

Comparison of Giving Behaviour in Western Australia

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of survey data examining the differences and similarities of giving behaviour between university students and members of the public in Western Australia (WA). The two groups reported donating behaviour and intended donating behaviour using an established scale from Sargeant, Ford and West (2006). A convenience sample of 400 members of the general public 287 higher education students participated in a survey to explore their motivations behind giving. The results indicate that female participants generally tend to be more positive towards giving to non-for-profit organisations. Trust, emotional utility and familial utility were significant predictors of commitment that leads to future giving behaviour.

Key words: Giving; public sector; not for profit; donation

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1. Background to the Study

This paper attempts to assess the giving behaviour between university students and members of the public in WA with particular emphasis on monetary donations. The challenge facing WA not-for-profit organisations is to increase the amount of giving among current donors and attract new donors. Studies have examined what attitudes and motivations influence donating behaviour to develop a broad perspective on why individuals might give to certain charities and non-for-profit organisation (Sargeant, Ford and West, 2006; Burnett and Wood, 1988; Guy and Patton, 1989). They suggest that trust appears unrelated to the direct benefits that accrue to donors because of their gift; however, both trust and commitment predict perceived benefits to beneficiaries and the manner in which the impact of these benefits on the donors' future intentions. Bierhoff (1986) and Manner and Galliot (2007) reiterate that helping others and giving to the needy is a universal trait by most countries in the world. Different authors illustrated the motivating factors of helping behaviour (Batson, 1987; Kerbs and Miller, 1985; Mathur, 1996; Radley and Kennedy 1995) putting various models forward, however, these models failed to explain and explore the factors of that drive the value of giving (Schelegemilch, Diamantopoulous and Love, 1992).

A number of studies indicate altruism as motivating factor for the giving behaviour (Shelley and Polonsky, 2002; Hall, 2006; Manner and Galliot, 2007; Polonsky, 2003; Sargeant, 1999; Sargeant, Ford and West, 2001; Smith and McSweeney, 2007). Whilst altruism plays an important role in predicting frequent and generous giving, electing a definite type of charity to support gives people the opportunity to express their personal values (Bennet, 2003). Studies in Australia show that whilst altruistic reasons (familial utility) play an important role in giving, a stronger emphasis was also placed on egoistic reasons (emotional utility) (Polonsky, Shelley and Voola, 2002; Shelley and Polonosky, 2002; Oroz, Shanka and Handley, 2008). However, Sargeant et al. (2006) concluded that there is a significant link between emotional and familial utility as well as commitment. They also concluded that emotional utility and familial utility are of similar importance to trust in driving commitment, and consequently are leading to giving behaviour.

Having assessed the nature and applications of giving behaviour examined by previous studies, this study attempts to explore the motivating factors for giving behaviours in the context of the WA public, and to compare the difference in their giving patterns. Sargeant et al. (2006) identified six constructs that predict giving behaviour and they include emotional and familial utility, the performance and communication of an organisation, trust and commitment.

2. Methodology

This study adapted Sargeant et al.'s (2006) scale to explore what motivates people in WA to give money to not for profit organisations. The survey instrument consists of two sections. Section one contained 22 items from Sargeant et al. (2006) and one item from Söderland (2003) that sought peoples feelings about charitable giving. A seven-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) was used to measure the responses. Section two canvassed general socio-demographic questions and included gender, age, education, beneficiary, and frequency of such donations.

Four hundred members of the general public from different locations in Perth, WA and 287 students from a large WA university were approached and voluntarily participated in completing the survey. To qualify for the participation, prospective participants were screened for residency (WA), age (18 years or over), and donation history (donated to charity in the past six months). Data from 687 questionnaires were analysed using SPSS v.17. The survey participants consisted of 53% females and 47% males, aged between 18 and 55⁺. This study focuses on comparisons between two sample groups based on gender only.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Group Means Compared

Independent samples t-test scores compared group means on the six constructs. All six factors indicated statistically significant mean scores for the two groups. The general public participants scored significantly higher on trust, performance, communication, and commitment constructs while the student sample scored significantly higher means on the emotional and familial utilities constructs as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Comparison of mean scores between Groups

Constructs	Group		t-value	Sig.
	Public	Students		
Trust	6.12	4.76	18.293	.000
Performance of the organisation	6.02	4.26	20.224	.000
Emotional utility	3.12	3.71	-5.021	.000
Familial utility	2.75	3.81	-9.107	.000
Communication of the organisation	5.07	4.14	11.811	.000
Commitment	5.00	4.15	8.664	.000

In all the constructs, female participants from both groups (the public and students) showed significantly higher mean scores compared with male participants. This may indicate that women in WA may be more inclined to donate money to the not for profit organisations than their male counterparts. Furthermore, it is quite possible that there could be a link between both sample groups and gender when it comes to giving behaviour (Table 2).

Table 2.

Mean Comparison based on gender – Total Sample

Constructs	Gender		t-value	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Trust	5.71	5.42	3.137	.002
Performance of the organisation	5.49	5.06	4.077	.000
Emotional utility	3.60	3.10	4.075	.000
Familial utility	3.39	2.97	3.294	.000
Communication of the organisation	4.83	4.51	3.770	.000
Commitment	4.83	4.43	3.939	.000

Tables 3a and 3b further support the above analysis. With the exception of trust, all other constructs indicated significant differences between male and female participants for the general public. This is a further indication that women would more likely be motivated to give to not for profit organisations compared to their male counterparts (Table 3a). However, the t-test for university students for gender resulted in no statistically significant difference across all constructs. One would therefore, argue that any differences in the total sample would have come from the public, especially from the female participants (Table 3b).

Table 3a

Mean Comparison based on gender – General Public

Constructs	Gender		t-value	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Trust	6.20	6.10	1.049	.295
Performance of the organisation	6.12	5.88	2.407	.017
Emotional utility	3.46	2.64	4.730	.000
Familial utility	3.09	2.27	4.533	.000
Communication of the organisation	5.22	4.85	3.292	.001
Commitment	5.20	4.71	3.622	.000

Table 3b.

Mean Comparison based on gender –Students

Constructs	Gender		t-value	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Trust	4.85	4.69	1.251	.212
Performance of the organisation	4.36	4.17	1.357	.176
Emotional utility	3.84	3.60	1.561	.120
Familial utility	3.92	3.71	1.473	.142
Communication of the organisation	4.15	4.13	0.118	.906
Commitment	4.18	4.12	0.144	..689

3.2 Predicting commitment to giving behaviour

Multiple regressions tests examined the commitment to give to not-for-profit organisations based on trust, emotional utility and familial utility. Multiple regressions allow one to predict how well a set of predictor variable explains a dependant variable such as commitment (Pallant, 2006; Tabachnik and Fidell, 2001). In this case, the predictor variables were the three constructs that have a direct link to commitment (see Sergeant et al., 2006, p.161), which in turn predicts future giving behaviour. The multiple regression model as a whole is significant at .01 level. The multiple correlation value was .525 and multiple R^2 was .276 with adjusted R^2 of .273, a 27.3% prediction on the dependent variable, commitment for future donation. Tables 4a and 4b explain these results in more detail.

The ANOVA table (Table 4a) shows the significance level with F -value of 86.772. The coefficients table (Table 4b) indicates that all three constructs - trust, emotional and familial utility - were significant predictors of commitment. Of the three predictors, trust was the most important predictor of commitment to future giving behaviour with a beta (β) value of .499, showing a 50% predictive ability towards commitment for future giving. This was

followed by familial utility with a beta (β) value of .177 (an 18% predictive ability) and emotional utility with beta (β) value of .120 (a 12% predictive ability).

Table 4a.

ANOVA – Total Sample for Commitment

	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	348.700	3	116.233	86.772	.000(a)
Residual	914.895	683	1.340		
Total	1263.596	686			

Table 4b. Coefficients – Total Sample for Commitment

Constructs	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				B	Std. Error
Constant	.709	.249		2.845	.005	.220	1.198
Emotional Utility	.101	.029	.120	3.514	.000	.045	.157
Familial Utility	.141	.028	.177	5.123	.000	.087	.196
Trust	.564	.037	.499	15.156	.000	.491	.637

3. Conclusion, limitations and further research

Today, competition in the fundraising industry is getting more intense than ever. Hence, every dollar counts and fundraisers are always in search of greater efficiency. Trust as being the integrity of the charity, was expressed as an important factor towards a donor's commitment to give. To gain and maintain trust, organisations need to continue to meet the expectations of donors on the organisation's performance and its level of communication. Current research shows that many personal values have the potential to influence the specific genre of a charity that an individual might choose to assist. Both emotional and familial utility, together with trust, are significant predictors of commitment to future giving as shown in previous studies. Emotions derived out of giving to charity influence the commitment to give, which in turn drives giving behaviour.

This current study is unique in itself as it presents findings, which indicate that gender plays an important role in giving behaviour. It can be argued that female donors would more likely give money to not for profit organisations than male donors. This presents an opportunity for not-for-profit organisations to develop marketing strategies to target this specific group of donors. However, a number of limitations need mentioning. Due to small and convenient sample, the results from the research had limited generalisation. The sample was also limited to WA. Future research will need to collect data from different geographical settings in order to validate the findings. A tendency could also exist for a participant to present him/herself in a manner that seeks favourable impressions of others (Fisher, 1993; Oroz et al., 2008). The current study did not include questions relating to social desirability. Future research may need to control for socially desirable responses and consider examining antecedents of the likelihood of future donations.

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