

# A Review of Research on Charitable Donation Behavior based on Time and Money Perspectives

Chen Zhao

School of Shanghai University, Shanghai 200000, China

## Abstract

**Time and money are two distinct resources that can cause humans to behave in complex and unique ways. Donation time is one of the categories of charitable giving. However, current review articles on charitable giving primarily focus on monetary donations; no article has yet summarized and contrasted the two types of donations. In this work, the pertinent literature from the CNKI and Web of Science databases is collected, the influencing variables and subsequent outcomes that lead to the differences between the two types of research are sorted, and a research viewpoint is given.**

## Keywords

**Charitable Donation; Time; Money.**

## 1. Introduction

It is a traditional virtue of the Chinese people to be charitable and to help the poor and needy. People have given charitable donations more attention because of the COVID-19 outbreak and the rise in natural calamities in recent years. According to the 2021 Charity Blue Book: China Charity Development Report, the national social organization donation income reached 119.25 billion yuan, an increase of 12.6%; in terms of volunteerism, the total number of registered volunteers reached 192 million in 2020, an increase of 23.87% over the previous year; and the accumulated time of volunteering increased by 63.98% over the previous year. The development momentum of China's charity sector is good.

At the same time, scholars pay attention to philanthropy. The current review articles on donating behavior mainly focus on money (Jin et al., 2019). Because of the lack of attention to another essential type of donation, time donation, we have searched articles on the CNKI and web of science using keywords like "donate time" and "donate money". We read the abstracts of the articles, screened out the articles highly related to money donation and time donation for summarization, and sorted out the two types of donation behaviors of individuals. This paper makes up for the shortcomings of existing research and looks forward to future research to promote the development of individual philanthropy in China.

## 2. Types of Charitable Donation

Giving to charity is the practice of investing money or other resources to help those in need while receiving little or no compensation in return (Gao et al., 2017). Academics often categorize charitable donation into two types: money and time, based on the resources invested. Donating money refers to individuals providing help to others financially (e.g., donating money through a charity platform); donating time is an activity that improves the well-being of others by spending time (e.g., spending time with empty nesters, participating in volunteer services such as aid education) (Kandaurova & Lee, 2019). Due to the differences in people's perceptions of the concepts of time and money, there is also complexity in people's behavior when donating these two resources. From the perspectives of antecedents, outcomes, and processes, we will compare the existing studies on individual donation of time and money.

### 3. Factors Affecting Donation Money and Donation Time

#### 3.1. Donor Characteristics

(1) Demographic factors: People's giving habits are influenced by their age. According to studies, elderly people are more likely than younger people to volunteer their time for people who are close to them (Gong et al., 2019). In addition, a study of charitable giving behavior among cross-national college students found that students with religious values were more likely to volunteer and students with higher incomes were more likely to donate money. And according to the civil society model, students in traditional model countries (e.g., China, India) and corporatist model countries (e.g., Belgium, Netherlands) are more likely to volunteer than students in liberal model countries (e.g., the United States, Australia) (Kang et al., 2011).

(2) Role-identity: Role-identity has been shown repeatedly to be an important predictor of decision making, and it can be defined as how important a role is to an individual (Turner, 1978). A study by Lee and colleagues (1999) showed that role-identity was a significantly higher predictor of time donation than of money donation, possibly because volunteering is a social activity and the identity-behavioral intentions are relevant to social relationships.

(3) Moral identity: The more positive effect of moral identity on time donation (vs. money donation) has been demonstrated many times. People with high moral identity are more likely to donate time rather than money in their donation decisions (Reed et al., 2007). Activating moral identity increases an individual's willingness to donate time when time is a scarce resource or when donating time is unpleasant, and furthermore, activating moral identity also leads to higher time donation rather than monetary donation when an individual's trait moral identity is high (Levy et al., 2013).

(4) Attitudes and personal norms: Attitudes are an important influence on behavioral intentions. It was found that individuals' attitudes toward charitable giving positively influence the intention to give money donation, while there was no effect on time donation. Moreover, personal norms towards charitable giving were only found to have a positive effect on monetary giving (Chen et al., 2019).

(5) Social exclusion: VR has been used in charitable giving scenarios, and research has shown that it benefits charitable giving (both time and money). However, when individuals experience social exclusion, this effect occurs only for time giving and has no significant impact on monetary giving (Kandaurova & Lee, 2019).

(6) Power: Power is an essential element of social interaction (Fiske, 1993), and it is asymmetrical control over others and valuable resources (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Research has shown that high-power individuals are less willing to give money than low-power individuals, but because they have stronger illusory control over time, they will show a higher action orientation when faced with an appeal for time donation (Liu, 2019). However, the effect of power on charitable giving is complex. The motivation for hoping for power is different from having power itself, and individuals with subordinate needs are more inclined to donate time rather than money than those with dominant needs (Johnson & Park, 2021).

(7) Prior donation experience: Long-term volunteers were shown to donate more than new volunteers in a study of participants in nonprofit organizations. For new volunteers, donation money reduces the time of volunteering, while this effect does not occur for long-term volunteers, who maintain high-time contributions regardless of their previous money donation (Yeomans & Al-Ubaydli, 2018).

(8) Karma beliefs: According to karmic beliefs, whether one's actions are good or harmful, they will have an effect on their future selves. People with strong karma beliefs respond more positively to altruistic appeals to charitable advertising, but this response is more pronounced in terms of time donations than monetary donations (Kulow & Kramer, 2016).

### 3.2. Perception of Time and Money

(1) Construal level: Thinking about the concept of money activates individuals' more concrete modes of thinking, and thinking about time activates individuals' abstract modes of thinking. When donating money, a concrete framework is better; when donating time, an abstract framework is better (Macdonnell & White, 2015).

(2) Temporal distance: As mentioned above, money is a concrete and fixed-structured resource, while time is an abstract and ambiguous resource. Temporal distance can influence individuals' construal level and thus their preference for the type of charitable giving. That is, when individuals are asked to make a donation in the near future, they will prefer to donate money over time, whereas when individuals have enough time to decide on their donation, they will prefer to donate time over money (Song & Kim, 2020).

(3) Rational/emotional thinking: Inquiring about time and money activates various mindsets in people. When reminded of the concept of money, individuals' value-maximizing mindset may be activated, whereas time reminders may activate individuals' emotional mindset. This hypothesis is supported by the finding that when consumers were first asked about their intention to donate time, they subsequently donated more money to charity, whereas they donated less when asked about their intention to donate money first (Liu & Aaker, 2008). Interestingly, even donations requiring time can stimulate the person's profit-maximizing attitude when calculating the monetary value of time, which in turn diminishes their prosocial behavior (Li et al., 2015).

(4) Perceived control: According to a recent study, people behave asymmetrically when it comes to donating money and time. People are more likely to give their time than their money since time is an intrapersonally held resource and they feel more in control of how they spend it. And this asymmetry between time and money is mitigated when increasing people's sense of control over donated items (Malkoc, 2022).

(5) Awe: When an individual is confronted with something unusually large and their habitual reference in some area is challenged or beyond their current understanding, they experience awe. Positive and negative awe are two categories of awe. Positive awe is associated with calmness and a greater sense of control, while negative awe is associated with fear and a sense of powerlessness. It was found that in Chinese culture, both positive and negative awe can facilitate monetary donations. The time donation, on the other hand, was unique. Positive awe experiences can encourage giving of one's time, but negative awe prevents it (Guan et al., 2019).

### 3.3. Advertising Information Framework

(1) Altruistic and egoistic appeals: In egoistic appeals, the donor is the primary beneficiary of the charitable act, and the advertisement claims that their good deeds can "help themselves" or "achieve self-interest"; in altruistic charity advertisements, individuals are encouraged to "help others." The recipient is the primary beneficiary of the good deed, and this type of giving is not rewarded, even at the expense of one's own welfare. Ego-motivated people will donate with as little psychological or behavioral commitment as possible, and the level of commitment to donate money is lower compared to donating time. Therefore, egoistic appeals are more effective in increasing consumers' intention to donate money (vs. donate time). In contrast, altruistic-motivated consumers are concerned about their moral image and express themselves by doing good deeds. Compared to donating money, individuals who donate time are perceived as having more ethical behavior. Thus, altruistic appeals are more effective in increasing consumers' intention to donate time (vs. donate money) (Kim, 2014).

(2) Warm and competent appeals: In charity advertising, both warmth and competence appeals are common. Advertising appeals are also classified into warmth and competence based on two dimensions of social perception. Warmth appeal, which in charity advertising stands for emotional elements like friendliness, socializing, morality, and caring, stimulates people's

desire to connect with society and influences their decision to devote more time to charitable giving. While competence appeal, which is related to messages such as efficiency, diligence, and bravery, activates the individual's sense of competition and the pursuit of egocentricity and the maximization of benefits in decision making, thus favoring monetary donations in donation decisions (Zhang et al., 2019).

(3) Recipients' characteristics: In charity advertisements, we often see descriptions of recipients, some showing recipients who are in distress and others who have been helped by others. The portrayal of needy beneficiaries evokes personal distress and a desire to relieve negative emotions in a quicker, easier way, leading to the choice of monetary donation. In contrast, the portrayal of helped beneficiaries creates empathic concern for donors to understand the recipient's feelings, which leads them to choose more self-expressive and emotional ways of donating time (Kim, 2014).

### **3.4. Social and Natural Environment**

(1) Weather factors: Haze predicts opposing time and monetary donations. On the one hand, as one nears death, the importance and meaningfulness of money decrease, while also increasing the motivation to focus on legacy and engage in some meaningful donation behavior. On the other hand, when death signals are highlighted, time becomes scarcer and the value of time increases. As a result, people value their time more and decrease their willingness to donate time (Li et al., 2020).

(2) Social context: Information about others' giving has been shown to have a positive predictive effect on money donation, but there are different results with regard to volunteering. Research has shown that showing others' volunteer hours does not encourage more volunteering behaviors. And even when individuals' volunteer hours are at a low level, any level (moderate, high, very high) of information about others' volunteering negatively affects motivation to engage in volunteering (Moseley et al., 2018).

## **4. The Result of Donating Money and Time**

### **4.1. Donation Participation Enthusiasm**

In a study about village opera, the authors found that for low-income groups of villagers, the original model of accepting only monetary donations made villagers' cooperation difficult, but in a model that encouraged giving of time, it was able to promote villagers' motivation to cooperate (Chen et al., 2017).

### **4.2. Others' Evaluation**

What will others say about the individual's behavior of donating time or money? The study found that even though time and money are objectively equal in value, time will still be considered as a more expensive resource than money. People will acquire a higher moral evaluation by donating time. Furthermore, people with time donation experience have an advantage when it comes to attracting appointments and recruiting (Johnson & Park, 2021).

The individual donation behavior of entrepreneurs is also considered in the current study. The study found that different types of entrepreneurs' donations will affect consumers' evaluation of them. In terms of warmth and competence cognition, consumers have a higher ability perception of entrepreneurs who donate money and a higher affinity perception of entrepreneurs who donate time (Huang et al., 2012). In addition, compared with donating money, consumers have higher cognitive and emotional recognition of entrepreneurs who donate time (Wang et al., 2021).

### 4.3. Psychological Benefits

A recent study examined whether giving money and giving time can bring different psychological benefits. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the level of happiness in terms of money donation or donation time. In addition, in daily measurement, there seems to be no significant difference between donating money and donating time in obtaining basic psychological needs, but people are more inclined to retain the experience of time donation (vs. money donation) in memory (Zhang et al., 2021).

## 5. Conclusion

This paper focuses on different types of charitable donations. Based on previous studies, in terms of antecedents, most scholars paid attention to the characteristics of donors, emotional reactions, different thinking modes activated by money and time, and advertising appeals. In terms of psychological mechanisms, illusory control, action orientation, profit maximization mentality and emotional mentality, social connection and individual competition, personal distress and empathic concern, mortality salience, and sense of control are often considered as mediators. In terms of results, there are differences in the willingness to donate, others' evaluations, and individual psychological benefits brought by the two types of donations.

The existing research provides a wealth of literature support for the follow-up research, but there are also some problems to be discussed: (1) In terms of donor characteristics, consumer experiences are considered to be important factors affecting prosocial behavior, such as some self-threatening experiences (Klein, 2003; Trudel et al., 2020), but it is still necessary to further explore this effect in the situations of donating time and donating money. (2) How charity advertisements are publicized will affect consumers' donation decisions. Charity advertising appeals are not only reflected in egoistic/altruistic appeals or warmth/competent appeals, but also the person in the advertising copy may be an influencing factor, such as whether "I" or "we" will have an impact on the type of donation.

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