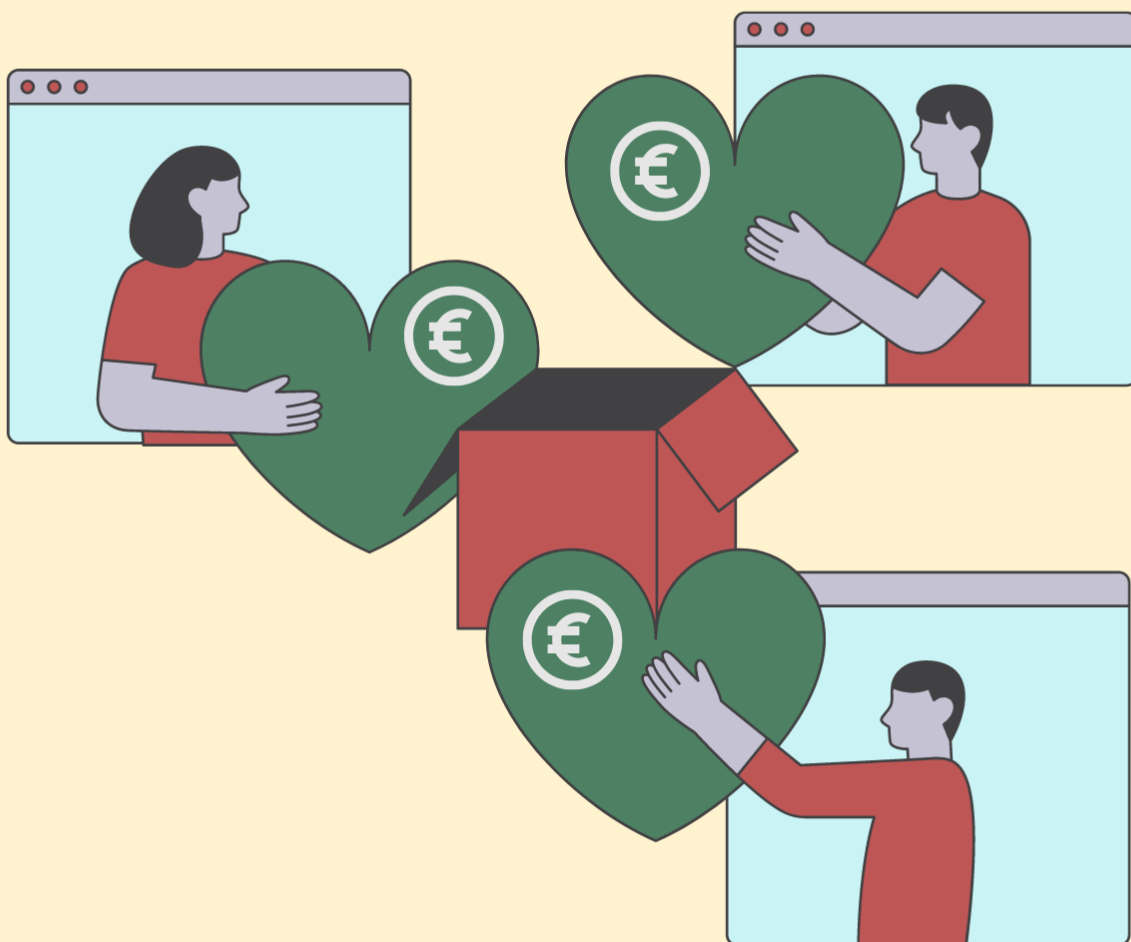


# You should give because it feels good.

The effects of social norms and anticipated emotion  
on donation intention.

by Krisztina Dávid

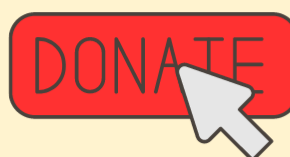


**Master Thesis**

**Supervisors:**

Dr. Ardion Beldad

Drs. Mark Tempelman



**Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS)  
Master Communication Studies**

University of Twente.

April/2023

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The effects of social norms and anticipated emotion on donation intention.

**Master Thesis**

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**Name:** Krisztina Dávid (S2627213)

**Study:** Master in Communication Science

**Specialization:** Technology and Communication

**Faculty:** Behavioral Management and Social Sciences

**Supervisors:**

Dr. Ardion Beldad

Drs. Mark Tempelman

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**UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.**

# Abstract

**Purpose.** Many non-profit organizations seek new ways to fund their projects to aid and improve the lives of people and the environment with increasingly scarce resources. Non-profits could increase their effectiveness using cooperatives with for-profit businesses through their cause-related marketing events, such as checkout charities in an online setting. While there is evidence that these cooperatives benefit the stakeholders involved, there is a lack of knowledge on how the presented donation appeals work in this context. Thus, this study is focused on exploring the online nudging effect of two persuasive messaging in donation appeals, social norm and anticipated emotion-based, on the donation intention of customers.

**Design and methodology.** An online experiment with a 3 (injunctive norm vs descriptive norm vs no norms) x 2 (anticipated emotion vs no emotion) between-subjects design was employed in this study. The mediating role of inference of manipulating intent (IMI), the moderator role of social conformity, and personal norm as covariant was also explored. Through an online questionnaire, the data was collected from participants (N=227) around the world using convenience and snowball sampling.

**Results.** The results of the statistical analyses showed no main and interaction effects between social norm-based messages and anticipated emotion-based messages on donation intention. No moderating effect of social conformity was found between the social norm-based messages and donation intention relationship. Similarly, no mediation effect of IMI was found between the donation appeal types and donation intention. However, IMI did have a significant impact on intention. While when controlled for, personal norms did not significantly affect the relationship between the donation appeal types and donation intention, it substantially impacted the intention.

**Discussion.** The appeal types' lack of effectiveness may be related to the channel differences of the online versus offline context, the message's valence-congruency and the norms' salience. While the results of IMI and personal norms could indicate that if the message of the charity request is not persuasive, people rely on their moral code when deciding to be charitable.

**Keywords:** Online nudging, social norms, anticipated emotions, donation intention, online checkout.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Monetary donations are often the primary income for many non-profit organizations that aim to improve and aid people and environments affected by social or environmental issues (Ressler et al., 2020). As such, the number of non-profits is high, with approximately ten million worldwide (Conrardy, 2020), with numerous projects and events that need funding. Consequently, there are limited resources for which most non-profits must compete to remain active and relevant (Castaneda et al., 2007).

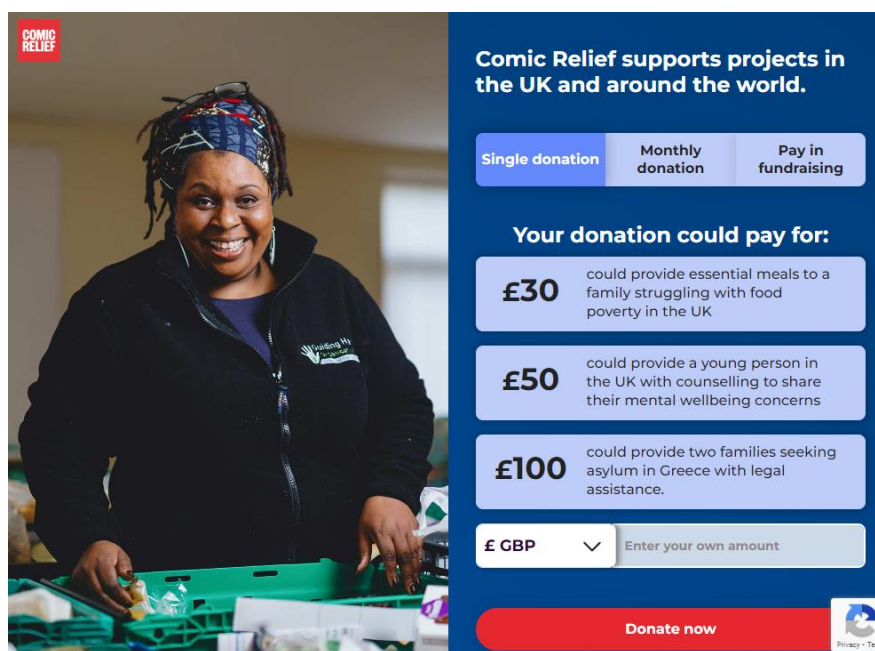
Non-profit sectors typically employ social marketing to create value to improve upon social and environmental issues using commercial marketing techniques (Wood, 2012). With the Internet, online channels opened new opportunities for non-profits to expand their social marketing campaigns (Hsu et al., 2021). However, one of the significant setbacks of online channels is that people receive a copious amount of information daily; thus, non-profits must find new ways to become noticeable to increase website visitations and elicit donors to donate (Pittarello & Kogut, 2021).

So, how can non-profits reach their target audience online more effectively? One strategy could include cooperation with for-profit organizations. For example, in 2020, supermarket chain Sainsbury's promised to match customers' donations at the store and online checkouts and supported the non-profit organizations BBC Children in Need and Comic Relief to fund their projects (Thompson, 2021). For-profit organizations like Amazon received over three billion visitors on their online retail website in 2022, making it the most visited website worldwide (Pasquali, 2023). Thus, combining the non-profit organization's donation initiatives with the exposure that the for-profit organization could provide (through their online retail platforms) offers an opportunity for reaching new donors efficiently.

Asking for donations during checkouts at an online or offline retailer is called a 'checkout charity', whereby the customers are requested to donate to charitable causes by frontline

employees or by self-service technologies (Giebelhausen et al., 2017). While most of the literature observing this practice focuses on the offline retail setting (Castillo-Villar & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2020; Giebelhausen et al., 2017; Hepworth et al., 2021), its effect can also be observed in an online retail shopping situation (Han, 2021). Reportedly, in 2018 checkout charity projects around the US raised over 486.3 million dollars, from which the online commercial platform eBay raised 69 million dollars thought different charities (*Charity Checkout Champions 2019*, n.d.). Despite its apparent benefit for customers, for- and non-profit organizations, such as customer satisfaction, increased revenue, and donation rate (Giebelhausen et al., 2017), there are reported possible negative consequences of checkout-charities, such as lack of trust in the involved organizations (Castillo-Villar & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2020) or negative service experience (Hepworth et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be assumed that how organizations appeal to customers is necessary for the success of donation initiatives.

Appeals, such as standard donation appeals (that present information and a short request for donations) or emotional appeals, were most commonly applied with varied effectiveness (Agerström et al., 2016; Bennett, 2014; Chang & Lee, 2008). A standard donation appeal typically contains pictures (such as children living in poverty) and information about the charity context (Agerström et al., 2016). Take the following example of Comic Relief shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Comic Relief supports. (n.d). Comic Relief. Retrieved September 20, 2022, from <https://donation.comicrelief.com/cart/1YsYOwm2pHZgBUhWr8ZL13>. Screenshot by author.*

Emotion-based donation appeals have an emotionally charged message added to the request to trigger sympathy, guilt, or a sense of personal responsibility in potential donors to persuade them to donate (Bennett, 2014; Chang & Lee, 2008). In their recent social media post, UNICEF requested donations to help children suffering from the devastations of the recent floods in Pakistan. Next to a standard request, they posted a video where a 12-year-old boy described his predicament around his flood-damaged village (UNICEF [@UNICEF], 2022).

Additionally, regarding the standard and emotion-based appeals, there is some evidence that social norm-based requests could be as or more effective than the standard ones (Agerström et al., 2016). A social norm-based appeal would have an additional mention in the donation request about the number of people who have donated and how this is widely supported (Lindemans, 2018). Past research found positive effects of social norms on increasing donation intention (Agerström et al., 2016; Smith & McSweeney, 2007). However, social norm-based appeals in charity requests received little attention in the literature (Agerström et al., 2016), especially their effect in an online retail setting.

According to past research, social norm-based messages could appeal to extrinsic motives by addressing individuals' drive to receive a social reward, recognition or avoid punishment (Ariely et al., 2009; Cialdini & Trost, 1998); emotion-based messages could appeal to the intrinsic motive which relates to the drive to feel good about oneself gained from giving to a cause (Andreoni, 1989, 1990). Moreover, addressing more than one motive to donate, in this context, to the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, it is supported by some of the influential theories of persuasion (Fishbein, 1979; Petty & Brinol, 2012; Sheppard et al., 1988; Todorov et al., 2002). Thus, a joint appeal, combined with a social norm (i.e., extrinsic appeal) and an emotion-based (i.e., intrinsic appeal) appeal, will also be examined.

In this research context, the extrinsic appeal containing social norms will be examined through the focus theory of normative conduct by Cialdini et al. (1990), where they distinguish between two social norms: descriptive and injunctive. The intrinsic appeal containing an emotion-based message is examined using the 'warm glow' effect (the gained positive feeling after giving) described by Andreoni (1989). The study explicitly uses this warm glow effect as a persuasive technique by describing it as an anticipated emotion in the manipulations (see Bergquist et al., 2020). According to research, when made salient, anticipated positive emotions can nudge individuals to adjust their behaviour to attain them and avoid probable negative emotions (Baumeister et al., 2007).

This research investigates how the added social norm-based and anticipated positive emotion-based messages (or the combination of the two) in donation appeals influence the donation intention of online customers. The study results could guide non-profit and for-profit organizations when developing social marketing/donation solicitation strategies and help increase their effectiveness. Furthermore, the results would contribute to the theoretical knowledge of social norms and anticipated positive emotions' persuasiveness (or nudging effect) in the context of cause-related marketing and social marketing strategy designs. For this purpose, the current study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

*To what extent do the social norm and emotion-based messages in donation appeals influence consumers' donation intention through an online retail checkout setting?*

*To what extent does a joint appeal of social norms and emotion-based messages influence consumers' donation intention through an online retail checkout setting?*

In addition, in the context of donation appeals, previous research has found the inference of manipulative intent (IMI) to have a significant effect on the relationship between the appeal and donation behaviour and intention (Cho & Sands, 2011; Kang et al., 2022; Reinhart et al., 2007). Furthermore, regarding social norms, individuals' tendency to conform to social expectations was



found to effect norm compliance (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Schnuerch & Gibbons, 2014). Thus, this research will also examine IMI's impact as a mediator and social conformity's effect as a moderator; for this purpose, the following questions are proposed:

*To what extent does inference of manipulative intent mediate the relationship between the donation appeal types and donation intention in an online retail checkout setting?*

*To what extent does social conformity moderate the effect of social norm-based messages on donation intention when presented in an online retail checkout setting?*

To answer these research questions, a 3(descriptive norm vs injunctive norm vs no norm) x 2(anticipated positive emotion vs no emotion) online experimental design was implemented, where a questionnaire was used to gather data about the participants' donation intention in an online retail checkout setting. In addition, the study participants were approached online on different social media platforms, where they filled out a questionnaire created using Qualtrics.

Before further describing this study's intended methods, the primary constructs will be examined and outlined. As such, the persuasive effect of nudging will be explored, including its use in donation appeals, followed by social norms and emotions in a similar context, and possible mediators and moderators that could influence the design variables' effect on donation intention.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. PERSUASION THROUGH NUDGING

The choice to be charitable could be elicited from individuals with different statements and visuals (Bennett, 2014, Park & Yoon, 2022), indicating that they can be persuaded somehow. Often choices made by people are influenced by how options are shown in a particular context (Johnson et al., 2012). This effect could be related to their cognitive limitations, and as such, their rationality is constrained (Simon, 1955), leaving their decision-making to be led by different biases and heuristics,

especially when dealing with uncertainty (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). It is possible to address these influences on decision-making by designing and creating contexts, for example, digital environments (e.g., Weinmann et al., 2016), which 'nudges' people to make predictable choices and sometimes even change their behaviour (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Such design that endorses nudges to affect behaviour is also called 'choice architecture', a term coined by Thaler and Sunstein (2008). The authors argue that in such architecture, nudges are not sanctions where the desired options built by the designer are the only options but merely place that preferred option in the context so that it is preferable for the user to choose. In addition, if desired, the nudges could be avoided easily and inexpensively. Despite the apparent effectiveness of nudging labels and messages, studies warn about the possible resistance consumers might display due to their belief of being coerced into choices and to which they could react with negative emotions (Feiler et al., 2012; Grunert & Wills, 2007; Ostrom, 2000).

Nudges take different forms depending on the goal and context (Schneider et al., 2018), for example, persuading people to eat healthier with packaging or menu design (Ensaiff et al., 2015; Thorndike et al., 2014). Alternatively, nudges could also be used to convince people to get vaccinated with the use of text-based reminders (Dai et al. (2021) or protect the environment by buying and consuming sustainable products presented with ecolabels and social norm-based messages (Demarque et al., 2015).

In charitable campaigns, slogans and catchphrases are often observed to be tools to influence decision-making about donating to a cause (Park & Yoon, 2022). These messages are often emotionally charged and contain written statements and visuals (Bennett, 2014). Furthermore, according to Chang and Lee (2008), the type of emotion and content balance between message and visual is essential to consider, as they have an increased influence on donation intention (e.g., previously mentioned UNICEF online request). Alternatively, Agerström et al. (2016) found that using a social norm message (e.g., most people have contributed to the cause) in donation appeals substantially increased the monetary giving rate of university students compared to requests with

standard altruistic messaging (e.g., stating that the contribution will make a difference). Social norms or peer influence has been noted as an effective tool in eliciting donations, for example, during door-to-door charity requests (Sargeant & Hudson, 2008). While these practices are still active, with digitalization and the use of social media, peer influence is transferred to online contexts and can impact new generations to behave prosocially (Konstantinou & Jones, 2022). As such, appeals could be framed with emotions, considered an intrinsic motivator, or social norms, considered extrinsic motivators (Cecere et al., 2014; Edinger-Schons et al., 2018).

To elaborate, people are intrinsically motivated to behave in a certain way when the behaviour is considered enjoyable or satisfactory, or they expect it to be so (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). In the context of prosocial behaviour, intrinsic motivations could be closely related to the feeling of a 'warm glow' (Andreoni, 1989, p. 1447), the consciously or unconsciously expected positive emotions (e.g., happiness) gained from performing a charitable act (Andreoni, 1989, 1990). In contrast, extrinsically motivated individuals would act to receive an internal or external reward or benefit (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000) or to avoid punishment (Cialdini et al., 1990). Ryan and Deci (2000) described this motivation as driven by social or self-regulation to comply with a (social) demand or to attain some personal gain (for example, a feeling of worth, pride or reinforcing values). Regarding prosocial behaviour, the extrinsic motivation of individuals to act charitably could stem from wanting to receive social recognition or reputation as a reward (Ariely et al., 2009), conversely being viewed as not prosocial and losing out on said rewards could also be a source for said behaviour (Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

Just as decision-making about product purchase intention can be influenced by how the information about a product is designed and presented (Grunert & Wills, 2007), similarly, donation intention is affected by the charitable request phrasing and presentation in donation campaigns (Gu & Chen, 2021). Thus, based on the arguments made about nudges, using messages and cues (e.g., labels and pictures) that are simple with a meaning that is widely understood (Grunert & Wills, 2007) can increase the persuasiveness of appeals and nudge people towards socially and self-benefiting

behaviours (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Given the literature outlined in this section, donation appeals and their effects on donation intention will be examined and described through the nudging influence of two elements: the added social norm (i.e., extrinsic appeal type) and emotion-based (i.e., intrinsic appeal type) messages. Moreover, several of the most well-known theories of persuasion support the idea of addressing multiple motivators at once (Fishbein, 1979; Petty & Brinol, 2012; Sheppard et al., 1988; Todorov et al., 2002). Thus, a joint appeal is used to observe the combined effect of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators.

## 2.2. EXTRINSIC APPEAL: SOCIAL NORMS

Societies create social norms through a shared understanding that outlines the behaviours that are accepted, obligatory or prohibited (Crawford & Ostrom, 1995). These norms form through social dynamics and interactions, where members seek to receive confirmation and justification for their behaviour (Cialdini et al., 1990). Individuals may consciously or unconsciously follow norms (Nolan et al., 2008). Additionally, societal group complexities can impact the presence of norms (Ostrom, 2000). This can be due to the informal nature of social norms that lack the enforcement of formal norms of society (Hechter & Opp, 2005).

Cialdini and Trost (1998) describe social norms as an aid or shortcut to decision-making about behaviour that individuals could use to navigate certain situations. The authors Cialdini et al. (1990) add further detail to this phenomenon through the Focus Theory of Normative Conduct, which stipulates that decisions are influenced by social norms either because they outline that the behaviour is normal (descriptive norm) or expected (injunctive norm). Furthermore, the theory specifies that for any social norm to exert its influence, it must be activated when the decision is about to be made or it is in the focus of attention of the decision-making individual.

### 2.2.1. SOCIAL NORMS: THE ROLE OF INJUNCTIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE NORMS

In the context of donations concerning social norms, as described by Bekkers and Wiepking (2010), descriptive norms could mostly work through the mechanism of efficacy, which illustrates that donating is the right thing to do because it brings positive change to the selected cause. Additionally,

the authors outline injunctive norms, in the same context, as the norm that most likely works with the mechanism of reputation, which is the (negative or positive) social outcome of the donator's charitable activities.

However, the results from comparing the two norms remain inconclusive in the academic literature. For example, when it comes to descriptive norms, Lindersson et al. (2018) found that "Charitable giving intentions tend to increase when people receive information about previously made donations compared with when no such information about previous donations is given" (Lindersson et al., 2018, p. 4). Similarly, in the study by Agerström and colleagues (2016), university students who were provided with descriptive norms were likelier to donate than those who were exposed to standard altruistic appeals that the average non-profit organizations use. In contrast, in the findings of their study, the authors Smith and McSweeney (2007) found that while injunctive norms aided in predicting charitable giving intentions, descriptive norms have not. On the other hand, in the work of McAuliffe et al. (2017), when children's generosity was measured using the dictator's game (a game used to explore selfless behaviour; see Bardsley, 2007), the authors found that there was no significant difference between the influence of injunctive and descriptive norms on children's donating behaviour.

The mixed results across the studies could be related to the context in which the norm is presented and how it is presented (Cialdini et al., 1990, 2006; Everett et al., 2014; McAuliffe et al., 2017). In an online checkout context, for example, the cognitive load from arithmetic complexity caused by calculating the costs of transactions or reading further instructions (see Desrochers et al., 2019) could influence the effectiveness of the different social norm messages added in the donation appeal. Melnyk et al. (2011) found that descriptive norm messages work best on consumers' attitudes and intentions if the probability of cognitive deliberation is high. In contrast, if no such deliberation is necessary, the injunctive norm is better at eliciting behaviour change.

Furthermore, according to Cialdini and colleagues (1991), descriptive norms would be most successful if most of the population already performs the desired behaviour. Thus, to elicit change in

the conduct of others, injunctive norms could be used in any given situation since this type of norm effect does not depend on what others are doing, only on what is expected (Cialdini et al., 1991; Reno et al., 1993). In addition, from the perspective of using technology for activities (in this context, donating online), Venkatesh and Bala (2008) stipulate that consumers' perceptions could be influenced by the social group expectation of said activity, known as subjective norms. Taking the arguments mentioned above, an injunctive norm statement is expected to perform better in influencing intention in an online donation appeal than a descriptive one.

*H1a: The extrinsic donation appeals presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no extrinsic donation appeals are presented.*

*H1b: The extrinsic donation appeal with an injunctive norm will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout, where an extrinsic donation appeal with a descriptive norm is presented.*

### 2.3. INTRINSIC APPEAL: POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Charitable giving can elicit positive emotions for both the giver and the receiver (Switzer et al., 1997). Such hedonic motivations and other motivations like philanthropy and altruism were reported to be the most substantial dimension in supporting a cause (Amos et al., 2015). There are different approaches to how emotions are displayed and what reaction is expected to encourage charitable behaviour. For example, in the work of Merchant et al. (2010), the authors observed that problem statements that trigger consumers to feel negative about a presented situation would elicit positive emotions when they feel like they did something to help and enhance the possibility of future charitable intentions. This effect of altruistic behaviour has been described as the 'warm glow', which is assumed to be what individuals get from giving (Andreoni, 1989; Andreoni, 1990); such observations suggest that charitable giving could be intrinsically rewarding. The warm glow giving was brought forward to make a notion that there are no pure altruistic reasons for generous

behaviour and that people might be motivated by a more impure reason, such as feeling good about giving (Andreoni, 1990). In like manner, people strive to feel genuinely selfless, which is described in research as self-signalling (Savary et al., 2013; Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2015), or it could be that they want to be perceived as such for social rewards like reputation or recognition, termed social-signalling (Ariely et al., 2009); suggesting that individuals who engage in charity might anticipate certain positive emotions because of their action.

In this study, anticipated emotions are implemented as a persuasion technique by making it salient in the donation appeals that the act of giving will evoke positive emotions (see Bergquist et al. 2020). Most individuals imagine how they will feel when deciding to help or not if such an opportunity arises (Erlandsson et al. 2016). According to Onwezen et al. (2013), anticipated emotions affect individuals' evaluation of their social and personal norms from which intention is formed, consequently influencing behavioural choices. The authors further suggest that positive emotions are essential in developing prosocial behaviours. Similarly, Erlandsson et al. (2016) found that if someone is in a situation where the sense of responsibility is high, they anticipate guilt for not helping. In contrast, if the sense of responsibility is low, the individual anticipates a warm glow due to feeling that they did more than expected.

Research and theory about anticipated emotion have previously outlined its effect on behaviour change. In their work, Baumeister and colleagues (2007) distinguish two emotional processes through which behaviour is conducted. The 'automatic affect' describes a quick response to an emotion that can often happen without awareness, the 'conscious emotion' is within the awareness of the individual and subject of deliberation, thus considered a slower response. Within the domain of conscious emotion, individuals tend to think about and act in anticipation of a desired emotion and avoid undesired ones. As the authors explained, "Instead of emotion causing the behaviour, the behaviour is aimed at bringing about a change in one's emotional state—so the behaviour is pursuing emotion as the desired outcome." (Baumeister et al., 2007, p. 195). Thus, based on the literature mentioned in this section, reminding individuals that the act of giving would

evoke positive emotions, such as happiness or a warm glow (Andreoni, 1990), would motivate them to consider behaving in such a way that they could achieve that emotional state (Baumeister et al., 2007).

*H2: The intrinsic donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no intrinsic donation appeal is presented.*

#### 2.4. JOINT APPEAL: SOCIAL NORMS AND ANTICIPATED POSITIVE EMOTIONS

When it comes to appealing to consumers to donate, addressing more than one motive to be prosocial is supported by several influential theories of persuasion (Fishbein, 1979; Petty & Brinol, 2012; Sheppard et al., 1988; Todorov et al., 2002); in this research context in the form of a joint appeal containing both an extrinsic (social norm) and an intrinsic (anticipated positive emotion) written message. The combination of both social norm-based and positive emotion-based messages (i.e., anticipated emotion) could complement each other by alleviating the possible negative effects of social pressure by using the anticipated positive emotion (Vesely et al., 2022) as a reminder of the positive effects of donating behaviour (Dunn et al., 2008). Indeed, research has pointed out that social norms might trigger reactance in consumers because they do not like to be manipulated into decisions (Feiler et al., 2012; Grunert & Wills, 2007; Ostrom, 2000). That is, anticipated emotions will make people reevaluate their personal and social norms and change or reinforce their intention to donate (Onwezen et al., 2013). Therefore, it is expected that consumers who might feel reactance towards the social norm-based message in the donation appeal will regulate their emotions because of the anticipated emotion-based message.

When examining the social norms separately combined with the anticipated emotion, results are expected to vary according to the literature. As such, a descriptive norm message combined with an anticipated emotion-based message might cause a cognitive overload during online transactions because it warrants increased mental deliberation (Desrochers et al., 2019; Melnyk et al., 2011). While injunctive norm message combined with the anticipated emotion-based message, due to its simplicity and ability to better influence consumers' perception in any given



situation, including the use of technology (Cialdini et al., 1991; Reno et al., 1993; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008), it is expected to be a more effective joint appeal type than the previously mentioned one.

*H3a: The joint donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no joint donation appeal is presented.*

*H3b: The joint donation appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with an injunctive norm and the intrinsic appeal will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to the joint appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with a descriptive norm and the intrinsic appeal when presented at an online checkout.*

## 2.5. INFERENCES OF MANIPULATIVE INTENT AS MEDIATOR

As mentioned in this section, social norm-based and anticipated emotion-based messages could be considered persuasive techniques to influence behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2007; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2010; Bergquist et al., 2020; Cialdini et al., 1990; Crawford & Ostrom, 1995). Being persuaded to behave in some way might trigger reactance to the attempt of persuasion due to the feeling of restricted freedom of behaviour (Steindl et al., 2015).

If individuals perceive manipulative intent from a persuasive message, they could feel limitations to their freedom, thus responding with reactance and reducing the message's persuasiveness (Reinhart et al., 2007). Past research has described the inference of manipulative (IMI) intent as the "consumers inferences that the advertiser is attempting to persuade by inappropriate, unfair or manipulative means" (Campbell, 1995, p. 228). In the context of charitable giving, a study by Kang et al. (2022) compared the effects of different facial emotional expressions in charitable advertisements on donations and attitudes towards the advertisement campaigns. They found that sympathy and IMI mediate the relationship between facial expression on donation, where greater compassion turns to more significant contributions, while greater IMI decreases donation. Furthermore, the authors also observed that the high prominence of sad expressions in advertisements led to a more significant mediating effect of IMI than sympathy.

Additionally, studies have found that gain-framed messages infer less manipulative intent and reactance than loss-framed messages (Cho & Sands, 2011; Reinhart et al., 2007). Persuasive messages written in gain-frames tend to make the advantages of the proposed behaviour salient, while loss-frames describe the disadvantages when said behaviour is not done (Covey, 2014). In this research, the anticipated emotion-based message focuses on the positive emotion of charitable giving ('It feels good to donate'), explicitly indicating an advantage of the proposed behaviour.

On the other hand, messages that describe what the individuals should or ought to do (e.g., must, need, have to), as social norms indicate (Cialdini et al., 1990), could create reactance in an individual considering the forcefulness of the language of the message (Miller et al., 2007), and reduce the persuasiveness of the message (Reinhart et al., 2007).

*H4a: Inference of manipulative intent negatively mediates the effect of extrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that extrinsic donation appeal increases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn decreases donation intention.*

*H4b: Inference of manipulative intent positively mediates the effect of the intrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that the intrinsic donation appeal decreases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn increases donation intention.*

## 2.6. PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: PERSONAL NORMS AS COVARIANT

Some researchers argued that an additional norm should be considered in conjunction with social norms (Smith & McSweeney, 2007; Van Der Linden, 2011), the personal injunctive or otherwise coined moral norm (Parker et al., 1995). These "individual's internalized moral rules" (Parker et al., 1995, p.129) have been described as the construct that distinguishes the individuals' feelings of responsibility, instead of the influence of the pressure from social norms, thus argued to have independent effects on behavioural intentions (Parker et al., 1995). The inclusion of moral norms in predicting prosocial behaviours indeed appears to be relevant and included in different studies with

similar behavioural focus, such as volunteering intentions (Warburton & Terry, 2001), organ donations (Blondeau et al., 2007), and blood donations (Masser et al., 2009; Veldhuizen et al., 2011).

Individuals' feeling of personal responsibility has been noted in many different contexts and situations. Firstly, in their study, Schervish and Havens (2002) found that people care for one another and feel a responsibility to help by giving their time or money, albeit mostly starting from their close circle of relations and extending to strangers or organizations. Secondly, prosocial commitments could also be expressed through a concern for social justice and order in society; as such, Todd and Lawson (1999) observed that frequent donors are more likely to be interested in improving, caring for the weak and aiding in overcoming injustices of society. Thirdly, Weerts and Ronca (2007) found that there are alumni who felt that it was their responsibility to volunteer at or give to their alma mater, mainly who stayed connected and participated in events on campus after graduation. Consequently, this feeling of social responsibility has also been aimed at society at large (Reed & Selbee, 2003) instead of towards a single social entity such as a single institution.

Considering the literature in this subsection, when controlled for the personal feelings of responsibility (i.e., personal norms) are expected to affect the impact of the appeals (and added social-norm and anticipated emotion-based messages) on consumers' donation intention.

*H5: The relationship between the different donation appeal types and donation intention will be positively affected when controlling for personal norms.*

## 2.7. SOCIAL CONFORMITY AS MODERATOR

Social conformity is an individual's effort to adjust their behaviour to the expected direct or indirect influences of their peers in a group (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Schnuerch & Gibbons, 2014). Past research identified two types of conformity, normative social and informational social influences (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Normative social influence describes an individual's attempt to conform by following existing group norms. The informational social influence happens when an individual is driven to accept information gathered from others as facts about reality (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955).

Despite the apparent conceptual independence, the two influences (Cialdini & Trost, 1998) are often closely related (David & Turner, 2001).

Altruistic behaviours (such as giving donations) rely on individual morals and social norms (Erceg et al., 2018). Due to normative pressure, individuals sometimes act against their beliefs, which dictate their values (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). According to Fehr and Fischbacher (2003), a small group of altruistic-oriented individuals may influence a larger group of more egoistically-oriented individuals to act altruistically. At the same time, a small group of egoistic-oriented individuals may persuade a large group of altruistic-minded individuals to deter acting altruistically. Therefore, the influence of social norms can be used to convince individuals to change or enforce existing behaviours, which could come from the tendency of social conformity that can lead to compliance with social norms (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). As such, it is expected that social conformity will act as a moderator regarding the relationship between the donation appeal variable (with a social norm-based message) and the donation intention variable.

*H6: The positive effects of the extrinsic donation appeal on the consumers' donation intention will be moderated by social conformity.*

## 2.8. RESEARCH MODEL

This study focuses on how the donation appeals (extrinsic and intrinsic appeal types) written statement influences consumers' donation intention. The following theoretical model (Figure 2) guided the research. In the model, extrinsic and intrinsic donation appeals are the independent variables, and donation intention is the dependent variable. Inference of manipulative intent is presented as the mediator, social conformity as a moderator, and personal norms as a covariate.

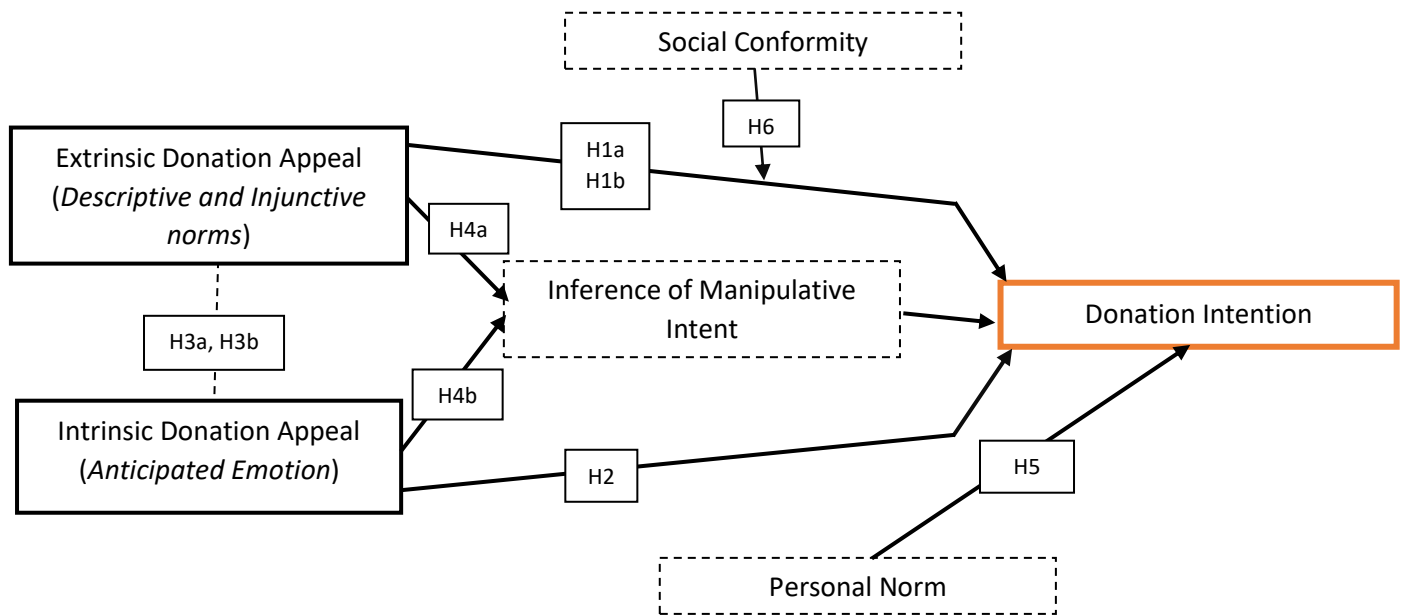


Figure 2. Theoretical model.

Based on the literature and the expectations concluded from it, there are several hypotheses formed, and they are defined as presented in the table below (Table 1):

Table 1

*Hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Description
<b>H1a</b>	The extrinsic donation appeals presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no extrinsic donation appeals are presented.
<b>H1b</b>	The extrinsic donation appeal with an injunctive norm will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout, where an extrinsic donation appeal with a descriptive norm is presented.
<b>H2</b>	The intrinsic donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no intrinsic donation appeal is presented.
<b>H3a</b>	The joint donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no joint donation appeal is presented.
<b>H3b</b>	The joint donation appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with an injunctive norm and the intrinsic appeal will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to the joint appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with a descriptive norm and the intrinsic appeal when presented at an online checkout.

---

<b>H4a</b>	Inference of manipulative intent negatively mediates the effect of extrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that extrinsic donation appeal increases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn decreases donation intention.
<b>H4b</b>	Inference of manipulative intent positively mediates the effect of the intrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that the intrinsic donation appeal decreases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn increases donation intention.
<b>H5</b>	The relationship between the different donation appeal types and donation intention will be positively affected when controlling for personal norms.
<b>H6</b>	The positive effects of the extrinsic donation appeal on the consumers' donation intention will be moderated by social conformity.

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### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

To test the research model, the study used a 3 (descriptive vs injunctive vs no norm) x 2 (anticipated emotion vs no emotion) online experiment. The independent variables were manipulated to observe their effects on donation intention. Additionally, the impact of the variable social conformity on the relationship between the extrinsic donation appeal independent variable and donation intention was tested. The IMI was considered a mediator between the independent variables and the donation intention. The effects of the personal norm were also tested as a covariate. The following table, Table 2, describes the six experimental conditions. The sixth condition of this study serves as the *control condition* that does not contain manipulations and is used as a comparison.

Table 2

*Conditions*

Condition number	Social Norm	Anticipated Emotion
1	Descriptive	x
2	Injunctive	x
3	x	✓
4	Descriptive	✓
5	Injunctive	✓
6	x	x


### 3.1.1. STIMULUS MATERIAL

The materials used to test the condition consisted of one fake online checkout website in the form of a picture containing a donation appeal. The control condition consisted of only the checkout and a standard donation appeal (see Figure 3). At the same time, five additional pictures of the website were created where the donation appeals also contained the added manipulations (see Figure 4).

The following sentences were added to the donation appeal representing one of the conditions in Table 2:

1. Descriptive norm: In this store many people choose to donate to help animals (adapted from Cialdini et al., 2006).
2. Injunctive norm: Many customers think supporting a good cause is the right thing to do (adapted from Cialdini et al., 2006).
3. Anticipated Emotion: It feels good to donate (adapted from Bergquist et al., 2020).
4. Descriptive norm + Anticipated Emotion: In this store many people choose to donate. It feels good to donate.
5. Injunctive norm + Anticipated Emotion: Many customers think supporting a good cause is the right thing to do. It feels good to donate.

The displayed organisation logos and names, including the name of products, are fictitious and were designed specifically for this study. The decision to use fictitious contexts and organizations were to avoid possible conflicts of interest arising from using existing organizations and projects with which this study has no actual contact. Since the survey was disseminated using multiple international contacts, the dollar was used as currency to display the made-up prices of the introduced products and donation requests.



# ELLA-SHOPS





Everything in your reach.

Login  
Sign Up

---


← Back
Cart - **Check-out** - Payment

## Check-Out

	Hand Mixer - type Y87T	\$35	<a href="#">Remove</a>
	Mono Mobile Phone V3	\$150	<a href="#">Remove</a>
	Starlight Perfume -Spring	\$120	<a href="#">Remove</a>
	Teddy- Kids winter socks: 6pairs	\$15	<a href="#">Remove</a>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$320</b>	

---

**Before you continue your purchase...**



- HELPPAWS -

Help Paws is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the rescue, care and finding of homes for cats and dogs in need of help and a loving home. To continue their efforts in aiding these animals they are looking for donations. For more information visit [helppaws.com](http://helppaws.com). Please consider donating to their cause.

Add  \$0.50  \$1  \$3  \$5  \$10  Other \_\_\_ donation to your purchase.

New Total:

---

[Continue with purchase](#)

Figure 3. Online checkout with standard donation appeal.



Before you continue your purchase...



Help Paws is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the rescue and care of cats and dogs in need of help and a loving home. To continue their efforts in aiding these animals they are looking for donations. For more information visit [helppaws.com](http://helppaws.com). Please consider donating to their cause.

**It feels good to donate.**

Add  \$0.50  \$1  \$3  \$5  \$10  Other \_\_\_ donation to your purchase.

New Total: .....

[Continue with purchase](#)

Figure 4. Example material: Donation appeal with added manipulation: Anticipated Emotion.

### 3.1.2. PRE-TEST.

Before the main study, a pre-test was devised and conducted as a manipulation check. The test was made to check whether participants could distinguish and recognise and distinguish between the norms and anticipated emotion conditions. To achieve this, short interviews were conducted where the participants were asked to describe what they see in the pictures presented (see Figure 3 as an example) and to see if they recognised the different conditions (descriptive or injunctive, emotion, or norm and emotion-based messages). Short interviews were conducted with 12 people, either online or in their homes. During the interviews, the participants were asked questions (see Appendix 1, Pre-test interview questions), and they could flip through the six mockups of the online checkout.

All participants recognised the mockup as an online web-shops checkout that included a donation request before finalising the purchase. In addition, 11 out of 12 participants identified the descriptive norm messages in the donation appeals, and similar results were observed regarding the injunctive norm messages. All participants recognised the anticipated emotion message. Thus, it can be concluded that the statements (as described in the *Stimulus material* subsection of this paper) adequately represent the different conditions and the research context.

### 3.1.3. PARTICIPANTS

The survey participants were recruited using social media channels like Facebook, LinkedIn, Discord, and WhatsApp. Using the Qualtrics survey program, the survey links were sent out to the target group and recorded their responses anonymously. The target group consisted of any individual who had experience shopping online on any platform and was at least 18 years old at the completion time of the survey. Therefore, no specific target population or demographic was used for this study. The survey was open online from the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023, to the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 2023.

The research experiment involved a total of 287 participants who completed the survey. From the survey responses, 18 were removed due to incomplete answers, and five were removed due to time criteria. The time criteria were assigned to the donation appeal part of the survey; if the participants spent less than six seconds observing the material, their responses were disregarded. Additionally, 37 answers were removed that indicated a participant finished the survey in less than three minutes. The time criteria were enforced to limit response bias. The remainder 227 responses were considered eligible for further analysis. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of six conditions.

From the 227 responders used for this study analysis, 83 were male (36.6%), 134 were female (59%), and ten did not specify (4.4%). No gender differences were found between the six conditions [ $\chi^2(10, N=227) = 13.91, p = .17$ ]. The respondents' age distribution among the six conditions was not significantly different [ $F(5, 200) = .553, p = .73$ ]. The age-range among the respondents was between 18-75 ( $M=28.26, SD=10.65$ ). Similarly, the education levels showed no difference across conditions [ $\chi^2(5, N=227) = 5.223, p = .389$ ]. Additionally, no difference in past charitable behaviour between the conditions was observed [ $\chi^2(5, N=227) = 5.81, p = .324$ ], where most respondents (88.1%) reported donating to charities before. Table 3 shows an overview of the demographic distribution across the six conditions.

Table 3

*Demographics*

Condition	Age		Gender						Education level			
	M	SD	Male		Female		Other		Low		High	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Condition 1</b>	27.11	8.95	18	50	17	47.2	1	2.8	10	27.8	26	72.2
<b>Condition 2</b>	28.50	11.11	12	29.3	27	65.9	2	4.9	12	29.3	29	70.7
<b>Condition 3</b>	27.51	7.87	16	39	23	56.1	2	4.9	17	41.5	24	58.5
<b>Condition 4</b>	30.16	14.20	14	38.9	22	61.1	0	0	14	33.3	24	66.7
<b>Condition 5</b>	26.91	9.98	12	30	23	57.5	5	12.5	12	35	26	65
<b>Condition 6</b>	29.86	11.62	11	33.3	22	66.7	0	0	6	18.2	27	81.8
<b>Overall</b>	28.26	10.65	83	36.6	134	59	10	4.4	71	31.3	156	68.7

## 3.2. MAIN STUDY

### 3.2.1. PROCEDURE

The study used an online experiment where the participants were presented with the stimulus material containing the nudges (norms and anticipated emotion). Before seeing the materials, they had to answer demographic (age, gender, education level and past donation experience), social conformity, and personal norm questions. This was followed by the fictive scenario about the online web shop where the participant has placed products in their checkout basket and is ready to pay. Under the scenario, the participants were notified that the price total and purchase continuation are fictive, and no actual monetary obligation is requested or required. After seeing one of the six stimulus materials, the participants could answer questions regarding donation intention and inferred manipulative intent. The questionnaire questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

### 3.2.2. MEASUREMENTS

This section describes the quantitative measurement of donation intention, inference of manipulative intent, social conformity, and the personal norm as used in the online experiment. The selected items are all based on existing studies and measurements. The complete list of questions used in the online questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 2. The donation intention was measured using three items adapted from Chen et al. (2019) ( $\alpha=0.88$ ). The inference of manipulative intent was measured using four items adapted from Campbell (1995) ( $\alpha=0.90$ ). Two items from this list were later reverse coded during the analysis: 'The way this donation request tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.' and 'I didn't mind this donation request; the advertiser tried to be persuasive without being excessively manipulative.'. Social conformity was measured using six items adapted from Mehrabian and Stefl (1995) ( $\alpha=0.77$ ). Three items were reverse coded later for analysis, namely, 'I would be the last one to change my opinion in a hosted argument on a controversial topic.', 'I am more independent than conforming in my ways.' and 'I don't give in to others easily.'. Personal norm was measured using four items adapted from Smith and McSweeney (2007) ( $\alpha=0.62$ ). All items mentioned above were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 7 – Strongly Agree.

At the end of the questionnaire, manipulation check questions were asked to assess if the respondents could recall the presented materials (donation appeals). In addition, each respondent received queries corresponding to the specific manipulation or control condition material they were exposed to in the middle of the questionnaire. These questions were measured with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Definitely not to 5-Definitely Yes.

### 3.2.3. CONSTRUCT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.

The construct validity and reliability of the items were tested using factor analysis. Before the test, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was run to test for the variance in the variables that could occur due to underlying factors. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity was

checked to see if there is an association between the variables and thus structure detection test can be made. The sampling adequacy was sufficient with KMO=.776; additionally, all individual items were above >.67, which is higher than the adequate limit of .5 (Field, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity measured significant results ( $X^2(120) = 1944.27$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Taking these results into account, a Principal Factor Analysis test with orthogonal rotation with 16 items could be made.

The first analysis resulted in five components, with 17 items having an eigenvalue larger than Kaiser's criterion of 1. However, later investigation revealed that to improve the reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the constructs measuring Social Conformity, item number 2 of the scale ("*I would be the last one to change my opinion in a heated argument on a controversial topic.*") was removed and the factor analysis was run with 16 items. The second analysis resulted in four components with an eigenvalue larger than 1, and all components had a combined explained variance of 66.86%. All four constructs were loaded under one factor as proposed without any observed cross-loadings or items loading under the wrong component; thus, no further adjustments were made to the constructs. As mentioned before, Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure internal consistency to examine the construct's reliability. Table 4 depicts the detailed factor analysis results and Cronbach's Alpha scores.

Table 4.

*Factor analysis (varimax rotation) with 16 items and four constructs, and Cronbach's Alpha*

Construct	Item	Components			
		1	2	3	4
<b>Inference Manipulative Intent</b>	I didn't mind this donation request; the advertiser tried to be persuasive without being excessively manipulative.	.86			
	I was annoyed by this donation request because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience.	.85			
	The donation advertiser tried to manipulate the audience in ways that I don't like.	.85			
	The way this donation request tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.	.83			

<b>Personal Norm</b>	I believe I have a moral obligation to donate money to charities or community service organisations.	.86			
	Not donating money to charities or community service organisations goes against my principles.	.85			
	I would feel guilty if I didn't donate money to charities or community service organisations.	.76			
	I am the kind of person who donates money to charities or community service organisations.	.74			
<b>Donation Intention</b>	The probability that I would donate money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.	.93			
	The likelihood of me donating money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.	.93			
	My willingness to donate money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.	.89			
<b>Social conformity</b>	Generally, I'd rather give in and go along for the sake of peace than struggle to have my way.	.69			
	I often rely on, and act upon, the advice of others.	.59			
	Basically, my friends are the ones who decide what we do together.	.57			
	I am more independent than conforming in my ways.	.63			
	I don't give in to others easily.	.73			
	<b>Explained variance</b>	26.86%	17.89%	12.55%	9.54%
	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	4.29	2.86	2.00	1.52
	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	.86	.84	.95	.62

### 3.3. POST-TEST

At the end of the online questionnaire created for the main study, questions were assigned to the six manipulations testing whether the participants could recall and recognise them. The participants had to rate on a 5-point Likert scale whether they had seen the donation appeal and the extrinsic or intrinsic messages or both (1=Definitely not, 5=Definitely yes). In addition, each participant has seen manipulation check questions specific to the condition they were randomly assigned to. In addition, a series of one-sample t-tests (right-sided) were conducted where the mean scores were controlled for equal or above 4 (Test value 4). This value is considered confidence that the

participants recalled and were exposed to the manipulations successfully. The sample sizes reflect the number of participants who were exposed to a specific manipulation.

Although the mean outcome of the test for each manipulation is less than 4, it cannot be concluded that it is significantly lower. With injunctive norm ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD= 1.06$ )  $t(80)=-4.39$ ,  $p<0.001$ , descriptive norm ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=1.15$ )  $t(71)=-4.48$ ,  $p<0.001$  or anticipated emotion message ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=1.07$ )  $t(116)=-3.87$ ,  $p<0.001$ , it can be assumed that the participants are confident that they recall seeing the manipulations. Additionally, while in general, participants indicated they recall the donation request ( $M=4.10$ ,  $SD=.89$ ) with  $t(226)=1.7$ ,  $p=.032$  with .05 significance criteria; it cannot be concluded that it is significantly higher than 4. The results suggest that the participants are somewhat confident that they recognized and recalled the different elements of the manipulation (donation description, social norms and anticipated emotion-based statements). Thus, the manipulation checks can be considered successful.

### 3.4. PRE-ANALYSIS

After the survey data was gathered, it was transferred to SPSS, where it could be analyzed. The participants were clustered under six variables corresponding to which condition they were subjected to. The six variables representing the six conditions were recoded into three variables representing one of the three independent variables (injunctive norm, descriptive norm and (anticipated) emotion). The thus recoded three dichotomous variables, each consisting of two groups (1, 2), where either the respondent has not seen the specific independent variable (1) or they have so (2). These three recoded variables were used as the fixed factors in the analysis. The donation intention measured with three items was recoded into one continuous variable and used as the dependent variable. These steps were done to be able to analyze whether the absence or presence of specific independent variables influences the donation intention, as hypothesized in the study. The remaining items for IMI, personal norms and social conformity were also recoded into their own individual continuous variable. Several items were reverse-coded, as mentioned before, in the measurements section.

## 4. RESULTS

A one-way ANCOVA was performed to compare the different donation appeal types' effect on donation intention controlling for personal norms. Before the test, the underlying assumptions of normality and Levene's test for equal variance were checked, and they were met.

Despite personal norms' significant effect on donation intention ( $F=38.303$ ,  $p<.000$ ), with the partial eta squared value showing a 14.8% variance in donation intention is explained by said variable, the analysis showed no significant main or interaction effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Subsequently, a Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare the differences in effect when the variable personal norm is present or absent. Despite personal norms' significant effect on donation intention, it only slightly affects the effectiveness of different donation appeals in increasing donation intention, which did not significantly influence intention (in both the ANCOVA and ANOVA results). Considering this analysis, there is not enough evidence to support that when controlled for personal norms, extrinsic and intrinsic donation appeal types significantly impact donation intention; thus, H5 is rejected.

In light of the output of the ANCOVA analysis, the results of the main and interaction effects later this section will be described using the outcome of the ANOVA analysis (hence without the influence of the personal norm variable).

As mentioned before, ANOVA was used to test the main effects of extrinsic and intrinsic appeals on donation intention. Before the analysis, the underlying assumptions were checked and met to perform the test. The analysis results can be seen in Table 5. The analysis outcome showed no significant main effect of extrinsic or intrinsic appeal on donation. In addition, no significant interaction effect was revealed (Injunctive norm \* Anticipated emotion; Descriptive norm \* Anticipated emotion).



Moreover, the moderating effect of social conformity on the extrinsic appeal types' relationship with donation intention was measured, revealing no significant impact. Also, no significant mediating effect was measured between the inference of manipulative intent and the independent variables and donation intention; however, a significant effect was found between IMI and donation intention.

Table 5

*Results of Univariate Analysis of Variance*

		ANOVA	
		F	<i>p</i>
<b>Extrinsic Appeal</b>	Injunctive norm	.66	.416
	Descriptive norm	.21	.642
<b>Intrinsic Appeal</b>	Anticipated emotion	.41	.521
<b>Extrinsic Appeal*Intrinsic Appeal</b>	Injunctive norm*Anticipated emotion	.32	.567
	Descriptive norm*Anticipated emotion	2.71	.101
<b>(Covariate) Personal norms</b>		38.30	.000

*Note:* The F-test for the personal norms in this table was acquired from the ANCOVA analysis.

#### 4.1. RESULTS OF THE MAIN EFFECTS

The main effects of an extrinsic appeal on donation intention were measured using ANOVA. The test results show no significant impact of the injunctive norm on donation intention with  $F(1, 221)=.66$ ,  $p=.416$ . Similarly, no significant effect of the descriptive norm on donation intention was found with  $F(1,221)=.21$ ,  $p=.642$ . The post hoc test Tukey HSD was performed to establish whether there was any significant difference between the means. No significant difference in the mean scores was found between the appeal types with either injunctive ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=1.72$ ) or descriptive a norm ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=1.56$ ), and no significant difference was found between the extrinsic appeal types means and the control condition means ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ). Thus, H1a and H1b is not supported.

The ANOVA results for the main effect of the intrinsic appeal on donation intention were not significant, with  $F(1,221)=.41$ ,  $p=.521$ . The Tukey HSD post hoc test showed no significant difference between the anticipated emotion mean ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.67$ ) and the control condition ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ). Therefore, H2 is rejected. An overview of the means and standard deviation can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations for the main effects of Extrinsic and Intrinsic appeals.*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Manipulation	Mean	SD
Extrinsic Appeal	Donation Intention	Injunctive norm	3.39	1.72
		Descriptive norm	3.44	1.56
Intrinsic Appeal	Donation Intention	Anticipated emotion	3.43	1.67
		Control condition	3.76	1.70

#### 4.2. RESULTS OF THE INTERACTION EFFECTS

No interaction effect was found between the different extrinsic appeal types and intrinsic appeal.

More specifically, no significant interaction effect was found between the injunctive norm and anticipated emotion ( $F=.32$ ,  $p=.567$ ) and the descriptive norm and anticipated emotion ( $F=2.71$ ,  $p=.101$ ). While there seems to be some notable difference between the two mean scores of the interaction effects, see Table 7 below, according to the ANOVA and post hoc Tukey HSD test, it is insignificant. Thus, H3a and H3b is rejected.

Table 7.

*Means and Standard Deviation for interaction effects of Extrinsic appeal\*Intrinsic Appeal*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Extrinsic Appeal	Intrinsic Appeal	Mean	SD
Extrinsic Appeal*Intrinsic Appeal	Donation Intention	Injunctive norm	Anticipated emotion	3.36	1.47
		Descriptive norm	Anticipated emotion	4.00	1.75

### 4.3. MODERATOR AND MEDIATOR EFFECTS

It was hypothesised that social conformity would moderate the relationship between the extrinsic appeals' social norm messages and donation intention. In addition, it was also hypothesised that the inference of manipulative intent would mediate the said relationship. A moderation and mediation analysis was employed using the author and creator Andrew F. Hayes's (Hayes, n.d.) PROCESS macro extension (v.4.0), model 5. This model is used to observe the moderator and mediator variable effect in a tested relationship with one test. Before the examination, all variables were mean-centred.

The outcome of the analysis showed that the injunctive norm had no significant impact on IMI ( $b=.212, t=1.258, p=.209$ ). The injunctive norm's direct effect on donation intention also had no significant impact ( $b=-.181, t=-.830, p=.407$ ) in the presence of the mediator and moderator. Additionally, no indirect effect of IMI was observed. However, IMI significantly affected donation intention ( $b=-.428, t=-4.955, p<.001$ ). These results show that IMI does not mediate the relationship between injunctive norm and donation intention. In this model, social conformity was found to have no significant moderating effect between injunctive norm and donation intention, where social conformity did not significantly correlate with donation intention ( $b=-.0005, t=-.0004, p=.996$ ). The figure below, Figure 5, visualises the outcomes of the PROCESS macro Model 5 applied to the injunctive norm on donation intention.

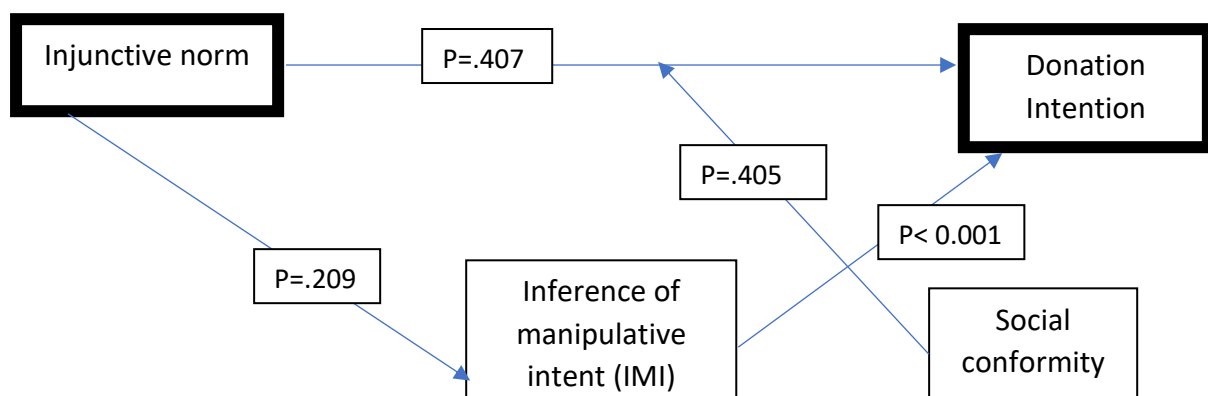


Figure 5. Hayes PROCESS macro – Model 5, Injunctive norm on donation intention

The same analysis that was applied to the relationship between injunctive norm and donation intention was used to analyse the descriptive norm and donation intention relationship. The PROCESS macro Model 5 analysis yielded similar results as the previous analysis. The descriptive norm had no significant impact on IMI ( $b=.072$ ,  $t=.418$ ,  $p=.676$ ). The direct effect of the descriptive norm on donation intention had no significant impact ( $b=.284$ ,  $t= 1.256$ ,  $p=.210$ ) in the presence of the mediator and moderator. In addition, no indirect effect of IMI was observed.

Similarly to the previous relationship, IMI significantly affected donation intention ( $b=-.431$ ,  $t=-5.031$ ,  $p<.001$ ). These outcomes suggest that IMI has no significant mediating effect between descriptive norm and donation intention. Lastly, no significant moderating effect was found between social conformity and descriptive norm on donation intention, where social conformity did not significantly correlate with donation intention ( $b=.027$ ,  $t=-.222$ ,  $p=.824$ ). The figure below, Figure 6, visualises the outcomes of the PROCESS macro Model 5 applied to the descriptive norm on donation intention relationship.

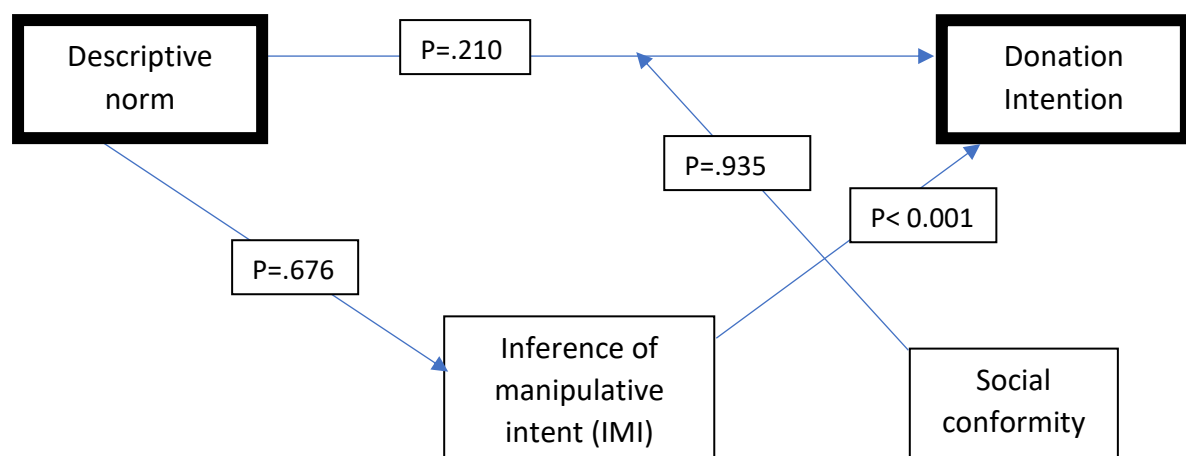


Figure 6. Hayes PROCESS macro – Model 5, the descriptive norm on donation intention

One mediating effect was analysed with the relationship between intrinsic appeal and donation intention. Using Hayes's PROCESS macro model 4, the IMI role as a mediator was tested between anticipated emotion and donation intention. The results indicated that anticipated emotion did not significantly impact IMI ( $b=.153$ ,  $t=.950$ ,  $p=.343$ ). The direct effect of anticipated emotion on

donation intention was also insignificant ( $b=.129$ ,  $t=.618$ ,  $p=.536$ ) in the presence of the mediator and moderator. Additionally, no significant indirect effect of IMI was observed.

Finally, IMI significantly impacted donation intention ( $b=-.431$ ,  $t=-5.034$ ,  $p<.001$ ). However, these outcomes suggest that IMI has no significant mediating effect between anticipated emotion and donation intention. The figure below, Figure 7, visualises the results of the PROCESS macro Model 4 applied to the relationship of the anticipated emotion appeal on donation intention.

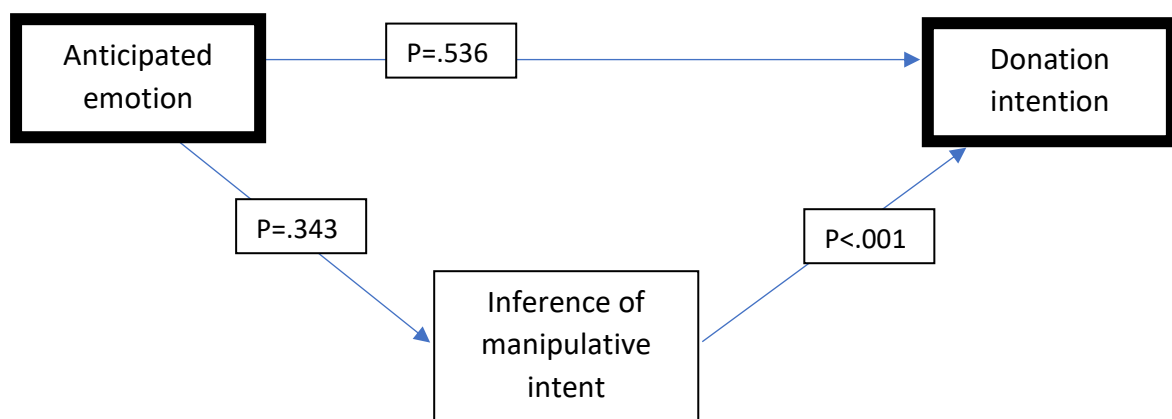


Figure 7. Hayes PROCESS macro – Model 4, the anticipated emotion appeal on donation intention

Considering the analysis performed in this subsection, H4a and H4b, implying that the IMI will mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, are rejected.

Furthermore, H6 is also rejected, meaning no statistical evidence supports that social conformity will moderate the extrinsic appeal types' impact on donation intention.

#### 4.4. THE OUTCOME OF THE TESTED HYPOTHESES

Table 8 summarises an overview of the statistical analysis regarding the tested hypotheses below.

Table 8

*Tested Hypotheses results.*

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1a	The extrinsic donation appeals presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no extrinsic donation appeals are presented.	Rejected
H1b	The extrinsic donation appeal with an injunctive norm will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online	Rejected

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	checkout, where an extrinsic donation appeal with a descriptive norm is presented.	
<b>H2</b>	The intrinsic donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no intrinsic donation appeal is presented.	Rejected
<b>H3a</b>	The joint donation appeal presented at an online checkout will positively influence donation intention as opposed to an online checkout where no joint donation appeal is presented.	Rejected
<b>H3b</b>	The joint donation appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with an injunctive norm and the intrinsic appeal will more positively influence donation intention as opposed to the joint appeal comprised of an extrinsic appeal with a descriptive norm and the intrinsic appeal when presented at an online checkout.	Rejected
<b>H4a</b>	Inference of manipulative intent negatively mediates the effect of extrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that extrinsic donation appeal increases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn decreases donation intention.	Rejected
<b>H4b</b>	Inference of manipulative intent positively mediates the effect of the intrinsic donation appeal on donation intention, such that the intrinsic donation appeal decreases the inference of manipulative intent, which in turn increases donation intention.	Rejected
<b>H5</b>	The relationship between the different donation appeal types and donation intention will be positively affected when controlling for personal norms.	Rejected
<b>H6</b>	The positive effects of the extrinsic donation appeal on the consumers' donation intention will be moderated by social conformity.	Rejected

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## 5. DISCUSSION

This study explored the potential nudging effect of online donation appeal messages on donation intention framed in an extrinsic (using social norms) or intrinsic (anticipated emotions) motivational manner. Previous studies indicated that if social norms are made salient, their potential could motivate individuals to act in a socially expected way (Cialdini et al., 1990; Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Additionally, suppose people are reminded that they will feel certain emotions, such as happiness or a 'warm glow' (Andreoni, 1990) when behaving prosocially. In that case, they will adjust their

behaviour to pursue and achieve the proposed emotion (Baumeister et al., 2007). Building upon these studies, donation appeals with social norms and anticipated emotion-based messages were expected to affect donation intention positively. However, the outcome of this study did not support these hypotheses.

*Personal Norms as covariant.* The connection between internalized universal principles and more particular beliefs and expectations about how to act in concrete situations is thought to be provided by personal (moral) norms (Schwartz, 1977). In the literature concerning charitable intentions and behaviour, this variable is recognized as one of the most influential factors that are behind the motivation of giving behaviour (e.g., Jackson et al., 1995; Jonas et al., 2013; Smith & McSweeney (2007); Van Der Linden, 2011; Webb et al., 2000). In the current study, both the extrinsic and intrinsic appeal did not significantly impact donation intention even when controlled for personal norms; albeit a slight change in variance was noticed, it was not statistically significant. It could be that in the absence of social approval or social pressure due to the intention or act of charity being done privately, personal norm activation is more likely (Van Der Linden, 2011). The same activation order might have occurred when the participants were exposed to the intrinsic appeal, where not having to follow through with the donation made the sentiment of warm glow secondary, if not irrelevant.

*Extrinsic Appeal.* Regarding the extrinsic donation appeal, neither the injunctive nor the descriptive norm showed a difference in donation intention when made salient in the online donation appeal. There could be a few reasons for these findings. Firstly, the previous studies that found injunctive norm as a significant predictor of charitable giving intention (e.g., Kashif et al., 2015; Smith & McSweeney, 2007) based it on the participants' opinion of their close social circles' expectation of said behaviour. While these studies' approach is congruent with the idea that injunctive norms specify what people ought to do as expected by a culture or society (Reno et al., 1993), compared to the previous studies, it gives a different perspective. One conclusion could be that people are more

susceptible to the expectations of their immediate social circle instead of the general expectation of some circle of society (Tunçgenç et al., 2021; White et al., 2009).

Secondly, similarly to the results of previous studies, descriptive norms were found to have no significant impact on donation intention (Goeschl et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2015; Kashif et al., 2015; Smith & McSweeney, 2007). Smith and McSweeney (2007) argue that the lack of effect of descriptive norms could be due to the nature of giving, which is usually a private act, and as such, people do not have an accurate estimation of how other people behave in a charitable context. In this study, the charitable context was an online one (webstore checkout), which according to Van Teunenbroek et al. (2021), could impact the effectiveness of said norm.

*Intrinsic Appeal.* This study attempted to persuade the participants to feel intrinsically motivated to donate by explicitly reminding them about the 'warm glow' of giving. This approach contrasts previous research that largely focused on the donation recipients' emotions in their messages, attempting to evoke a specific emotion in the giver (e.g., Merchant et al., 2010; Small & Verrochi, 2009; Zhao et al. (2022)). In their field experiment study, Bergquist et al. (2020) found that anticipated positive emotion-based messages had a more significant effect in nudging people to donate the money they received for recycling their bottles than those who have seen a social norm-based or no message. Contrary to the previous authors' observation, this study found no effect of the anticipated emotion-based message on donation intention.

One explanation for this outcome could be related to the methodological approach. While in a field experiment by Bergquist et al. (2020), the participants gained and gave their money to the charity, having a process of a direct consequence, whereas in this current study, the donation appeal and charity organization were fictitious; thus, no such exchange happened. The description of Schneider et al. (2021) sheds light on this phenomenon "positive emotions tend to promote and result from productive issue engagement" (p.118). Therefore, messages that promote anticipated positive emotion in the context of donation intention or donation behaviour could be affected by the perception of people that they are actively contributing to a real cause.



*Joint Appeal.* A joint appeal containing both extrinsic and intrinsic statements was tested. This appeal type was expected to affect donation intention significantly; the study results did not support this hypothesis.

One of the reasons for this outcome could be related to the interplay between extrinsic and intrinsic statements; as Ryan and Deci (2000) argue, intrinsic motivation (i.e., to achieve satisfaction or fun) decreases when a form of social pressure is present. On the other hand, authors' Van Der Schalk et al. (2015) found that anticipated emotion may be important for the creation and upkeep of social norms. They also argued that an individual's observation of other people's emotional reaction to a norm would guide the later behaviour of the individual due to the anticipation of the observed emotions. Thus, it could be concluded that if a person is not aware of the emotion to be anticipated when following a norm, they are less likely to be affected by it. However, as this study did not test the participants' preconceptions of the norms, it cannot be known that they shared similar anticipated positive emotions for donating or adhering to the norm as presented in the manipulations.

*The moderating role of Social Conformity.* This study tested whether social conformity would moderate the effect of social norms on donation intention. The results did not indicate such an effect. Mehrabian and Stefl (1995) argued that conformity is the characteristic willingness to do what other people think, value, or do and to avert social conflict. Also, they recognize that there are significant individual variances in compliance tendencies. Thus, the lack of effect of conformity on donation intention could be related to the lack of observed charitable acts; as such, there is no reward or punishment for choosing otherwise. According to Wallace et al. (2020), both young adults and adults tend to be more generous when they observe others to be so, and if they are also can be seen as being charitable.

*The mediating role of the inference of manipulative intent (IMI).* Perceived manipulative intent is conceptualized as the advertiser's endeavour to persuade by improper and dishonest means (Campbell, 1995). This research tested whether people perceive the extrinsic and intrinsic appeals as

manipulative, thus affecting their intention to donate. The results were inconclusive as no mediation effect of IMI was observed. However, the variable had a significant effect on donation intention. Explanations as to why no mediation effect was observed could be related to tolerance or desensitization towards charity advertisements (Ashar et al., 2016; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). People are used to seeing donation appeals in different contexts and might not consider them as manipulations. Previous studies that often focused on the valance of negative and positive messaging have reported IMI as a significant mediator between the appeal type and donation intention (e.g., Cotte et al., 2005; Coulter et al., 1999; Hibbert et al., 2007; Kang et al., 2022;).

### 5.1. IMPLICATIONS

*Practical implications.* Donation requests at checkouts of commercial venues (like, supermarkets) yielded benefits for both for- and non-profit businesses and customers alike (Hepworth et al., 2021; Yang & Yen, 2018). In an online checkout (webstore) context, this study examined how different donation requests could affect consumers' intention to donate. While the study results show no substantial effect of the social norm and anticipated emotion-based message on donation intention, for-profit businesses should not abandon the idea of including donation appeals at their online checkouts. According to the study results, even if the donation appeal message does not elicit donation intention, people might donate given the opportunity to exercise their personal moral values or norms. Additionally, offering tokens to encourage charitable behaviour that can be turned in for discounts or other rewards could enforce said behaviour (Han, 2021). Other options to nudge intention to donate would be the customers' ability to share the charitable act with their social group through social media, like Facebook (Wallace et al., 2020).

*Theoretical implications.* This study contributes to existing knowledge on the field of donation appeal effectiveness in increasing donation intention. When presented in a donation request, social norms and anticipated emotion donation appeals did not affect people's intentions. Furthermore, social conformity did not moderate the relation between the social norm-based donation appeals and donation intention. While IMI did not mediate the relation between extrinsic and intrinsic appeal

types and donation intention, it did significantly affect donation intention. Similarly, when controlled for personal norms, it did not increase the effectiveness of said donation appeals, but it did significantly affect intention.

The results of the personal norms and IMI adds to the body of knowledge, indicating that they have a significant role in the research regarding charitable intentions and behaviour. Earlier research showed that social norms successfully increased donation intention and behaviour when the donators were prompted with a social norm-based message or an anticipated emotion-based message (Agerström et al., 2016; Bergquist et al., 2020). However, it is relevant to note that these studies were conducted in an offline environment. Up to now, no research has been performed using the previously mentioned appeals to nudge people to donate in an online checkout environment.

To this author's knowledge, this study is the first to use social norms and anticipated emotions as nudges in a donation appeal to prompt customers' charity while accounting for their personal values and norms, and the appeals perceived manipulateness. Finally, the results in this study context add to the research field of online cause-related marketing strategies and charitable behaviour.

## 5.2. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Just like other studies, this one is not without limitations. In this section, the most important limitation and a few recommendations for future research are outlined. Firstly, the study employed an online questionnaire that included both the manipulations in the form of a picture and the questions. The participants could fill this out anywhere, anytime, based on their own convenience. This limited the study since several external factors could not be controlled. Factors include the internet connection, technological equipment condition, noise, or other interruptions. Steps were taken to limit technological interference by testing the manipulations' look on different devices to check for frame quality and readability. Furthermore, for the study to measure the effectiveness of the nudge, the respondents had to read it and react to it. While measures were taken to remove

responses that show the participants took too long to finish the survey (e.g., several hours), it is probable that the risk that the effectiveness of the nudges was diminished due to the respondents not filling out the survey in one continuous process.

Another limitation of this study could be related to participant recruitment. The participants were recruited through convenience sampling and snowball sampling with the use of different social media platforms. This could have led the participants not to pay serious attention when reading and responding to the questions; hence they had limited involvement in the study. There were no incentives (e.g., rewards) for participation which could have made the behaviour mentioned above more probable. While steps were taken to limit and remove responses that showed biases, as mentioned earlier, the nature of the sampling method still could have affected the outcome and the results' generalizability.

This study did not focus on a specific target group which might have affected the outcome. In contrast, previous research has indicated that there could be generational or cultural differences in attitudes and behaviour regarding charitable giving (e.g., Castillo-Villar & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2020; Han, 2021; Konstantinou & Jones, 2022). For example, Wallace et al. (2020) found subtle differences in social group interdependence between adults and young adults when it comes to being charitable. Young adults would follow their social groups' behaviour to be charitable to fit into the group. Moreover, Siemens et al. (2020) observed cultural differences between charitable motivations. Unlike loose cultures, the authors found that individuals from tight cultures are more likely to follow social norms and agree to charitable requests. Thus, future research could narrow the target population and study the effectiveness of donation appeal types with a more specific demographic focus.

In addition to the previously mentioned limitations, one other is related to the salience and valence of the donation message. The lack of main effect, mediation and moderation may have been avoided if the appeal statements' strength through valence, salience and message congruency had been pre-tested. Previous research has suggested that internal congruency in donation appeals is

important (Erlandsson et al., 2016). A study by Lee and Aaker (2004) has shown that appeals that are gain-framed and promote giving behaviour were more favoured than the message that advocated loss for the victim and implied that preventative action is needed. Other studies manipulated the donation request's message and picture valence. The results indicated that charitable behaviour increased when there was valence-congruency between the written message and the picture (Chang & Lee, 2009, 2010). Future research could examine the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic appeals by increasing their valence-congruency. The salience of norms in these appeals should also be examined more thoroughly to ensure activation, as noted by past studies (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Cialdini et al., 1990; 1991).

### 5.3. CONCLUSION

This research explored how donation appeals with social norm-based and anticipated emotion-based messages influence people's intention to donate through a webshop checkout. In addition, the messages perceived manipulateness, people's conformity to norms, and personal norm were investigated. The set-up hypotheses for this purpose were examined through an online experiment using an online questionnaire.

The study's results revealed no significant main or interaction effects of the extrinsic appeals (with the injunctive and descriptive norm-based messages) and intrinsic appeal (anticipated emotion-based message) on donation intention. These contradict the findings of previous studies that found these variables effective in eliciting charitable intentions. The no significant main and interaction effects might be related to the messages' valence-congruency and the salience of the presented norms. Future research into these types of appeals could consider these elements when studying their effectiveness on charitable intention.

Social conformity was examined to see if it moderates the effect of social norms on donation intention, but no significant effects were found. Additionally, the inference of manipulative intent (IMI) did not mediate the relationship between donation appeals and donation intention. However,

it did have a significant impact on the intention. When controlled for personal norms, the statistic showed a small positive change in the variance of the donation appeals on donation intention, but it was insignificant. Similarly to IMI, personal norms significantly impacted donation intention. These results contradict previous research on account of mediation and moderation effects; however, the IMI and personal norm's significant effect on charitable intentions were also observed by past research.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Interview questions

\*After short description about the research the first picture will be shown which will be the Basic Condition (without added manipulation).

1. What do you think this picture is about? Please describe what you recognize.

\* Showing all six pictures that include the Basic condition and the Manipulation condition.

2. From the following pictures, which donation request describes what people have done? (*Descriptive norm*)

3. From the following pictures, which donation request describes what people consider should be done? (*Injunctive norm*)

4. From the following pictures, which donation request suggests an emotion? (*Emotion-based*)

Note: During the interview the number of times a condition was identified correctly was noted. The scores from the mixed conditions were registered (Norms and anticipated Emotion) in a separate bracket to see if the conditions are recognizable even in that set-up.

## APPENDIX 2

### Measurement Scales

The below presented table contains the measurements used in this study. The participants had to rate their agreement or disagreement with the statements using a 7-point Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7- Strongly Agree).

Variable	Item	Reference
Donation Intention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The probability that I would donate money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.</li> <li>2. My willingness to donate money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.</li> <li>3. The likelihood of me donating money to the charity 'Help Paws' is high.</li> </ol>	Chen et al. (2019) ( $\alpha=0.88$ ) <i>Adapted</i>
Inference of manipulative intent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The way this donation request tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.</li> <li>2. The donation advertiser tried to manipulate the audience in ways that I don't like.</li> <li>3. I was annoyed by this donation request because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience.</li> <li>4. I didn't mind this donation request; the advertiser tried to be persuasive without being excessively manipulative.</li> </ol>	(Campbell, 1995) ( $\alpha=0.90$ ) <i>Adapted</i>
Social conformity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I often rely on, and act upon, the advice of others.</li> <li>2. I would be the last one to change my opinion in a hosted argument on a controversial topic.</li> <li>3. Generally, I'd rather give in and go along for the sake of peace than struggle to have my way.</li> <li>4. Basically, my friends are the ones who decide what we do together.</li> <li>5. I am more independent than conforming in my ways.</li> <li>6. I don't give in to others easily.</li> </ol>	Mehrabian & Stefl (1995) ( $\alpha=0.77$ ) <i>Adopted</i>



Personal (moral) norm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am the kind of person who donates money to charities or community service organisations.</li> <li>2. I would feel guilty if I didn't donate money to charities or community service organisations.</li> <li>3. I believe I have a moral obligation to donate money to charities or community service organisations</li> <li>4. Not donating money to charities or community service organisations goes against my principles.</li> </ol>	Smith & McSweeney, 2007 ( $\alpha=0.62$ ) <i>Adopted</i>
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