed to recognize the attempt to depict a greater sense of urgency by the use of concrete language.

**Table 3**  
*Data Reduction of Language Concreteness*

	Component		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Comment
	1	2		
	<b>CONAB1TRANS</b>	<b>.804</b>		
CONAB2TRANS	.778	-.098	.763	
CLARITY1TRANS	.771	-.040	.763	
CLARITY2TRANS	.553	-.009	.791	
CLARITY3TRANS	.642	-.147	.780	
IMAGE1REVTRANS1	-.455	.727	<b>.858</b>	<b>Drop item</b>
IMAGE2TRANS	.112	.915	<b>.832</b>	<b>Drop item</b>
IMAGE3TRANS	.687	-.155	.779	
<b>IMAGE4REVTRANS1</b>	<b>.880</b>	-.050	.750	Keep item
<b>CONAB3TRANS</b>	<b>.873</b>	-.068	.751	Keep item
Cronbach's alpha			<b>.804</b>	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A. Rotation converged in 3 iterations

**CONAB1TRANS:** The needs of the family are described with concrete words and examples.

**IMAGE4REVTRANS1:** It was difficult to create a mental picture of the situation described in the message.

**CONAB3TRANS:** The overall situation is described with concrete words and examples.



The three items noted above were combined into a single factor which did not include survey items regarding imagery, though the factor was used by Altarriba and Bauer (2004) in measuring concreteness. The independent-samples test compared the mean scores reported by the subjects who were exposed to a concrete message, against the mean scores reported by the subjects who were exposed to an abstract message. The *t* test would indicate if the differences are statistically significant at the 5% level.

Table 4  
*Factor Analysis of Temporal Distance*

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.30	57.284	57.284	6.30	57.284	57.284	4.92	44.779	44.779
2	1.10	9.989	67.273	1.09	9.989	67.273	2.47	22.494	67.273
3	.981	8.916	76.189						
4	.626	5.690	81.879						
5	.568	5.166	87.044						
6	.367	3.337	90.381						
7	.302	2.750	93.131						
8	.262	2.379	95.509						
9	.220	1.999	97.508						
10	.191	1.738	99.247						
11	.083	.753	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A Cronbach's alpha statistic of .890 indicates the presence of a single unidimensional latent construct. The principal components were rotated to extract one factor because the second component extracted just over one Eigenvalue. The rotation revealed six items (bold text below) to load highly upon each other, as shown in Table 5. The items were combined so to form a single factor.

Table 5  
*Data Reduction of Temporal Distance*

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**Component Matrix**

	Component 1
<b>TDA1TRANS</b>	<b>.808</b>
<b>TDA2TRANS</b>	<b>.810</b>
<b>TDA3TRANS</b>	<b>.886</b>
TBD1REVTRANS1	.556
TDB2TRANS	.793
<b>TDC1TRANS</b>	<b>.845</b>
<b>TDC2TRANS</b>	<b>.864</b>
<b>TDC3TRANS</b>	<b>.872</b>
TDD1TRANS	.743
TDD2TRANS	.656
TDD3REVTRANS1	-.256

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 1 component extracted.

**TDA1TRANS:** The threat to their health and/or welfare is urgent.  
**TDA2TRANS:** The threat to their health and/or welfare is serious.  
**TDA3TRANS:** The threat to their health and/or welfare is critical.  
**TDC1TRANS:** Their need for financial assistance is urgent.  
**TDC2TRANS:** Their need for financial assistance is immediate.  
**TDC3TRANS:** Their need for financial assistance is critical.

---

**Independent-Samples *t* Test**

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean scores of the temporally near-future group and temporally distant-future control groups found a difference nearing significance between the means of the two groups ( $t(122) = 1.654, p = .101$ ). The mean of the temporally near-future experimental group was not significantly higher ( $m=5.41, sd = 1.12$ ) than the mean of the temporally distant-future group ( $m=5.07, sd = 1.08$ ).

### Social Distance

The respondents did not regard the family, described as a neighbor in the ad, to be personally closer than the family described as a stranger living within their community. There was no mean difference for scores (see Table 6) indicating Inclusiveness of Other in Self (IOS) between the socially near and socially distant characters described in the ad. Subjects did not feel personally closer to a parent described as a neighbor than they did to the same character when described as a stranger. Subjects who shared values with the parent in the ad did indicate greater personal closeness when evaluating the IOS scores ( $r=.523$ ); however, the correlation becomes insignificant when the subjects are compared by exposure to the in-group or out-group message. A histogram of the IOS scores (see Figure 2) supports the finding that subjects don't feel personally closer to neighbors ( $m = 3.24$ ,  $sd=1.46$ ) than they do to strangers ( $m = 3.29$ ,  $sd=1.51$ ).

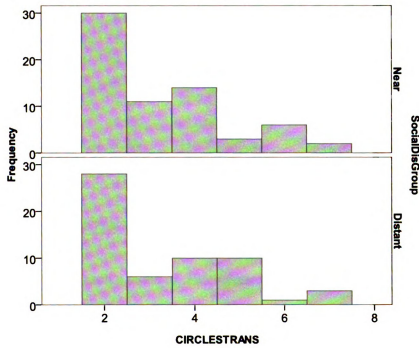


Figure 2. IOS score by exposure to socially near or distant stimuli material (1 far-7 near).

Table 6  
*Donor Relationship to Recipient (1 far–7 near)*

	Mean	SD	N
IOS 1	2.70	1.777	221
IOS 2	3.57	1.893	221
IOS 3	3.43	1.852	221
IOS 4	3.95	1.643	221
IOS 5	1.67	1.294	221
IOS 6	2.93	1.840	221
IOS 7	5.29	1.772	221
IOS 8	5.31	1.747	221

Table 7  
*Factor Analysis of Social Distance*

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.66	47.197	47.197	5.66	47.197	47.197	3.41	28.457	28.457
2	1.74	14.525	61.722	1.74	14.525	61.722	2.81	23.422	51.879
3	1.06	8.858	70.580	1.06	8.858	70.580	2.24	18.701	70.580
4	.638	5.316	75.896						
5	.569	4.746	80.641						
6	.507	4.223	84.864						
7	.415	3.457	88.322						
8	.397	3.306	91.628						
9	.336	2.802	94.430						
10	.291	2.425	96.855						
11	.225	1.875	98.729						
12	.152	1.271	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A Cronbach's alpha of .895 indicates the presence of a single unidimensional latent construct. This measure of scale reliability indicates a high degree of internal consistency, but perhaps too high, as the information may be redundant. The principal

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components were rotated to reveal seven items to load across three factors, as shown below in bold text. The items were combined to form a single factor.

Table 8  
*Data Reduction of Social Distance*

	Rotated Component Matrix			Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Comments
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3		
<b>SDB3TRANS</b>	<b>.804</b>	.011	.019	.889	
<b>SDB4TRANS</b>	<b>.804</b>	.132	.165	.883	
<b>SDC4TRANS</b>	<b>.769</b>	.225	.105	.881	
SDB2TRANS	.715	.178	.298	.888	
SDB1TRANS	.684	.184	.435	.882	
SDC1TRANS	.519	.506	.224	.884	
<b>SDC2TRANS</b>	-.044	<b>.888</b>	.188	.893	
<b>SDC3TRANS</b>	.283	<b>.877</b>	.060	.886	
SDA3TRANS	.317	.682	.373	.882	
<b>SDA4TRANS</b>	.188	.170	<b>.838</b>	.893	
<b>SDA1trans</b>	.198	.187	<b>.811</b>	.885	
SDA2TRANS	.158	.579	.582	.886	
Cronbach's alpha			<b>.895</b>		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser

Normalization. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

**SDB3TRANS:** They belong to my social group.

**SDB4TRANS:** I am comfortable introducing them to members of my social group.

**SDC4TRANS:** I would like to meet their friends.

**SDC2TRANS:** We share the same concerns.

**SDC3TRANS:** We share the same feelings on many subjects.

**SDA4TRANS:** I am comfortable spending time with them.

**SDA1TRANS:** I'd like them to become my friend.

#### Independent-Samples *t* Test

An independent-samples *t* test was calculated comparing the mean scores of subjects exposed to the socially near messages to the mean score of subjects exposed to the socially distant message. No significant difference was found

( $t(122) = 1.05, p > .10$ ) The mean score of perceived similarity toward the neighbor family ( $m=4.63, sd = .822$ ) was not significantly different from the mean of perceived similarity toward the stranger family ( $m=4.49, sd = .784$ ).

### *Corrective Actions*

The advertising copy in the stimuli material was edited to remove references to the sharing of values between the donor and out-group, with the intent of creating more dissimilarity between the donor and the out-group members described and depicted in the advertisement. The advertising copy in the low-construal X socially distant condition (treatment #5) was revised to increase the sense of urgency; success will be determined by attaining a statistically significant mean difference in the intended direction.

Copy in all treatments was reviewed for consistent use of abstract and concrete language according to the tenets of psychological distance. The photograph remained the same as it did in the original manipulation check. The survey instrument was revisited and revised as necessary for clarity; factor analysis and scale reliability measurements were used to help focus on key factors and items.

### Second Manipulation Check (MC2)

New stimuli materials, shown in Figures 12–19, were prepared and submitted to a second manipulation check on April 8, 2009. The manipulation check of the three independent variables was repeated. Treatment groups #1 and #8 receive stimuli materials in which the three IVs are consistently near or distant, and as such represent the strongest versions of CLT. Twenty-four responses were recorded for treatment #1, and 16 for treatment #8. The decision to restrict MC 2 to 124 employees was based in part on the need to conserve sample size for the main experiment.

### *Social Distance*

The correction to the stimuli materials was successful in creating the perception of social distance during MC2.

#### **Independent-Samples *t* Test**

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean scores of perceived similarity toward the socially near family and the mean score of perceived similarity toward the socially distant family, found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ( $t(36) = 2.061, p < .05$ ). The mean score of similarity with the socially near family was significantly higher ( $m=4.65, sd = .867$ ) than the mean score of similarity with the socially distant family ( $m=4.05, sd = .925$ ).

### *Temporal Distance and Construal Level*

The contrast between the near-future and distant-future conditions for temporal distance was lost in this new manipulation (MC2), as was the recognition between concrete and abstract language. The instability in the finding may have to do with the low sample size of 38.

#### **Independent-Samples *t* Test of Temporal Distance**

An independent-samples *t* test was calculated comparing the mean contributions of subjects who were identified as being exposed to an ad which described a temporally near-future scenario to the mean score of subjects who were exposed to the temporally distant-future scenario. No significant difference was found in the contributions made by the groups ( $t(38) = .80, p > .10$ ). The mean contribution of the temporally near-future ( $m=5.47, sd = .98$ ) was not significantly different from the mean of the temporally distant-future group ( $m=5.14, sd = 1.60$ ).



### Independent-Samples *t* Test of Language Concreteness

An independent-samples *t* test was calculated comparing the mean contributions of subjects identified as being exposed to an ad which used concrete diction, and those exposed to abstract diction. No significant difference was found between the contributions made by the groups ( $t(38) = 1.07, p > .10$ ). The mean contribution in response to the concrete message ( $m=5.03, sd = 1.36$ ) was not significantly different from the contribution in response to the abstract message ( $m=4.50, sd = 1.69$ ).

### *Corrective Action*

The advertising copy used in the successful manipulation of temporal distance and language concreteness in MC1 was the basis for the final version of the advertising copy to be used in the main experiment. The layout of the new ads reverted to the style used in MC1. A subheading was added to indicate the subject in the ad was a neighbor or stranger in need of aid. Three survey items used in the manipulation check were added to the survey in the main experiment to test the respondents' recognition of the ad along the three independent variables.

## Main Experiment

### *Demographics*

The demographic profile of the sample, when compared to the general population in the United States, is more often male, aged 25–54, white/Caucasian, with higher education, and children in the household. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between individual descriptive and charitable contribution. The weak positive correlation was found ( $r(122)=.210, p<.01$ ), indicating a significant

but low linear relationship between the two variables. More affluent donors tend to donate more of their anticipated prize earnings from the random drawing.

Table 9  
*Descriptive of the Sample Population Compared to U.S. Populations*

Gender	Sample	US Census
Female	36.0%	51.0%
Male	64.0%	49.0%
Age		
18–24	1.3%	9.9%
25–34	29.9%	13.4%
35–44	29.9%	14.6%
45–54	26.2%	14.5%
55–64	10.9%	10.6%
65 or older	1.8%	12.5%
Race		
Asian	1.4%	4.3%
Black/African American	3.2%	12.4%
Other, not listed here	3.2%	5.5%
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	4.1%	14.7%
White/Caucasian	88.2%	61.7%
Highest level of education		
Less than high school degree	0.0%	17.7%
High school degree or GED	4.5%	30.0%
Attended college but did not graduate	24.0%	19.6%
Graduate with Bachelor’s degree	37.6%	17.1%
Some post graduate course work	7.7%	n/a
Post graduate degree	26.2	9.9%
Children in HH		
Yes	59.0%	36.0%
No	41.0%	64.0%

Table 10  
*Contribution by HHI*

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Your household's annual income falls into the range of:

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Contribution \$	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
\$25,000–\$34,999:	650.00	494.975	2
\$35,000–\$49,999	413.64	295.035	11
\$50,000–\$74,999	492.86	371.643	42
\$75,000–\$99,999	550.00	395.388	62
\$100,000–\$149,999	399.34	361.924	68
\$150,000 and over	482.86	408.493	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>473.78</b>	<b>380.465</b>	<b>221</b>

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Donations by Attitude Function

An independent-samples *t* test was calculated comparing the mean contributions of donors who were identified as possessing a higher degree of value-expressive attitudes as compared to utilitarian attitudes (calculation described in the Methods section). No significant difference in contributions was made by either group ( $t(197) = -1.61, p = .110$ ) The mean contribution of those with value-expressive attitude function scores in excess of their utilitarian attitude function scores ( $m = 503.30, sd = 382.89$ ) was not significantly different from those with utilitarian attitude function scores in excess of value-expressive attitude scores ( $m = 408.61, sd = 384.73$ ). The first hypothesis was not supported.

It was theorized that donors with value-expressive attitudes scores in excess of their utilitarian scores would be more likely to seek anonymity, decline a gift in exchange for donation, and give with the greatest merit (level 7). Pearson correlation statistics were calculated for data shown in Tables 13–17, and the strength of value-expressive attitudes; however, no significant correlations were detected. The second hypothesis was not supported:

Table 11  
*Donor Recognition Requested*

	Yes	No
Treatment 1	7	20
Treatment 2	3	24
Treatment 3	8	22
Treatment 4	7	27
Treatment 5	3	24
Treatment 6	6	20
Treatment 7	7	18
Treatment 8	3	25
Total	41	180

Table 12  
*Amount of Expected Gift*

	Mean	SD	N
Treatment 1	.00	.000	27
Treatment 2	.37	1.334	27
Treatment 3	.00	.000	30
Treatment 4	50.03	201.280	30
Treatment 5	.00	.000	27
Treatment 6	.96	4.903	26
Treatment 7	.80	4.000	25
Treatment 8	5.39	20.805	28
Total	7.00	75.56	220

Table 13  
*Merit of Gift (1 Less - 1 - 7 More)*

	Mean	SD	N
Merit 1	148.33	291.619	15
Merit 2	657.14	472.077	7
Merit 3	300.00	346.410	6
Merit 4	349.39	390.358	33
Merit 5	419.29	368.227	35
Merit 6	470.54	354.584	56
Merit 7	630.80	342.894	69
Merit 8	473.78	380.465	221

Charitable donations were hypothesized to be greatest when concrete diction was used to promote charity for in-group members with an immediate need. Another way of thinking about this relationship is to recognize the interaction of social distance and temporal distance with construal level. In-groups should receive the greatest donation in

treatment #1 where congruency among the independent variables is greatest (near PD), and least in treatment #4 where the distances are least congruent. The opposite relationship is hypothesized for out-groups, who receive the greatest charity in treatment #8, and least in treatment #5. These relationships are labeled in the table which appears below.

The average amount of charity by treatment appears in Table 14. The amounts in the cells represent the main effects, and the amounts in the margin represent the interactive effects. A formal statement of the relationships appears in the Results section. These mean amounts of charity are the basis for the test of the main hypothesis; the results will be analyzed as to the theories of CLT, as measured by an independent-samples *t* test and an ANOVA test.

**Table 14**  
*Contributions by Treatment*

Treatment	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	677.78	377.322	27
2	401.85	367.811	27
3	690.00	391.813	30
4	498.39	359.742	31
5	358.33	373.973	27
6	372.12	322.671	26
7	377.20	349.339	25
8	379.46	351.126	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>473.78</b>	<b>380.465</b>	<b>221</b>

Table 15  
Actual Donation by Treatment

		Message Construal Level Low/Concrete <i>m</i> =\$453 ns		Message Construal Level High/Abstract <i>m</i> =\$493 ns	
		Temporal distance ( <i>p</i> <.03) Near: <i>m</i> =\$533 Distant: <i>m</i> =\$416			
		Near <i>Urgent appeal</i>	Distant <i>Less urgent appeal</i>	Near <i>Urgent appeal</i>	Distant <i>Less urgent appeal</i>
Social Distance ( <i>p</i> <.001)	Near <i>m</i> =\$568	Ad #1 <i>m</i> =\$677	Ad #2 <i>m</i> =\$401	Ad #3 <i>m</i> =\$690	Ad #4 <i>m</i> =\$498
	Distant <i>m</i> =\$372	Ad #5 <i>m</i> =\$358	Ad #6 <i>m</i> =\$372	Ad #7 <i>m</i> =\$377	Ad #8 <i>m</i> =\$379

Note. Near SD x Near TD #1-3: \$684 vs. Near SD x Distant TD #2-4: \$453 (*p*<.001); Distant SD x Near TD #5-7: \$367 vs. Distant SD x Distant TD #6-8: \$375 (*p*>.10).

#### ANOVA

A 2 (social distance) x 2 (temporal distance) x 2 (language concreteness) between subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the donations for subjects who read one message that featured one of two levels for each of the three conditions (See Table 16). A significant main effect for social distance was found ( $F(1, 213)=15.919, p<.001$ ). Donors to in-groups gave more ( $m=567.83, sd=388.67$ ) than donors to out-groups ( $m=371.75, sd=345.09$ ). The third hypothesis was supported.

A significant main effect for temporal distance was found ( $F(1, 213)=5.321$ ,  $p<.03$ ) as shown in Figure 3. Donors to urgent appeals gave more ( $m=533.07$ ,  $sd=402.02$ ) than did donors to less urgent appeals ( $m=416.07$ ,  $sd=350.48$ ). A significant interaction effect for social distance x temporal distance was found ( $F(1, 213)=6.105$ ,  $p<.02$ ). Donors gave more to recipients who were socially near with immediate temporal needs ( $m=684$ ,  $sd=381.62$ ) than did donors to recipients who were socially near with less urgent temporal needs ( $m=453.45$ ,  $sd=363.57$ ). The interaction was insignificant in the out-group condition. Donations to recipients who were socially distant and with immediate temporal needs ( $m=367.40$ ,  $sd = 358.91$ ) were not significantly different from the donation to the socially distant x less urgent group ( $m=375.93$ ,  $sd = 334.56$ ).

The main effect for whether abstract or concrete diction is used in a message was not significant ( $F(1, 213)=.476$ ,  $p>.10$ ). Donations to abstract messages ( $m=493.03$ ,  $sd = 381.58$ ) were not significantly different from the donation to concrete messages ( $m=453.27$ ,  $sd = 379.98$ ).

Finally, the three-way interaction was also not significant ( $F(1, 213)=.625$ ,  $p>.10$ ). The fourth hypothesis was not supported.

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Table 16  
*ANOVA of Contribution as the Dependent Variable*

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social_Distance	2096445.678	1	2096445.678	15.919	.000
Temporal_Distance	700792.899	1	700792.899	5.321	.022
Construal	62630.035	1	62630.035	.476	.491
Social_Distance *	803960.234	1	803960.234	6.105	.014
Temporal_Distance Social_Distance *	23422.732	1	23422.732	.178	.674
Construal Temporal_Distance *	18217.752	1	18217.752	.138	.710
Construal Social_Distance *	31571.757	1	31571.757	.240	.625
Construal Temporal_Distance *					
Error	2.805E7	213	131691.892		
Total	8.145E7	221			
Corrected Total	3.185E7	220			

a. R Squared = .119 (Adjusted R Squared = .090)

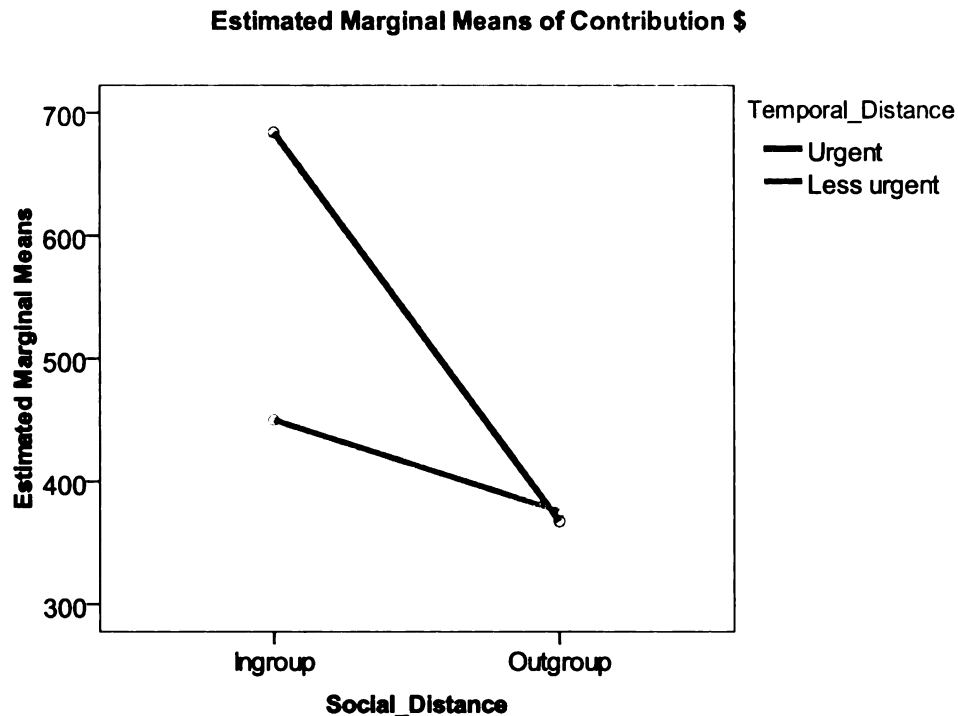


Figure 3. Interaction of SD x TD on mean contribution levels

#### *Contributions Correlated to Interdependent Self-Construal*

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean scores of the interdependent self-construal group and the independent self-construal groups found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ( $t(211) = 1.984, p < .05$ ). The mean of the interdependent self-construal group was significantly higher ( $m=488.89, sd = 377.92$ ) than the mean of the independent self-construal groups ( $m=339.66, sd = 366.5$ ).

Significant but low correlations below  $r=.20$  were observed between larger contributions and: (a) higher household incomes ( $p<.01$ ), (b) extrinsic religious orientation ( $p<.05$ ), and (c) personal involvement with in-group charitable issues ( $p<.01$ ).

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

### Findings

The stimuli material successfully represented the psychological distances (social and temporal) as measured during the manipulation check. The language used in the stimuli material was clearly recognized to be abstract or concrete as was the goal of the writing. The stage was set to attempt to replicate the main hypothesis to emerge from construal level theory (CLT): a message for an in-group member, which uses concrete language, will generate higher contributions than will a message using abstract language. Conversely, out-group messages crafted in abstract language should generate more donations for out-groups than will concrete messages.

An analysis of the contribution data using ANOVA showed the two psychological distances produced very strong main effects: social distance,  $p < .01$ ; temporal distance,  $p < .02$ . The results confirm that psychological distance is a viable framework to study the degree to which perceived social distance, and the timing of the request, impacts donor behavior.

The goal of this study was to develop guidelines that advertising agencies would follow to design messages which address the psychological distances which were shown in this test to be highly relevant. CLT provided a promising theory to suggest that abstract and concrete should be applied in specific situations as defined by the theory of psychological distance. The experiment failed to produce evidence that use of abstract or concrete language produces significant differences in contribution levels. Abstract messages produced slightly higher donations for out-group members compared to in-

groups; donations appeared in the expected descending order (from #8 to #5) but the mean difference was not significant.

The finding that best illustrates the failure of the construal level explanation is Treatment #3, where contrary to the hypotheses an abstract message produced a higher contribution than did the concrete appeal though the opposite was expected for an urgent appeal to benefit an in-group member; this finding was in the wrong direction but the differences were insignificant.

The data collected in this study was used to re-evaluate important claims that emerged from the literature review, and were presented earlier here as research questions.

Schwartz (1997) posited the value-expressive attitude function to be more generous than the utilitarian attitude function, which this study was on the verge of supporting at a statistically meaningful level. Proof that a message can activate one attitude function over another requires further testing, such as a pre- and post-test measurement of attitude functions. The study did not support that a message can be constructed so as to be more persuasive when, according to CLT, concrete terms are used to describe a socially near and temporally urgent situation, and abstract terms are used to describe a socially distant and temporally less urgent situation. Finally, the study did not find evidence that a donor who is motivated by desire to express their values is less likely to ask for a gift-in-exchange-for-donation than is the donor with utilitarian intentions; as it was, few donors requested a gift and the average amount requested ( $m=7.0$ ,  $sd=75.56$ ) was approximately 1% of the average donation.

## Rival Explanation

There are many possible explanations for why people are motivated to donate their money to others. This is a study of just one of those explanations, CLT, which is a relatively new theory (Trope & Liberman, 2000). An effort is made here to advance a strong version of theory that mental representations exist, in absolutely abstract or concrete terms, depending on the perception of social distance. The greatest problem encountered in this study had to do with the low-level construal and/or the appropriate use of concrete language.

Respondents recognized ads to be either concrete or abstract; however, that distinction alone may not be sufficient to produce the desired effect in terms of donor behavior, or detect the presence of concrete mental representations. It may be that ads written in concrete language, literally understood to be factual, concise, and noun heavy, may in fact be *too plain*, and too dull.

In defense of concrete words within a persuasive context is Paivio's (1986) experiment with dual coding theory in which attitudes are made more accessible by concrete words, rather than emotional or abstract words. Concrete words were shown by Altarriba and Bauer (2004) to provide the context needed to quickly conjure an accompanying image from memory. The list of concrete words includes common nouns such as garden, basket, and clown, among many others. It is easy to imagine pictures for these words; however, they are not very useful in promoting prosocial causes. Concrete words may be too specific in their advocacy and as such don't leave the reader with much discretion as to how they are to interpret the message. Concrete words, as narrowly defined in grammar manuals, may lead to a dispassionate response in the reader.

Maintaining that concrete words are at least as useful as abstract or emotional words in a persuasive context requires a fresh look at this class of word. Concrete words may be persuasive if the description leads to a clear rendering of the situation but stops short of mandating a response. The message that leaves room for a reader to imagine the best solution consistent with their values could be constructed with concrete words if the reader is allowed to provide the abstract or emotional words. A message that is open ended may work better than the message that is presumptive. An example of a charitable ad with an open end is a call for a free-will donation instead of one that asks for a specific amount.

#### Discussion

Information exists in order to create abstract and concrete messages, respectively. Manipulation checks provided the evidence that respondents distinguished between the two in a manner consistent with the researcher's intent. However, there is not enough information to know with certainty that people will produced a mental representation of a situation that will favor an abstract or concrete message over the other.

The main conclusion from this experiment is that people in the sample did not create abstract mental representations of psychologically distant events, or concrete mental representations of psychologically near events, and thus did not validate the existence of low- or high-level construals.

A manager at UNICEF expressed frustration that Americans don't like to contribute to people in Africa. The specifics of this claim can be argued as Americans donate more money than people of any other country; however, Americans donate a lower percentage of their income compared to nearly every other country. The best

method for increasing donations is not one nation browbeating the other into becoming more generous; instead it begins an inquiry by asking why generous people contribute to some charities but not others. Some charitable causes will appeal to an individual donor more than will other appeals, but it is the intent of this research project to identify the motivation for giving to any types of appeals (e.g., social services, medical services, emergency services). The motivation to donate is really a desire to express our most important values, which can differ by person, but the desire is the same regardless of the amount of the donation and who receives it. Charitable giving can be selfishly motivated (showing off wealth for social recognition) or entirely altruistic (alleviating suffering); regardless of either, the mere act of giving provides the means to express privately, or publicly, what we value. Most often the values associated with charity are other-directed.

It was argued here that generosity is a trait that we acquire, then retain over time. It was shown that generosity is appropriate in some situations but not in others: for instance, donating money to church is considered appropriate behavior, however, giving (“donating”) a bottle of wine to a minor is not. People usually give more generously when they are approached in a manner they come to expect from repeated experiences as a donor and as a recipient. It is often overheard that, “I’d have given money to him, but I did not like the way that I was asked.” This communication research project asked basic questions in search of practical solutions: What is the best way to ask for money to conform to the expectations of a donor? The literature suggests that people, when approached properly, with the right language given the situation, will respond spontaneously, as if by an *unconscious habitual thought* to give spontaneously. When approached in the wrong manner, with inappropriate words, the donor will revert to a

conscious, utilitarian attitude in which risks and rewards for complying with the request become salient. It was theorized that people experience social situations, like a request for charity, in a manner (process) that is different for a stranger than it is for a neighbor. The theory that helps explain this is psychological distance. It suggests that the path for cognitive processing of a situation, like a charitable one, differs when: (a) the social distance between you as the donor is near (friend) or far (stranger); and (b) the timeliness of the request is urgent (e.g., starvation appeal) or not (e.g., education endowment). The prediction is that a situation socially near and temporally (time) urgent is construed in the mind of the donor in concrete language (e.g., statistics, nouns); whereas a situation that is socially distant, such as an appeal for a stranger, and/or a long-term cause, is construed in abstract language (e.g., feelings, sentiments, values). The assumption is that language used in the message should match the donor's construal of the situation. The test of the validity of this relationship is that an ad message that uses concrete language will generate more donations for situations that are psychologically near rather than far; and conversely, if a message that uses abstract language, it will generate more donations for situations that are psychologically distant rather than near.

The data analysis provided evidence that proper choice of words in a mediated message (advertisement) will optimize giving when the donor is either familiar or unfamiliar with the recipient. This is an important finding as it is possible to provide well for those who are less like us: people who are strangers, perhaps living in other cities, or even countries.

The immediate implication for managers in the communications industry is they should continue to use a combination of abstract and concrete language, with emotional



words thrown in for good measure, until it can be shown that people have specific mental representations for specific situations, and that a specific rhetorical style will be most persuasive, all other things being equal. Advertisers will continue to create messages to sell products and generate donations, though they may not know which words were the most influential in making the sale.

#### Limitations

The study among a large population living in a democratic and multi-racial country fails to account for the strong opinions that subgroups may harbor toward each other. Studies of rival groups living in cities in which racial or national tensions are intense are likely to reveal perceptions of wide social distance between parties. This study focused on influence of perceived similarity on social distance, and attempted to manipulate stimuli materials without addressing the more known major factors of social distance: race, religion, occupation, and nationality. The stimuli material did depict the in-group victim as having lost their job without specifying the occupation or industry from which the victim was separated; however, occupation accounted for just 17% of the variance in perceptions of social distance as measured in the Triandis and Triandis (1960) study.

Ad messages were designed for an audience living in the United States, which is an individualistic culture. This may have alienated respondents from collectivist cultures. The factorial design would have grown from eight treatments to 16 treatments, which is unwieldy.

Moral behavior was shown to change in response to induced moods (Kirchsteiger, Rigotti, & Rustichini, 2006). The study showed that one's morals depend on one's

moods. The effect was large and surprising to the researchers. This observation may be disturbing to this study in itself. In addition, some assumptions underlying the theoretical research on reciprocity must now be reconsidered. Moral preferences are not stable with respect to a simple perturbation of the environment; they change with a player's mood.

The measure of generosity may be negatively influenced by a respondent who has a negative evaluation of the ad because they are irritated by the design of ad, or the intrusiveness and frequency of charitable ads in general. This study did not measure negative attitude toward the ad ( $A_{AD}$ ). Respondents may respond negatively to the fictitious NPO which appears in the ad as the sponsor agency. The respondent may have a general disregard for nonprofit organizations due to the well-publicized stories regarding financial mismanagement among charitable organizations.

#### Future Research

Better measurement tools are needed to map the mental representations related to psychological distance, with the goal of identifying the mental state that is consistently associated with social situations construed as either near or distant. Should research fail to arrive at a stable definition of independent mental state as abstract or concrete, then focus should shift from CLT and onto another typology for mapping mental representations of commonly occurring social situations, such as an appeal for a donation from a stranger.

Future communication research proposals should consider language expectancies that differ by culture. Research may focus on the use of language tailored toward the cultural dimensions of a particular society; for instance, social-adjustive messages are theorized to be favored in collectivist societies in contrast to value-expressive messages

favored in individualist societies. An interesting but ancillary finding in the main experiment was that abstract language produced slightly higher mean contributions ( $m=\$493$ ,  $sd=381$ ) than did concrete language ( $m=\$453$ ,  $sd=379$ ). This finding is surprising given the English language preference that diction should always be concrete and unambiguous, instead of abstract. The proclivity to speak plainly may be a culturally derived preference associated with Anglo-Saxon cultures such as England, America, Australia, and Canada; however, the use of concrete diction is less appropriate when the subject concerns humanity, and an appeal for compassion, empathy, and social justice, which are abstractions. It may be found that word use that is abstract instead of concrete, and prose that is florid as opposed to sparse, may be favored among those who speak the Romance languages (e.g., French, Italian, Spanish). Critical message components such as compatible cultural values between donor and recipient may be rendered clearer when the message makes proper use of abstract or concrete language that matches the culturally preferred language style.

The stimuli material used in this ad were written to be either abstract or concrete; yet results showed that successful manipulation did not produce significant mean differences in the mean amount of the contributions. This finding suggests that a third class of stimuli materials are tested in the near future; that is, one which is equally abstract *and* concrete (a hybrid). Tests should introduce emotional words as the third semantic device which Altarriba and Bauer (2004) used to justify their claim that concepts represented by emotional words are more imaginable than are abstract words, and more similar to concrete words. Emotion Research may provide a useful perspective that is experiencing a revival among cognitive scientists.

In-group bias can be measured to determine the premium people are willing to donate to in-groups even when the message does not match the donor's mental representation. For instance, there is an excessive cost to society when donors give to subsets of the in-group whose behavior is clearly in violation of social norms, rather than give to out-groups who need aid to further their assimilation into the host society. Further research may conceptualize the "coverage" or "width" of the prosocial umbrella to estimate how far it extends from the in-group toward the out-group, and under what terms and conditions; in this way the social distance dimension may be manipulated so that recipients are perceived as belonging to the donor's in-group. The results of this research showed that in-groups are favored with significantly higher donations than those given to out-groups under the same conditions (urgency was controlled). Donations to out-group members may increase to the degree that social distance is closed; appeals to the brotherhood of man or common character may reduce social distance.

The predicament of the in-group member faced with social sanctions for their prosocial attitudes toward out-groups should be studied; in this case, the promotion of tolerance and charity toward out-groups based on a test of congruency of message design elements with the relevant psychological distances. This scenario may provide evidence that generosity is a character trait that can be developed, as opposed to an intractable trait, especially where progress toward greater charity is counter to the cruel intentions of bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice.

Research should explore whether incongruence among the various psychological distances and message abstraction is a form of cognitive complexity, while testing if the utilitarian attitude function is a default state when a message poses too much complexity,

especially when compared to a similar appeal that is congruent among its design elements.

Research should test if a pictorial representation is a form of concrete communication whereas words are abstract forms. Amit (2006) suggested that because psychologically near events tend to be represented concretely, and psychologically distant events tend to be represented abstractly, psychological distance should impede the processing of concrete event representations and facilitate the processing of abstract event representations. In particular, because a word is an abstract representation that carries the essence of the referent object whereas a picture is a concrete representation that carries the properties of the referent object in full detail, processing of pictures should be facilitated when they are psychologically near, and processing of words should be facilitated when they are psychologically distant. The study may yield insights as to the effectiveness of (a) words and/or (b) graphics given an event construed at a low- or high-level to generate donations.

The data set is beginning to show signs that social distance is a concept which has evolved or perhaps *de-evolved*, since the time of Tonnies (1887) and Borgardus (1925). A sociological aspect worth considering in future communication research should focus on the expectations that people have of their community. It may be that communicators need to emphasize the self-interested benefits of an industrially oriented community, which Tonnies labeled *gesellschaft*, over the familial and bonded relationships embedded into a tight *gemeinschaft* community.

This paper identified various donor motivations, but does not stake a claim that one motivation, among so many, accounts for the greatest generosity. This study seeks a

parsimonious explanation of generous behaviors, and suspects that the psychological functions served by the attitudes capture many of the motivations leading to charitable behavior. The function most often served by charitable attitudes allows for the expression of values consistent with an individual's private identity; however, that function is not expressed often enough if one considers that charitable contribution rates range between just 3% and 4.5% of household income levels in the United States. Rather than focus the research on rehabilitation of the American donors' presumed miserliness, this study instead shifts the burden upon the solicitor to craft messages that tap into what eighteenth century British philosopher Joseph Butler (1736) called an instinctive human capacity for benevolence.

Studies noted throughout this paper are consistent in showing that people evaluate messages according to their values. The experiment conducted here was built on the notion that messages that match the donor's culturally specific attitudes, as well as their motivation for holding those attitudes, are more persuasive than messages that are incongruent with those attitudes. This study extends current theories by observing that situational factors and message design features (e.g., semantics, imagery) will prime the emergence of a specific attitude, among several, toward an attitude object. Message design that reflects the donor's construal of the situation as psychologically close or distant is predicted to produce greater donor intentions and contributions.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Solicitation Materials

E-mail to [REDACTED] employees on March, 18 and April 2, 2009

Good morning,

Your voluntary participation in an online survey by Michigan State University is requested. The research is being conducted by Clay Dedeaux, whom some of you may remember as a representative at one of our former advertising agencies. Clay is finishing his dissertation for a PhD in Media and Information Studies at MSU, and expects to graduate upon completion of this study in May. The objective of Clay's study is to identify the message design elements and language that evoke the most charitable intentions and behaviors among prospective donors. (These elements are theorized to differ by the nature of the perceived personal relationship of the donor to the recipient, and by the urgency of the appeal.) Your responses will be vital to his research which promises to advance our understanding of humanitarian aid.

The survey should only take a few minutes of your time. Please help his research by responding to the survey at your earliest convenience. To access the survey, please follow the link below:

[http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable\\_Check\\_11.htm](http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable_Check_11.htm)

(Note: if clicking the link does not work, please copy and paste directly into your browser.)

Thank you very much for your anticipated cooperation.

**Name Omitted**

Title Omitted  
Sales and Marketing

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This message, which contains information from a corporate legal department, may be confidential and privileged. If you have received this communication in error (you are not the addressee or authorized to receive for the addressee), you may not use, copy or disclose the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail and delete the message.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Follow up e-mail to [REDACTED] employees from researcher**

March 20 and April 6, 2009

Hello,

I want to thank those of you who completed the on-line survey, and ask that others please take a moment to complete it.

I need just a few more responses for the analysis which takes place later today.

\*To access the survey, please follow the link below:

[http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable\\_Check\\_88.htm](http://research.adv.msu.edu/ss/wsb.dll/dedeaux/Charitable_Check_88.htm)

\*(Note: if clicking the link does not work, please copy and paste directly into your browser.)

Respectfully,

Clay Dedeaux

Michigan State University

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Instrument for Manipulation Check

#### **Charitable Attitudes Consent Agreement**

**(Same form used for Manipulation Check I & II, Pretest, and Main Experiment)**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Researchers hope to learn about the reasons you consider the most important when deciding among various charitable appeals. You have been identified as an employee of [REDACTED] and asked to participate in a voluntary study. You have been selected as a participant in this study because you are an adult who is likely to have experience considering the donation of your own money to assist others. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may result in better health and human services for needy people. Researchers received permission to send this e-mail to you from your human resource department who encourage your voluntary participation.

#### **YOUR RIGHTS**

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time during the study and withdraw at that time. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. You will be told of any significant findings that develop during the course of the study that may influence your willingness to continue to participate in the research. You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for participating in this study. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. The data for this project will be kept confidential on a secure website at Michigan State University, accessible only to the research team and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The data will not be shared with your employer, and your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent of the law. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. Your internet IP addresses will be deleted.

#### **RANDOM PRIZE (section not included in manipulation check)**

You are **not** asked to spend your money; however a survey question will ask you to imagine how you would distribute up to \$1,000 to a charity. Your name may be randomly selected among survey responders to **win** the amount that you decide to **KEEP** for yourself. Also, the amount that you designate for the charity will be donated to charity of your choice **IF** your name is selected in the random drawing. We provide the funds so that your decision is as realistic as possible.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact Clay Dedeaux, Ph.D. Candidate, Michigan State University, 542 Communication Arts & Sciences Building, East Lansing, MI 48823, dedeauxc@msu.edu, 616-735-1550). If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

You are asked to carefully read the instructions before answering the questions. Please use the TAB key to advance to the next question. Please answer all questions before moving onto the next section. A copy of the final research study will be made available to you at your request.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this research study by pressing the "next page" box at the bottom of this page. Your participation in this study will take about 10-15 minutes.

Addition or deletion of item in revised manipulation check (MC2) is noted

1) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE FAMILY IN THE AD**

Please carefully read this advertisement, then you will be asked to some questions about your attitude toward the advertisement.

<Insert one ad #1 to #8>

Indicate your agreement with the following statements regarding your relationship to the family depicted and described in the advertisement.

Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree.

Research note: responses coded 1-7 from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

- They belong to my social group.
- I am comfortable introducing them to members of my social group.
- I would like to meet their friends.
- Their friends are a lot like my friends.
- We share the same values.
- We share the same goals.
- We share the same concerns. ITEM DROPPED IN 2<sup>ND</sup> CHECK
- We share the same feelings about many subjects.

- 2) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE FAMILY IN THE AD continued 2**  
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- I feel personally close to them.
  - I am comfortable spending time with them.
  - I'd like them to become my friend.
  - We think alike on important topics.
- 3) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE FAMILY IN THE AD continued 3**  
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- The threat to their health and/or welfare is urgent.
  - The threat to their health and/or welfare is serious.
  - The threat to their health and/or welfare is critical.
  - The situation puts the child at LOW risk of falling behind in their studies at school. ITEM DROPPED IN 2<sup>ND</sup> MANIPULATION CHECK
  - The situation puts the child at HIGH risk of falling behind in their studies at school. ITEM DROPPED
  - The situation puts the child at high risk of falling behind at school as compared to classmates. ITEM ADDED TO 2<sup>ND</sup> MANIPULATION CHECK
  - The parent is legitimately concerned their child will fall behind at school if the family's financial situation does not improve soon. ITEM ADDED
  - The situation puts the child at high risk of falling behind others later in life for good paying jobs. ITEM ADDED
  - The parent is legitimately concerned their child risks falling behind others later in life for good paying jobs if the family's current financial situation does not improve soon. ITEM ADDED
- 4) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE FAMILY IN THE AD continued 4**  
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- Their need for financial assistance is urgent.
  - Their need for financial assistance is immediate.
  - Their need for financial assistance is critical.
  - Financial aid will benefit the family immediately. DROPPED IN 2ND
  - Financial aid will benefit the family in the short-term. DROPPED IN 2ND
  - Financial aid will benefit them in the future. DROPPED IN 2ND
  - My donation is intended to benefit the family immediately. ADDED IN 2<sup>ND</sup>
  - My donation is intended to benefit the family in the future. ADDED 2<sup>ND</sup>

5) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE FAMILY IN THE AD continued 5**

Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- The needs of the family are described with concrete words and examples.
- The benefit to the needy family is described with concrete words and examples.
- I understand how the money will be used to help the family.
- I understand how the family feels about their situation.
- I understand the values which the family considers to be important.

6) **YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE AD**

Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- It was easy to imagine the situation depicted in the message.
- It was difficult to create a mental picture of the situation described in the message.
- It was easy to imagine how the solution would benefit the family.
- It was difficult to create a mental picture of the situation described in the message.
- The overall situation is described with concrete words and examples.

7) **YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO PARENT SHOWN IN THE ADVERTISEMENT**

There is a single question near the bottom of this page for you to answer.

You are shown a series of circle sets that differ to the degree they overlap with one another. Imagine the circles in a set to represent you and someone else, in this case the parent shown in the advertisement. Furthermore, the circles overlap to the extent you feel personally close to the parent.

You are asked in this question about your personal feeling toward the parent depicted and described in the advertisement. If you perceive a distant relationship with the parent then you may choose a circle set nearer to #1 where the two circles are farthest apart from each other. If you perceive a close relationship with the parent in the ad then you would choose a circle set nearer to #7 where the two circles are nearest apart. The other circle sets depict varying degrees of personal closeness between you and the parent.

Please click on a circle set, from 1 to 7 that best describe your personal feelings toward the parent in the advertisement. \_\_\_\_\_ :

- 8) Please enter your name and e-mail address if you want a copy of the final report. Note that your name and address will be separated from your previous answers to maintain the confidentiality of your responses.  
Please enter e-mail address here: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) The survey is complete. Please click the SUBMIT button below to record your answers. A short statement regarding the purpose of the study appears next.

#### Follow-up Statement

Thank you for your participation in the study. The objective of the study is to identify the message design elements and language that evoke the most charitable intentions and behaviors among prospective donors which are theorized to differ by nature of the perceived personal relationship of the donor to the recipient, and by the urgency of the appeal. Your responses will help advance our understanding of how people make decision regarding humanitarian aid.

If you have any more questions or would like to talk further about the study, please contact researcher Clay Dedeaux at [dedeauxc@msu.edu](mailto:dedeauxc@msu.edu).

## APPENDIX C

### Survey of Attitudes Toward Charity: Main Experiment

Please tell us about yourself by answering a series of questions about you; the questions are similar to questions asked in the US census. Please answer all questions and then use the TAB key or Scroll bar to advance to next question.

- 1) **Your gender is:**
  - Female
  - Male
  
- 2) **Your age falls into the range of:**
  - 18–24
  - 25–34
  - 35–44
  - 45–54
  - 55–64
  - 65 or older
  
- 3) **Your household's annual income falls into the range of:**
  - Under \$15,000
  - \$15,000–\$24,999
  - \$25,000–\$34,999
  - \$35,000–\$49,999
  - \$50,000–\$74,999
  - \$75,000–\$99,999
  - \$100,000–\$149,999
  - \$150,000 and over
  
- 4) **Do children live in your home?**
  - Yes
  - No

- 5) **Your race is best described as:**
- Asian
  - Black/African American
  - Native American
  - Pacific Islander
  - Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
  - White/Caucasian
  - Other, not listed above
- 6) **The highest level of education that you have attained is:**
- Less than high school degree
  - High school degree or equivalent
  - Attended college but did not graduate
  - Graduate with Bachelor's degree
  - Some post graduate course work
  - Post graduate degree
- 7) **Which country are you a citizen of?**
- USA
  - Germany
  - Canada
  - China
  - England
  - Japan
  - Korea
  - Other (please specify)
- 8) **Which country do you live in?**
- USA
  - Germany
  - Canada
  - China
  - England
  - Japan
  - Korea
  - Other (please specify)



9) **CONTRIBUTION**

How much money would you contribute to this cause if you had \$1,000 in extra money? You can contribute the entire \$1,000 or a portion of it, or none at all, keeping the remaining amount for yourself.

Before answering this question you must pay close attention to this important notice: Your name may be randomly selected among all [REDACTED] survey responders to win the amount you decide to KEEP for yourself; furthermore, the dollar amount you designate for the charity will be donated to a charity organization of your choice. We provide the funds to make your financial decision as realistic as possible.

Note the charity and website used in this ad are fictitious, and used only for research purposes.

Now carefully read the advertisement shown below then enter your decision in the box that appears beneath this advertisement.

Simply enter the number (without dollar sign) that you want to contribute to CHARITY. \_\_\_\$N\_\_.

10) **CHARITY DESIGNATION**

You designated that \$N, should be donated to charity should you be selected in the random drawing. We will send the money to a [REDACTED] designated charity. Alternately, you may designate another charity which is registered with the IRS as a nonprofit 501(c) organization. You may enter the name of another charity here, should you wish.

11) **PRIZE REDEMPTION INSTRUCTIONS**

Enter your e-mail if you want to receive the amount which you designated for yourself. An e-mail will be sent to you with instructions on redeeming the money should your name be selected in the random drawing. You agree to waive the anonymity of your name for the purpose of sending redemption instructions (your other responses will remain anonymous).

12) **DONOR RECOGNITION**

Imagine you are given the option of allowing your name to be publicly recognized as donor of \$100 or preferring your donation to remain private? Please note that a donor list does not exist as this imagined situation is posed for research purposes only.

Yes, I want my name entered into a public register as a donor.

No, I prefer my donation to be anonymous.

13) **GIFT IN-EXCHANGE FOR DONATION**

If you were given the opportunity, would you like someone at the charity organization to acknowledge your contribution by sending you a gift? If so, then

please enter the value of the gift that you expect into the box which appears below this advertisement. Your gift request cannot exceed the value of your contribution. You may enter 0 (zero) if you do not want the charity to send you a gift. Please note that an actual gift will not be sent as this is a research question only.

Please enter figure here without the dollar sign: \_\_\_ G\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**14) YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO PARENT SHOWN IN THE ADVERTISEMENT**

There is a single question near the bottom of the ad for you to answer.

You are shown a series of circle sets that differ to the degree they overlap with one another. Imagine the circles in a set to represent you and someone else, in this case the parent shown in the advertisement. Furthermore, the circles overlap to the extent you feel personally close to the parent.

You are asked in this question about your personal feeling toward the parent depicted and described in the ad. If you perceive a distant relationship with the parent then you may choose a circle set nearer to #1 where the two circles are farthest apart from each other. If you perceive a close relationship with the parent in the ad then you would choose a circle set nearer to #7 where the two circles are nearest apart. The other circle sets depict varying degrees of personal closeness between you and the parent.

**Q 14 continued.**

Please click on a circle set, from 1 to 7 that best describe your personal feelings toward the parent in the advertised message.

- Circles #1
- Circles #2
- Circles #3
- Circles #4
- Circles #5
- Circles #6
- Circles #7

**15) ATTITUDE TOWARD RECIPIENTS OF CHARITY**

Please select the phrase which best reflects your feeling about the donation you gave toward the family depicted in the ad that you just read. Answer questions #4-7 as if situation regarding the familiarity of your relationship with the recipient were true.

Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither agree or disagree,  
Somewhat Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- I gave begrudgingly (with reservations).
- I gave less than I should, but give it cheerfully.
- I gave but only because I was asked.
- I gave but would have done so anyway, before being asked.
- I gave believing the recipient will be told that I am a donor.
- I gave even though the recipient does not know my identity, but I will be told their identity.
- I gave though neither party knows the other's identity.
- I gave to enable the recipient to become self-reliant.

#### 16) **BASIS FOR ATTITUDES**

This is the same advertisement that you read earlier. Please answer each of the following six questions regarding your attitudes toward the family who are depicted and described in the ad. Please give us your first impression.

Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither agree or disagree,  
Somewhat Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- My opinions about people who ask for charity mainly are based on whether I have positive or negative feeling toward them.
- My opinions about people who ask for charity mainly are based on how I will feel if I decide to contribute or not.
- My opinions about people who ask for charity mainly is based on my judgment of how likely it is that my contribution will be helpful, effective, or beneficial.
- My opinions about people who ask for charity mainly are based on how well I understand their experience and understand the consequences of their situation.
- My opinions about people who asked for are mainly based on my concern that we safeguard the welfare of all people in our society.
- My opinions about people who asked for, or need, charity are mainly are based on my moral beliefs about how things should be.

#### **ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHERS**

- 17) Next, tell us about your attitudes or feeling about yourself, and your relationship to others.

Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither agree or disagree,  
Somewhat Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- I'd rather depend on myself than others.

- I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
- I often do "my own thing."
- My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.
- It is important that I do my job better than others.
- Winning is everything.
- Competition is the law of nature.
- When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

#### **ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHERS continued**

18) Next, tell us about your attitudes or feeling about yourself and your relationship to others.

Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- I would feel proud if a coworker gets a prize,
- The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
- To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
- I feel good when I cooperate with others.
- Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
- It is my duty to take care of my family, even if I have to sacrifice what I want.
- Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.
- It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my group.

#### **ATTITUDES TOWARD CHARITY**

Please click on the circle closest to the word or phrase that best describes your feelings about charity. If you feel your choice is closely related to the one or the other end of the scale then you should click-select close to that end. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items as we are interested in your first impressions.

- 19) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:
- Very Important
  - Important
  - Neither
  - Unimportant
  - Not at all important

Charitable causes which aid a person living in poverty outside your community is:

- Very Important
- Important
- Neither
- Unimportant
- Not at all important

20) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:

- Very Boring
- Boring
- Neither
- Interesting
- Very Interesting

Charitable causes which aid a person living in poverty outside your community is:

- Very Boring
- Boring
- Neither
- Interesting
- Very Interesting

21) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:

- Highly Relevant
- Somewhat Relevant
- Neither
- Somewhat Irrelevant
- Highly Irrelevant

Charitable causes which aid a person living in poverty outside your community is:

- Highly Relevant
- Somewhat Relevant
- Neither
- Somewhat Irrelevant
- Highly Irrelevant

22) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:

- Very Exciting
- Somewhat Exciting
- Neither

- Somewhat Unexciting
- Not at all exciting

Charitable causes which aid a person living in poverty outside your community is:

- Very Exciting
- Somewhat Exciting
- Neither
- Somewhat Unexciting
- Not at all exciting

23) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:

- Means nothing at all to me
- Somewhat Meaningless
- Neither
- Somewhat Meaningful
- Means a lot to me

Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty outside your community is:

- Means nothing at all to me
- Somewhat Meaningless
- Neither
- Somewhat Meaningful
- Means a lot to me

24) Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty within your community is:

- Very Appealing
- Somewhat Appealing
- Neither
- Somewhat Unappealing
- Very Unappealing

Charitable causes which aid people living in poverty outside your community is:

- Very Appealing
- Somewhat Appealing
- Neither
- Somewhat Unappealing
- Very Unappealing

## **RELIGION**

25) This is the final set of questions. Please share your attitudes about religion by selecting the point on a 7-point scale in response to the following questions.

Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- My faith involves all my life.
- One should seek God's guidance when making important decision.
- In my life I experience the presence of the Divine.
- My faith sometimes restricts my actions.
- Nothing is as important as serving God as best I know how.
- I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
- My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
- It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.
- Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
- Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.

Please enter your e-mail address if you want a copy of the final report. Note that your name and address will be separated from your previous answers to maintain the confidentiality of your responses: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation in the study. The objective of the study is to identify the message design elements and language that evoke the most charitable intentions and behaviors among prospective donors which are theorized to differ by nature of the perceived personal relationship of the donor to the recipient, and by the urgency of the appeal. Your responses will help advance our understanding of how people make decision regarding humanitarian aid.

If you have any more questions or would like to talk further about the study, please contact researcher Clay Dedeaux at [dedeauxc@msu.edu](mailto:dedeauxc@msu.edu).

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened someplace else.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, to lose their jobs.

You know these good people however they won't ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

You also know these people work hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children; however they now face eviction from their home and struggle to put more than one hot meal on the dinner table. These responsible parents urgently seek new job and skills; motivated knowing their child's suffering extends into school time, too hungry to pay attention to the teacher.



Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families Helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**

<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 4. Stimuli Material, MC1, Treatment 1.



# Give

so that she can live to her full potential.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people, including your friends and neighbors, to lose their jobs. You know these good people however they won't ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

You also know these people work hard to provide a good home and quality school for their children. Though they lack money today these parents are even more concerned their children risk falling behind at school which will negatively affect their skills and reduce their chances later in life for good jobs and admission to college.



Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families Helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 5. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 2.

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened someplace else.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. Many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances don't have the job skills needed for the few remaining jobs during this economic crisis. You know these good people however they are reluctant to admit they need to ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

You also know these people work hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children; however they are forced to delay their dreams for success. They face the threat of eviction from their home, and struggle to put hot food on the dinner table. They are anxious and distressed, yet motivated, to find work knowing their child's suffering extends into school time, too hungry to pay attention to instructions.



We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families Helping Families shares  
your value for independence as  
the key to success.**

<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 6. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 3.

# Give

so that she can live to her full potential.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. The poor economy has forced many of your neighbors, friends, and close acquaintances to lose their jobs. You know these good people however they are too proud and reluctant to admit they lost a job and need money to pay for food and shelter.

These families share your values of hard work, independence and justice. They want the same things that you do: A comfortable home and high quality school for their children. Though they lack necessities today these parents are motivated to find work because a lack of money for food may cause their children to fall short of their potential, reducing their chances later in life for higher learning and fulfilling jobs.



We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families Helping Families shares your value for independence as the key to success.**

<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 7. Stimuli Material, MC1, Treatment 4.

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened someplace else.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. You won't recognize these families as they are not your neighbors, yet their problems are not so strange. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people to lose their jobs, and now they must ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

These men and women work hard, just as you do, to provide a safe home and good school for their children. Their unemployment check, even at the highest amount, is not enough to pay for household necessities. The parents experience pain knowing that lack of money for food and warmth hurts their child enough during school time that they can't pay attention to the teacher.



Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families Helping Families teaches  
that hard work leads to success.**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 8. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 5.

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened someplace else.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. You won't recognize these families as they are not your neighbors, yet their problems are not so strange. Many people who lost jobs don't have the skills needed for the few remaining jobs during this economic crisis and now must ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

These families work hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children; however they now face eviction from their home and struggle to put more than one hot meal on the dinner table. Parents are anxious and distressed yet motivated to find work knowing their child's suffering extends into school time, too hungry to pay attention to instructions.



We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families Helping Families shares  
your value for independence as  
the key to success.**

<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 9. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 6.

# Give

so that she can live to her full potential.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. You won't recognize these families as they are not your neighbors, yet their problems are not so strange. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people to lose their jobs, and now they must ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

These men and women work hard, just as you do, to provide a safe home and good school for their children. Their unemployment check, even at the highest amount, is not enough to pay for household necessities. These parents experience pain in knowing that lack of money for food may cause their children to fall behind other kids at school, reducing their chances, later in life, for admission to college, and good jobs.



Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families Helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 10. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 7.

# Give

so that she can live to her full potential.



**Families Helping Families**



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in YOUR community. You won't recognize these families as they are not your neighbors, yet their problems are not so strange. Many people who lost jobs don't have the skills needed for the few remaining jobs during this economic crisis and now must ask for money to pay for food and shelter.

These families share your values of hard work, independence and justice. They want the same things that you do: A comfortable home and high quality school for their children. Though they lack necessities today these parents are motivated to find work because a lack of money for food may cause their children to fall short of their potential, reducing their chances later in life for higher learning and fulfilling jobs.



We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families Helping Families shares your value for independence as the key to success.**

<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 11. Stimuli Material, MC 1, Treatment 8.

## Your donation pays for the food that keeps a student alert and ready for school.



I am Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of jobs across so many important industries has immediately and drastically forced many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, into a financial and family crisis like none they've ever experienced.

*"Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher."*

Suddenly unemployed men and women who are used to working hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children, while helping their neighbors, are threatened with home eviction and an inability to provide hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher.



You know these people from your neighborhood and realize they are too proud to ask for the money needed to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. They need financial aid during their job search. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.



**Families Helping Families**

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**Families helping Families teaches  
that hard work leads to success.  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>**

Figure 12. Stimuli Material, MC 2, Treatment 1.



# A hungry school-age child is unfairly handicapped for life.

Your donation feeds a student so they have an opportunity to live up to their lifelong abilities.



*"School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet."*



**Families Helping Families**

copyright © 2009 Clay Dedaux

I am Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of jobs across so many important industries has immediately and drastically forced many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, into a financial and family crisis like none they've ever experienced.

Suddenly unemployed men and women who are used to working hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children, while helping their neighbor, are threatened with home eviction, and an inability to provide hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher. School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet.

You know these people from your neighborhood and realize they are too proud to ask for the money needed to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. They need financial aid during their job search. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**

<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 13. Stimuli Material, MC 2, Treatment 2.

## She needs your charity to keep her school age kids feed and focused.



*"Parents are concerned to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher."*



**Families Helping Families**

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I am Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of jobs across so many important industries has suddenly and dramatically changed the lives of people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, who are experiencing a financial and family emergency like never before.

Your neighbors share the community's value for hard work with a goal of financial independence, while finding time to assist others, but now are threatened with home eviction and a struggle to provide food for their kids. Parents are concerned to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher.

You know these people from the neighborhood and realize they are reluctant to admit they need to ask for money to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. These parents need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families helping Families share  
your values as the keys to success**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 14. Stimuli Material, MC2, Treatment 3.

## Your charity feeds a child so they can concentrate on their lessons and not their hunger.



*"School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet."*



**Families Helping Families**

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I am Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of jobs across so many important industries has suddenly and dramatically changed the lives of people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, who are experiencing a financial and family emergency like never before.

Your neighbors share the community's value for hard work with a goal of financial independence, while finding time to assist others, but now are threatened with home eviction and a struggle to provide food for their kids. Parents are concerned to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher. School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet.

You know these people from the neighborhood and realize they are reluctant to admit they need to ask for money to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. These parents need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families helping Families share  
your values as the keys to success**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 15. Stimuli Material, MC 2, Treatment 4.

## Your donation pays for the food that keeps a student alert and ready for school.



*"Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher."*



**Families Helping Families**

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I am Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Donors often help their family and neighbors when hit by job loss, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of hardworking who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Some of these people have customs and language different from ours, yet their problems are very real and simple to understand: they urgently need money to pay for food and shelter.

These families work hard to provide a good home, healthy meals, and quality education for their children, but now are threatened with home eviction as parents struggle to cook hot and nutritious food more than once a week. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic recession, so we are asking for them. These parents need financial aid while they seek new skills and jobs. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 16. Stimuli Material, MC 2, Treatment 5.

## Your donation pays for the food that keeps a student alert and ready for school.



*"School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet."*



**Families Helping Families**

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I am Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Donors often help their family and neighbors when hit by job loss, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of hardworking who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Some of these people have customs and language different from ours, yet their problems are very real and simple to understand: they need money to pay for food and shelter.

These families work hard to provide a good home, healthy meals, and quality education for their children, but now are threatened with home eviction as parents struggle to cook hot and nutritious food more than once a week. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher. School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic recession, so we are asking for them. These parents need financial aid while they seek new skills and jobs. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families helping Families teaches that hard work leads to success.**  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 17. Stimuli Material, MC2, Treatment 6.

## She needs your charity to keep her school age kids feed and focused.



*"Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher."*



**Families Helping Families**  
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I am Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Donors often help their family and neighbors when times get tough, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of hardworking who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Some of these people have customs and language dissimilar to ours, yet their problems are not so strange: they urgently need money to pay for basic living expenses.

These families work hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children, but their unemployment check is not enough to pay for household necessities. They now face eviction from their home, and struggle to put a hot meal on the dinner table. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic emergency, so we are asking for them. These parents need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families helping Families share  
your values as the keys to success  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>**

Figure 18. Stimuli Material, MC2, Treatment 7.

## Your charity feeds a child so they can concentrate on their lessons and not their hunger.



*"The children of our city risk falling behind now, and later in life when competing for entry into a good college and satisfying job."*



**Families Helping Families**

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I am Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Donors often help their family and neighbors when times get tough, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of hardworking who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Some of them have customs and language dissimilar to ours, yet their problems are not so strange: they need money to pay for basic living expenses.

These families work hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children, but their unemployment check is not enough to pay for household necessities. They now face eviction from their home and struggle to put more food on the table. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher. The children of our city risk falling behind now, and later in life when competing for entry into a good college and satisfying job.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic emergency, so we are asking for them. Parents need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families helping Families share  
your values as the keys to success  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>**

Figure 19. Stimuli Material, MC 2, Treatment 8.

# Poverty:

It used to never happen *here*.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

## **Your Neighbor Needs Help.**



*"Your friends and neighbors are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school."*

My name is Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, to lose their jobs.

Parents used to working hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children are threatened with home eviction, and unable to cook more than one hot and nutritious meal a week for their kids. Your friends and neighbors are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school.

Your neighbors are too proud to ask for money needed to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. They need financial aid during their job search. Our immediate needs include rent



assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Neighbors helping Neighbors**

in a time of crisis.

<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 20. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 1.



# Give

so *our children* can live to their full potential.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

## Your Neighbor Needs Help.



My name is Lisa Smith and I am director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. The loss of automobile industry jobs, outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries and the banking crisis has forced many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances, to lose their jobs.

*"The problem shows up in lower individual grades and lower district assessment scores. The long-term risk is that many of our students will end up in low paying jobs, far short of their ability."*

Parents used to working hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children are threatened with home eviction, and unable to cook more than one hot and nutritious meal a week for their kids. Your friends and neighbors are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school. The problem shows up in lower individual grades and lower district assessment scores. The long-term risk is that many of our students will end up in low paying jobs, far short of their ability.

Your neighbors are too proud to ask for money needed now to secure their child's future well-being, so we are asking for them.



They need financial aid during their job search. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Neighbors helping Neighbors**  
secure the future.

<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 21. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 2.

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened *someplace else*.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

## **Your Neighbor Needs Help.**



*"Your friends and neighbors are emotionally distressed for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school."*

My name is Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances don't have the job skills needed for the few remaining jobs during this economic crisis.

Parents who make a great effort to provide a secure home for their children are threatened with eviction and unable to prepare hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Your friends and neighbors are emotionally distressed for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school.

Your neighbors are reluctant to admit they need money to pay for food and shelter, so we are asking for them. Your friends need support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially

concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.



**Neighbors helping Neighbors**  
in a time of need.  
<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

Figure 22. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 3.

# Give

so *our children* can make the most of their lives.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

## **Your Neighbor Needs Help.**



My name is Lisa Smith, director of a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving families living in our community. Many people, including your friends, neighbors and acquaintances don't have the job skills needed for the few remaining jobs during this economic crisis.

*"The eventual risk is that too many of our children will end up underemployed and dissatisfied with low paying jobs, far short of their full potential"*

Parents who make a great effort to provide a secure home for their children are threatened with eviction and unable to prepare hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Your friends and neighbors are emotionally distressed for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school. Lost household income causes instability in the home and hurts a school age child's ability to pace with other students. The eventual risk is that too many of our children will end up underemployed and dissatisfied with low paying jobs, far short of their full potential.

Your neighbors are reluctant to ask for help needed now to protect their child's chances later in life that, so we are asking for them. Your friends need support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.



**Neighbors helping Neighbors**  
secure the future.  
<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

Figure 23. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 4.

# Poverty:

It used to never happen *here*.



Families Helping Families

## Help A Stranger In Need.



*"Parents are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school."*

My name is Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving local families. Donors often help their family and neighbors when hit by job loss, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of men and women who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Their customs and language may be difficult to understand, yet their problems are simple to understand: they urgently need money to pay for food and shelter.

Adults used to working hard to provide a good home, healthy meals, and quality education for their children, but now are threatened with home eviction as parents struggle to cook hot and nutritious food more than once a week. Parents are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic recession, so we are asking for them. These parents need



financial aid while they seek new skills and jobs. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families helping Families**  
extending help in at time of crisis.  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 24. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 5.

# Give

so new children in *our community*  
can live to their full potential.



Families Helping Families

## Help A *Stranger* In Need.



My name is Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving local families. Donors often help their family and neighbors when hit by job loss, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of men and women who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Their customs and language may be difficult to understand, yet their problems are simple to understand: they need money to pay for food and shelter.

*"The problem shows up in lower individual grades and lower district assessment scores. The long-term risk is that many students will end up in low paying jobs, far short of their ability"*

Adults used to working hard to provide a good home and quality education for their children, are now threatened with home eviction, and an inability to provide hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Parents are frightened and worried for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school. The problem shows up in lower individual grades and lower district assessment scores. The long-term risk is that many students will end up in low paying jobs, far short of their ability.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to secure their child's future, so we are



asking for them. These parents need financial aid while they seek new skills and jobs. Our immediate needs include rent assistance for 20 families, hot meals for 100, transportation for 75, and medical services for 80. These families need your donation of money today.

**Families helping Families**  
secure the future.  
<http://donate.sosfamily.org>

Figure 25. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 6.

# Poverty:

It used to be a problem  
that happened *someplace else*.



Families Helping Families

## Help A Stranger In Need.



*"Your friends and neighbors are emotionally distressed for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school."*

My name is Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving local families. Donors often help their family and neighbors when times get tough, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of workers who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Their customs and language may be strange, yet their problems are not so strange: they urgently need money to pay for basic living expenses.

Adults who make a great effort to provide a secure home for their children are threatened with eviction and unable to prepare hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Your friends and neighbors are emotionally distressed for their children who leave home too hungry to pay attention at school.

You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed to pay for food and shelter during this economic emergency, so we are asking for them. These parents



need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.

**Families helping Families**  
in a time of need.  
<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

Figure 26. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 7.

# Give

so our children can make the most of their lives.



Families Helping Families

## Help A Stranger In Need.



*"School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet."*

My name is Lisa Smith, director of a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving local families. Donors often help their family and neighbors when times get tough, but please remember to be generous to the hundreds of workers who lost jobs just after moving to our city. Their customs and language may be strange, yet their problems are not so strange: they need money to pay for basic living expenses.

Adults make a great effort to provide a secure home for their children are threatened with eviction and unable to prepare hot and nutritious meals for their kids. Parents are emotionally distressed to know their children are often too hungry to pay attention to the teacher. School children in our community may fail now and end up underemployed in minimum wage jobs, struggling to make ends meet.

**You don't know these people, which mean they can't directly ask you for money needed now to protect their child's chances later in life, so we are asking for them.**

**Parents need our support while they seek new skills and jobs. We are especially concerned about meeting the needs of families who just lost jobs but don't qualify for public assistance. These families deserve your charity today.**



**Families helping Families**  
secure the future.  
<http://charity.sosfamily.org>

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Figure 27. Stimuli Material, ME, Treatment 8

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