**SURVEILLANCE AND CHARITABLE DONATION BEHAVIOUR: A SOCIAL MARKETING APPROACH**

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**Abstract -** With the focus of the media headlines on the economic and political impacts, it is unclear to what extent this has affected charitable donations. The successful implementation of a donation campaign represents a major marketing challenge in the current economic climate. There is a growing consensus that social marketing can play an important role in persuading charitable donation behaviour. Our study addresses this salient research question from a social marketing perspective: What are the motivators of charitable donation behaviour? While we acknowledge that a variety of factors may affect consumer charitable behaviour, we focus on providing a conceptual understanding of how the effect of surveillance on charitable donation behaviour could be intervened by personality factors such as self-monitoring and need for approval. Ultimately, we seek to improve our understanding of consumer engagement in charitable donation behaviour from a social marketing perspective, in turn, consumer welfare.

**Keywords:** social marketing, donation campaign, charitable donation behavior

**1. Introduction**

The media’s news agenda over the past several years has been dominated by pieces about the global financial crisis. Stories about governments in disorder, volatile markets and failing currencies have become commonplace. Every newspaper, website, television and radio news bulletin alike all reiterate the seriousness and the long term repercussions of the crisis (Schranz and Eisenegger, 2011). The wider human ramifications are largely ignored however, as the coverage focuses more on the economic and political impacts. As the turmoil continues, many more people are left poorer and need help but during a recession people tighten their purse strings and optimism is reduced. With the focus of the headlines elsewhere, it is unclear to what extent this has affected charitable donations. However, fewer and less frequent donations is an already known tragedy of the recession (Charities Commission, 2011, February). This casualty of the recession means a reduced capacity to care for the sick or elderly, less aid during natural disasters and the many worthwhile causes that rely on donations. With charities failing and donations dropping, the quality of life for millions of people globally is worsened (Bennett, 2003).

The successful implementation of a donation campaign represents a major marketing challenge, which is, persuading consumers who feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of social causes asking for money. There is a growing political consensus that charitable organisations need to be more entrepreneurial and follow a business-like approach in order

to capitalise on every opportunity in the rivalry for funds. We agree with those who argue that social marketing can play an important role in persuading charitable donation behaviour (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971).

Therefore, our study addresses this salient research question: What are the motivators of charitable donation behaviour? While we acknowledge that a variety of factors may affect consumer charitable behaviour, this paper focuses on providing a conceptual understanding of how the effect of surveillance on charitable donation behaviour could be intervened by personality factors such as self-monitoring and need for approval. Ultimately, we seek to improve our understanding of consumer engagement in charitable donation behaviour from a social marketing perspective, in turn, consumer welfare.

**2. Background Literature**

The study of charities and donation behaviour began in the 1960s. Much of the literature from this period focused on why consumers choose to voluntarily part with money they worked to earn or to create a profile of these individuals. In the late 1990s, there was a significant change in the type of research being published whereby the focus was on behavioural process itself (Rabin, 1993; Sugden, 1984). The literature relating to charitable behaviour has undergone changes with the directional shift in the 1990s. As per traditional economic theory, consumers use their income solely for their own benefit as rational beings. This could not account for the seemingly selfless act of giving money to charity. To account for this what on the surface seemed unselfish behaviour, researchers decided that they needed a closer look (Lazear, 2000). Since then, scholars have examined the rewards consumers get in return for their donation. For instance, Becker (1974) argued in the ‘pure altruism’ model that the outcomes following a donation included happiness and peer validation.

However, Becker’s model was criticised as being too simplistic, and the model was built with the inclusion of additional concepts. Other potential predictors that have been considered to have an influence on charitable behaviour include social approval (Holländer,

1990), a signal of wealth (Glazer and Konrad, 1996) and religiousness (Ranganathan and

Henley, 2008). Past research investigating charitable donation behaviour is dominated by donor profiles, socio-economic background and the preferred types of charities (Schlegelmilch, Diamantopoulos and Love, 1997). Although knowledge about socio- demographic of donors is important, these variables provide merely descriptive information. They do not explain why people engage (or not engage) in donation behaviour. This has prompted a call for transformative research that identifies more realistic human behavioural responses (Martin and Randal, 2007, 2009; Meier and Frey,

2004).

**2.1 Models of Donor Behaviour**

Sargeant (1999) developed a comprehensive model of donor behaviour which has provided a strong theoretical basis to understand the donation decision process. The model encapsulates a range of inputs, extrinsic and intrinsic determinants, perceptual reactions, etc. Particularly, the intrinsic motivations of a consumer considered in their study include a need for self-esteem, guilty, pity, social justice, empathy, fear, and sympathy while looking at the extrinsic motivations (e.g., age, gender, social class and income) as having a potential impact in the donation decision process.

Later, Polonsky, Shelley, and Voola (2002) tested Sargeant’s model in their interpretive study on charitable donation behaviour among Australian and reported that extrinsic determinants did not bear any real importance to the participants. Instead, they found that the fit of the charity with one’s self-image and donor fatigue were more prominent in their focus group discussions. Nevertheless, the alignment of the charity’s values with one’s own was not accounted for in Sargeant’s model. Bennett (2003) takes this view further by arguing that personal values can affect which charity a consumer will donate to. In a longitudinal study carried out in the United Kingdom, Bennett’s (2003) finding shown that people tend to positively identify and align themselves with the charities they donate to. This is probably due to the impact it has on one’s wider social image, and hence, consumers choose to donate to charities’ that protect the interest of their peer group. Perhaps this explains why some not-for-profits organisations are more popular with regular individual donors as people support the same as those in their immediate peer network (Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

Generally, the Sargeant’s (1999) model has been criticised as weak in a few aspects. The entire donation decision process should be more complex in practice than the model demonstrates. Particularly, the role of peer and social contexts are not fully captured; and the fit between consumer relationship to society and their self-fit to the charity is presented as static (Bennett, 2003). Polonsky et al. (2002) suggest that future framework development need to account for this shortcoming. Following these recommendations, Sargeant, West and Ford (2005) revamped their model with the inclusion of trust and commitment toward the organisations themselves and their reputations. They found that trust and commitment not only affect the number of people who chose to donate to said charity, but also influence the amount people donated.

**2.2 Surveillance and Charitable Donation Behaviour**

Despite substantial research on donation behaviour, a question remains as to how an environmental variable such as surveillance can have an impact on charitable donation. As mentioned, previous studies have highlighted the importance of intrinsic and reputation motivations to maximise others and self-perception as a reason behind making charitable

donations. Similar reasoning is seen to be important when people are aware (or made aware) that their behaviour is being monitored (Pridmore and Zwick, 2011). A fundamental reasoning to support the potential relation between surveillance and charitable donation behaviour is that individuals are driven by theories of pro-social behaviour comprised of intrinsic, reputational and extrinsic motivational factors (Ariely, Meier and Bracha 2009; Bénabou and Tirole, 2006). Specifically, Schwartz (1968a, 1968b) advanced a theory of moral decision making known as the norm-activation theory to explain individuals’ altruistic behaviour. This theory is originally applied to explain helping behaviour but it has been extended to altruistic pro-social behaviour. The presence of cameras in the environment has been demonstrated to cause people to behave in a non- deviant manner avoiding committing crimes, cheating or lying (Bauman, 2001).

Previous studies in surveillance and charitable donation behaviour highlight the role of self- perception and other reputation motivations when they are aware of being monitored (Pridmore and Zwick, 2011). For instance, Bateson, Nettle and Roberts’ (2006) study found that small environment cues can generate a sense of being watched and can work in stimulating pro-social behaviours. In their experiment, they placed a variety of pictures of eyes or faces on the wall of a small staff cafeteria and found that these cues increased pro- social behaviour in a real life setting whereby respondents have the tendency to pay more for their coffee or helping others. In support of this finding, Ernest- Jones, Nettle and Bateson (2011) discovered that using eye imagery can provoke the feeling of being watched led to people being more likely to clean up their own tables in the break room more often.

In surveillance research, there is a difference between public and private behaviour and an increased consciousness of one’s public performance seems to denote a private self- conscious. In turn, the private self-consciousness may increase one’s sensitivity to situational manipulations of pressures in the environment (Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss,

1975). This is why the use of a video camera to record naturalistic observations in research allows one to see what individuals actually do rather than what they say they do. In an attempt to examine the differences in individual’s private and public consumption behaviour, Ratner and Kahn (2002) found interpersonal influences and expressions to influence consumers’ consumption choices as they employed impression management to “fit in” with the rest of their group. Theoretically, individuals who violate their personal norms feel a sense of guilt, a loss of self-esteem and self- deprecation but when they conform to the norms of the self or group, it results in pride and enhanced self-esteem (Millham, 1974). It is reasonable to presume that the motivation to ‘fit in’ and be approved by a peer group can affect individuals’ donation behaviour. That is, the higher need for approval an individual feels, the more concerned they will be about the impression others form of them. Therefore, the presence of others or surveillance equipment will affect participants with a high need for approval to a greater extent than those with a low need for approval. Consequently, the presence of other as well as a camera have tendency to increase people’s likelihood to donate to charity (Danheiser and Graziano, 1982).

Research also attributes that people are more willing to follow rules and social codes in situations where they are aware that others are observing them due to personality traits such as self-monitoring ( van Rompay, Vonk and Fransen, 2009). Wicklund and Duval (1971) describe this as people reflecting their own norms and values against that of a wider reference group in a range of social scenarios. Upon reflection an individual will adjust their own stance accordingly to better fit the group’s norm.

**3. Concluding Remarks**

The rationale behind using pro-social behaviour as the critical link between surveillance research and charitable behaviour is well grounded in the current theoretical stream of literature. Surveillance, like use of a video camera, and awareness of being monitored is a factor that could potentially lead to an increase in donation behaviour. The use of knowledge from surveillance could be a practical solution to increase consumer donation making as the response elicits from a camera being present could see an increase in donations and the amount people donate. It is therefore important to explore the impact of surveillance on donation behaviour so that practical solutions can be offered to charitable organisations which increasingly find it challenging to survive in the current economic climate. The research summarised here has focused primarily on how the surveillance may affect consumer donation behaviour. However, the relation between surveillance and donation behaviour isn’t as straightforward as in the case of direct link. Further insights could be gained by looking at the possible moderating variables that could alter the strength of relationship between surveillance and donation behaviour. One necessary step in developing effective communication messages for promoting donation is to identify personality characteristics that are predictive of the desired behaviour (Markus and Wurf,

1987). In this instance, we propose that the need for approval and self-monitoring play an important role in the surveillance and donation research.

Based on the aforementioned theoretical and empirical rationales, we argue that it is worthwhile to examine the effects of different types of surveillance on charitable and pro- social behaviour. Experimental method of research will be the most suitable approach to investigate the nature and presence of surveillance equipment in the immediate environment and its effect on donation and pro-social behaviour. In addition, we expect that personality traits such as need for approval and self-monitoring have the potential to affect the strength of relationship between surveillance and charitable donation behaviour in a moderating capacity. Finally, the implications and outcomes of this research should be discussed from the social marketing perspective since it has an immense potential to affect major social problems (Evans and McCormack, 2008). It is deemed that the use of social marketing approach in the surveillance and donation research would benefit not only the charitable organisation but also the general society as a whole.

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