THE EFFECT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON INDIVIDUALS’ GIFT-GIVING: ROLE OF CAUSE TYPE, APPEAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND DONOR MINDSET

by

MEHDI TANZEEB HOSSAIN

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2014
Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation work to my mother Mrs. Mustari Begum for all her hard work and sacrifices in developing my capabilities.

- Mehdi Tanzeeb Hossain
Acknowledgements

Undoubtedly this is one the greatest milestone that I could ever achieve in my career. First of all I would like to thank my dissertation advisor Dr. Zhiyong Yang for his patience, kindness and encouragement throughout the years of working together. Dr. Yang’s persistent encouragement over the years has greatly facilitated the accumulation of my research skills. Thank you Dr. Yang, for always being there for me and believing in my abilities. I would like to thank my dissertation committee member Dr. Ritesh Saini who has had a major influence in my development. Dr. Saini and I have collaborated in multiple research projects and his mentoring style has always motived me in conducting high quality research. I find myself blessed to have such amazing professors in my dissertation committee who have always been willing to help. Dr. Traci Freling, Dr. Adwait Khare, Dr. Mahmut Yasar and Dr. Narayan Janakiraman have provided outstanding support in conducting my dissertation work. I couldn’t have come this far without such generosity of a team of amazing professors.

I am extremely thankful to my mom and dad for their hard work in developing my abilities. My words will never be enough to describe the sacrifices you made for my future. I am ever grateful to both of you.

April 21, 2014
Abstract

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Mehdi Tanzeeb Hossain, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014

Supervising Professor: Zhiyong Yang

In two essays, this dissertation focuses on an important domain of research in marketing: how marketing communications affect individuals’ donation. For example, Globalgiving provides a myriad of projects for potential donors to form their own donation “portfolio”. However, research till date has put up little effort in identifying the potential differences between such causes which may influence donors’ portfolio decision making process. To address this issue, the first essay breaks down the donation objects/causes into two components—namely environment-focused (e.g., ozone layer depletion) and humanitarian-focused (e.g.,
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poverty)—and examines the differential effects of individuals’ holistic/analytic thinking style on environmental/humanitarian gift-giving. Six studies provide consistent evidence to show that humanitarian and environmental causes differ in specificity, abstractness, and immediacy. In addition, analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both. The mechanism underlying such effects is the level of empathy aroused by different causes. To further understand the effect of marketing appeals on donation, the second essay classifies organizational communications into transaction-oriented (e.g., asking for money directly) and relation-oriented appeals (e.g., updating potential donors about the development of the institution without asking for money), and examines their differential effects on individuals’ donation over time. The longitudinal analysis shows that relation-oriented communications create greater degree of psychological closeness between the organization and the potential donors; as such, they are likely to have more prolonged effects on donation behavior than transaction-oriented communications.
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Essay 1

Influence of Thinking Style on Individual Donation Decisions

1.1 Introduction

How do donors choose their favorite cause for donation? How do they decide whether to support an environmental group or a children’s charity? In the past few years, a growing number of organizations have come forward with the initiative of connecting donors with charitable organizations and causes for donation (Blackbaud 2010). For example, Globalgiving is a non-profit that connects donors with grassroots projects. On their website, one can find a myriad of projects to support, with some aiming at human lives and others focusing on environmental issues. Donors can create a portfolio of the projects they intend to support. Another notable example is the service provided by PayPal. One can choose his/her favorite cause for donation from a number of available causes and contribute directly from the PayPal account. eBay also offers similar services through their ‘giving works’ program which allows sellers to list items on eBay to support nonprofits. These platforms are helping donors in three ways: 1) to ease the donation process, 2) to provide donors with a large number of options to support, and 3) to make it easier for donors to build up a portfolio that fits with their distinctive needs. Unlike the early days when individual donation centered only on a few specific causes, the potential donors nowadays can experience more
variety than ever before.

Since individual donors account for the largest contributor among all sources of donation (Globalgiving 2013), it is a timely call for researchers to understand how donors choose from a number of options to donate. In this research I propose that the causes for donation differ in their nature of perceived outcome characteristics. Take the difference between humanitarian cause (e.g., poverty) and environmental cause (e.g., ozone layer depletion) as an example. The outcome of donating to a humanitarian cause is perceived as being more specific and immediate by donors, whereas the outcome of donating to an environmental cause is perceived as being more broad and delayed. I believe that such differences in outcome characteristics can drive donors to choose one cause over the other in their donation decisions.

Conceptually distinguishing humanitarian causes from environmental causes has important theoretical implications and practical values. Theoretically, the conceptual distinction between humanitarian and environmental causes opens a new avenue for future research. Previous studies in the field have mainly focused on one specific cause to study donation, such as organ donation (Pessemier et al. 1977; Kessler and Roth 2012), blood donation (Allen and Maddox 1990; Burnett 1981), contributing to cancer foundations and ill children (Liu and Aaker 2008), helping an unemployed (Small and Lowestein 2008), recycling (Granzin and Olsen 1991; Winterich et al. 2009), protecting wild lives
(Zhang et al. 2011, study 3), and saving butterflies and gazelles (Smith et al. 2013). However, research till date has put up little effort in identifying the qualitative differences among such causes which may play an important role in influencing the potential donors’ portfolio formation. Let’s take Save the Children and the Environmental Defense Fund as an example. The former works for improving children’s lives, whereas the latter mainly works to protect climate change and ecosystem. Are there any cause specific differences between these causes that can affect the decision making process for donors? If so, in which way do such differences influence donors’ preferences in forming their portfolios?

Addressing these questions not only advances my understanding about the qualitative differences between humanitarian and environmental causes, but also allows us to examine how people may respond differently to the same cause being framed as humanitarian-focused or environment-focused. For example, when calling for help for hurricane Katrina, marketers can center on human lives or environmental issues to develop the appeals. Will that make a difference? My answer is “yes” and in this research I focus on individual differences in thinking style to demonstrate.

There is considerable agreement among researchers that there are two types of thinking styles: 1) a holistic thinking style characterized by an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events
within the context in which they exist—even when such context is uninformative; and (2) an analytic thinking style characterized by the detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object to assign it to categories, and a preference for using rules about the categories to explain and predict the object’s behavior (Nisbett et al. 2001; Peng and Nisbett 1999; Choi et al. 2007). The premise on which the present research proceeds is that analytic thinkers’ tendency of separately evaluating objects will lead them to discriminate their helping behavior in favor of humanitarian causes more than environmental causes. In contrast, holistic thinkers make less of such discrimination since they think in terms of relations and connections among objects and may perceive the causes of donation as being interconnected.

In six studies, I investigate how individuals’ holistic versus analytic thinking style influences their preference for humanitarian and environmental causes. Study 1 demonstrates that humanitarian and environmental causes differ in three aspects, namely perceived specificity, abstractness, and immediacy of outcomes. Studies 2 and 3 further show that analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both. The mechanism underlying such effects lies in the level of empathy aroused by different causes: while analytic thinking leads to more empathetic reaction to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, holistic thinking generates similar level of empathy across
these two causes (study 3). Study 4 keeps the cause the same and only changes the framing of the outcome to be humanitarian-focused or environment-focused (i.e., saving human lives vs. saving the environment), and study 5 manipulates thinking style and cause type in an advertisement setting. Both studies replicate the previous findings on the differential effects of thinking style. Study 6 shows a consistent pattern using behavioral data.

1.2 Theoretical Background

1.2.1 Environmental vs. Humanitarian Causes

Individual donation can take different forms, such as donation of time (Boradbridge and Horne 1994), money (Reingen 1978), blood (Burnett 1981), and body parts (Pessemier et al. 1977). Regardless of the forms of donation, it is natural for the donors to be concerned about the impact they are making through their donation. While making donation decisions, donors are likely to foresee the impact of their donation and take the possible outcomes into consideration before donating to a particular cause.

This research focuses on two fundamental causes—humanitarian and environmental—to examine the effect of thinking style on individuals’ donation decision making. People donate for the welfare of human beings as well as for the welfare of the environment. A donation to Save the Children leads to direct impact on human lives, while a donation to Environmental Defense Fund leads to
direct impact on the environment. Therefore, I define the causes of donation that make direct impact on human lives as humanitarian causes and the causes of donation that make direct impact on the environment as environmental causes. My basic proposition is that these two types of causes differ in the nature of their outcome characteristics around three aspects, namely specificity, abstractness, and immediacy.

Regarding specificity, imagine that you are donating to a tree plantation project (an environmental cause) which will help mitigate the issue of deforestation. Even if the perceived impact of your donation is to reduce deforestation, such tree plantation efforts may bring other positive outcomes such as improving air quality, creating habitats for the wildlife, and many others. Thus the impact of tree plantation is not necessarily limited to the targeted item; rather, it has a broad influence on other interrelated factors. By contrast, donating to a poverty-fighting organization (a humanitarian cause) is very specific, i.e., the impact is primarily on helping the beneficiary resolve a particular problem.

Another characteristic that may distinct humanitarian from environmental causes is the abstractness of the outcome. I posit that the outcome of a humanitarian cause is concrete in nature, i.e., it is relatively easy for donors to foresee how their donation will affect a human life. By contrast, the outcome of an environmental cause is more abstract and it is hard for donors to figure out how much impact their own contribution can be in the whole process.
A third outcome characteristic of interest is immediacy, which contains two aspects: (1) how much time it takes for the impact to take place, and (2) how long the impact can last. With respect to the examples mentioned above, tree plantation takes a delayed time period for people to see the effects, whereas the impact of buying food for hungry children is fast and immediate. Also, the environment may enjoy the positive impact of tree plantation over a continued period of time. By contrast, the impact of helping the causes that are related to the direct welfare of human lives is likely to have a narrower timeframe (e.g., food for a day or so). The forgoing discussions lead to the following hypothesis:

\[ H_1: \text{The outcome of donation to humanitarian causes is more specific, more concrete, and makes more immediate impact than that to environmental causes.} \]

1.2.2 Thinking Style and Donation to Humanitarian vs. Environmental Causes

The terms analytic and holistic thinking style were originally introduced to explain the difference in cognition between Easterners and Westerners (Masuda and Nisbett 2002). Research shows that Westerners possess an analytic thinking style whereas Easterners possess a holistic thinking style (Masuda and Nisbett 2002; Nisbett and Peng 1999). Analytic thinkers view the world as composed of separate elements that can be understood independently, while holistic thinkers
focus on the relationships among different elements and the context (Nisbett et al.
2001). Since holistic thinkers are better at detecting covariation than analytic
thinkers, they find it difficult to isolate the objects from the field in which it is
embedded (Monga and John 2007; Nisbett et al. 2001). For example, Ji et al.
(2000) found that the Chinese respondents reported a higher degree of association
among pairs of objects than their American correspondents when being asked to
judge the degree of association among the objects. Similarly, Masuda and Nisbett
(2001) reported that, when being exposed to scenes of fishes moving together and
other animated objects, the Easterners mentioned more about the background and
the relationship between the background and the focal objects than did the
Westerners. Moreover, analytic thinkers tend to consider category membership
and attributes while grouping objects together, but holistic thinkers group objects
based on thematic interdependence (Chiu 1972 as cited in Monga and John 2007).

Even though much of the earlier research introduces the two thinking
styles as distinct across cultures, recent research finds evidence that such
differences in thinking style exist within cultures as well (Choi et al. 2007). That
is, individuals’ thinking style can be situationally activated and, regardless of their
original cultural background, their tendency of integration and separation of
objects induced by a situationally activated holistic versus analytic mindset
influences their decision making. Along this line, Monga and John (2008) studied
the effect of situationally activated thinking style on product recall, and found that
holistic thinkers are less influenced by negative brand publicity than analytic thinkers. A major reason is that holistic thinkers consider context-based explanations for negative publicity and are less likely to revise their beliefs about the parent brand. On the other hand, analytic thinkers are less likely to consider context-based explanation and they attribute negative information to the parent brand.

Extending the existing literature, I argue that analytic thinkers’ tendency of thinking in discrete terms will help them discriminate between humanitarian and environmental causes and show different levels of donation intention toward these causes. Specifically, they are more likely to donate to humanitarian than to environmental causes, due to the compatibility between humanitarian causes’ specificity, concreteness, and immediacy and analytic thinkers’ nature of thinking in discrete terms. By contrast, since holistic thinkers think in relational terms, they are more likely to find connections between the humanitarian and environmental donation causes, and therefore have similar levels of donation intention toward both types of causes. For example, a tree plantation project for analytic thinkers may be specifically related to reducing deforestation; however, for holistic thinkers, reducing deforestation is only one of tree plantation’s benefits. It can also improve the quality of human lives by increasing air quality and creating beautiful scenery. Moreover, thinking in discrete terms lead to analytic thinkers’ possession of the ability to work independently, which makes them more
concerned about the impact of their actions than the holistic thinkers (Nisbett et al. 2001).

Notably, my reasoning is also in line with individual differences in types of logic people use to evaluate an object. Holistic thinkers tend to use dialectical logic and analytic thinkers use formal logic in judgment (Nisbett et al. 2001). Dialectical logic allows contradictory logics to co-exist and make judgments based on opposing states of affairs. Therefore, holistic thinkers often take a middle way instead of extremes, leading them to discriminate less than analytic thinkers. However, analytic thinkers’ greater use of formal logic in evaluating objects may lead them to extremes rather than a middle ground (Nisbett et al. 2001).

**H2:** The effect of thinking style on donation is contingent on the types of causes. Specifically, analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both causes.

I further expect that analytic thinkers are more empathetically aroused by humanitarian causes (vs. environmental), whereas holistic thinkers have similar levels of empathetic arousal toward both causes. Relative to environmental causes, humanitarian causes are more specific and concrete, and of human relevance. I believe that the greater degree of specificity of the target stimuli for humanitarian causes can induce greater emotional engagement while processing
information. Supporting this argument, VanBoven et al. (2010) found that emotional intensity and perceived psychological proximity of an event are correlated. In fact, from a broader view, my reasoning is also in line with the “identifiable victim effect” documented in the literature, i.e., donors are more willing to contribute money to charity when the victims or beneficiaries are identifiable (Small and Loewenstein 2003). A key reason underlying such effect is that greater specificity and vividness of the distress of identifiable victims can induce greater degree of empathetic reaction toward such victims (Kogut and Ritov 2005).

Extending this stream of research, I reason that greater perceived vividness of the outcomes of humanitarian causes than environmental causes would lead to analytic thinkers’ greater degree of empathetic arousal for humanitarian causes than environmental causes. By contrast, since holistic thinkers think in relational terms, they are more likely to find connections between the humanitarian and environmental donation causes and elicit equal empathetic arousal towards both types of causes. The forgoing discussions also lead us to predict that the differential effects of holistic/analytic thinking on humanitarian/environmental cause are mediated by the level of empathetic arousal elicited by the donation cause.

$H_{3a}$: Analytic thinkers and holistic thinkers diverge in the level of empathetic arousal elicited by the donation cause. While analytic
thinkers generate greater empathetic arousal to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, holistic thinkers generate similar level of empathetic arousal across the two types of causes.

H₃ᵇ: Empathetic arousal mediates the differential effect of thinking style on donation to humanitarian and environmental causes stated in H₂.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Study 1: Humanitarian vs. Environmental Causes

1.3.1.1 Participants, Procedure, and Measures

Study 1 tests the prediction that the outcomes of donation to humanitarian causes are more specific, more concrete, and have immediate impact than the outcomes of donation to environmental causes (H₁). My sample was made up of fifty one adults (40% men; M_{age} = 34, SD = 13.72; 72% Caucasians, 10% Hispanics, 10% African Americans, and 8% Asian) who completed the study online for financial compensation. The respondents were provided with a list of six randomly rotated donation causes, including three environmental causes (saving coral reefs, informing congress on energy issues, and environmental job corporation) and three humanitarian causes (saving children affected by hurricane Sandy, providing food to the poor, and feeding hungry children). These donation causes were chosen from GlobalGiving.com where donors can choose amidst a number of different causes for donation. The task for the respondents was to rate
each cause in terms of its specificity (not specific at all/very specific), immediacy (immediate/delayed), and abstractness (concrete/abstract), on a 7-point semantic differential scale.

1.3.1.2 Results

Paired sample t-tests indicated that the humanitarian causes were perceived to be more concrete ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 5.40, M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.68; t(54) = -8.59, p < .001$), more specific ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 5.24, M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.68; t(54) = -7.25, p < .001$), and take place at a more immediate time period ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 2.65, M_{\text{environmental}} = 4.68; t(54) = 10.45, p < .001$) than the environmental causes. These results support hypothesis 1.

1.3.1.3 Discussion

Findings from study 1 confirmed the existence of differences in outcome characteristics of donation. Specifically, the outcome of donating to humanitarian causes was rated as more specific, having immediate impact, and more concrete than the environmental causes.

Extending study 1’s findings, my next set of studies examine how thinking style affects individuals’ tendency to humanitarian and environmental causes.
1.3.2 Study 2: Thinking Style and Donation Portfolio Formation

In a within-subject setting, study 2 tests my core thesis that analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both causes (H2).

The study featured a quasi-experimental design, whereby thinking style was manipulated and donation causes was a within-subjects variable. The purpose is to examine how situationally activated thinking style affects individuals’ creation of their donation portfolio.

1.3.2.1 Participants, Design, and Procedure

Fifty eight adults recruited from a nationwide online panel in the United States participated in the study in return for a small cash incentive. The mean age of the respondents was 33 (SD = 9.22) and 45% of them were females.

Participants were randomly assigned to either an analytic thinking prime or a holistic thinking prime. Following Monga and John (2007), thinking style was induced by pictures with embedded hidden images (e.g., a devil face, a lion, and a dolphin). In the analytic condition, the participants were asked to find the hidden picture in each of the pictures, whereas in the holistic condition the participants were instructed to focus on each picture as a whole and choose their favorite one to explain what they like about it.

After receiving the thinking style prime, participants were provided with a
hypothetical endowment of $100 to donate and asked to choose as many causes as they want from a list of six causes as in study 1. Similar to study 1, these six causes, three humanitarian and three environmental, were presented in a random order. Such a design reflects a decision scenario that many people are facing in reality. Indeed, donors are often confronted with myriads of donation causes and need to prioritize their choices and allocate the amount of money they plan to donate among those options. After forming the donation portfolio, the respondents indicated their allocation of donation amount to each of the chosen causes from their endowed amount of $100.

1.3.2.2 Results

Hypothesis 2 specifies that the effect of thinking style on donation is contingent on the types of causes: While analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both causes. To test this hypothesis, I derived participants’ preference for environmental versus humanitarian causes in two ways: (1) the percentage of their choices belonging to environmental/humanitarian causes, and (2) the share of the $100 allocated to environmental/humanitarian causes.

A one-way ANOVA with the percentage of environmental causes as the criterion and thinking style as the explanatory variable revealed a significant main
effect \((F(1, 57) = 10.49, p < .01)\), with a significantly higher share of environmental causes in the holistic thinking condition (45%) than in the analytic thinking condition (14%). More important and consistent with H2, there were significant differences in the ratio of humanitarian and environmental causes within each type of thinking style. As shown in figure 1, analytic thinkers’ portfolio was made up of a greater portion of humanitarian causes than environmental ones \((R_{\text{humanitarian}} = 86\% \text{ vs. } R_{\text{environmental}} = 14\%)\); however, holistic thinkers’ portfolio was equivalent to both types of causes \((R_{\text{humanitarian}} = 55\% \text{ vs. } R_{\text{environmental}} = 45\%)\). Similarly, when using the monetary share of environmental causes as the criterion variable, the ANOVA showed that the respondents in the holistic condition allocated a significantly higher share of their donation money (47%) to environmental causes than those in the analytic condition (14%; \(F(1, 56) = 10.97, p < .01\)). Supporting H2, analytic thinkers allocated a greater percentage of money to humanitarian causes than to environmental ones \((R_{\text{humanitarian}} = 86\% \text{ vs. } R_{\text{environmental}} = 14\%)\); however, holistic thinkers allocated equal amount of money to both causes \((R_{\text{humanitarian}} = 53\% \text{ vs. } R_{\text{environmental}} = 47\%)\). These results are presented in figure 2.
1.3.2.3 Discussion

Study 2 provided confirmatory evidence in support for my hypothesis that analytic thinkers prefer humanitarian causes to environmental causes in forming their donation portfolio; however, holistic thinkers are not biased toward either of
these causes in their portfolio. These findings suggest that peoples’ thinking style drives their preference in donation decision making. Consistent with the choice portfolio, individuals’ allocation of donation amount exhibits similar patterns.

Even though these results are in line with my prediction, study 2 has two potential limitations. The first is its within-subjects design. When both humanitarian and environmental causes are presented together, the choice of one cause over the other may have induced a contrast effect, i.e., the presence of humanitarian (environmental) causes may have influenced the attractiveness of the environmental (humanitarian) causes for donation. This methodological artifact has been documented by prior research, and several researchers report a preference reversal for the same options when they are presented separately versus jointly (Hsee et al. 1999; Okada 2005). Thus, testing my thesis in a separate evaluation context adds to the generalizability of my findings. A second limitation is that study 2 does not assess the mechanism underlying the differential effects of thinking style on humanitarian and environmental causes. Why do analytic thinkers have biased preferences toward humanitarian causes, but holistic thinkers do not? I have speculated that the empathetic arousal elicited by the causes is the key. Because of analytic thinkers’ discrete mode, they would develop stronger empathetic arousal toward humanitarian (vs. environmental) causes. However, due to their connectedness thinking mode, holistic thinkers see commonalities between humanitarian causes and environmental causes and
therefore generate similar levels of empathetic arousal toward these causes.

To overcome these issues, study 3 is designed to test the differential effects of thinking style in a between-subjects setting, and verify empathetic arousal as the key mechanism underlying these effects.

1.3.3 Study 3: Thinking Style and Donation to Humanitarian/ Environmental Causes

1.3.3.1 Participants, Procedure, and Measures

One hundred and sixty one undergraduate students (40% females; $M_{\text{age}} = 24, SD = 6.07$) from a major university in the southern United States participated in exchange for partial course credits. The experiment featured a 2 (thinking style: analytic vs. holistic) × 2 (causes of donation: humanitarian vs. environmental) between-subjects design. Participants first were randomly assigned to either the analytic or the holistic condition to complete the Embedded Figures Test (Monga and John 2007) used in study 2. They were then randomly assigned to either the humanitarian condition or the environmental condition. In the humanitarian condition, participants read about a project aiming for hunger reduction. In the environmental condition, participants read about a project aiming for saving marine lives that were affected by the gulf oil spillover: “The Gulf oil spill disaster is of a magnitude that we cannot comprehend. Globalgiving.com is one of the leading charities that have set up a fund called ‘Save Our Planet”
Fund’. This fund will allow us to know what the Gulf’s baseline contaminant levels are and to measure its future impact. The Gulf oil spill is the worst oil spill disaster in my history. Its impacts are just beginning to be felt. As of July 1, already over 1,300 sea birds, 400 sea turtles, and 50 dolphins and whales have been found dead meaning that thousands more have already died and sank, not washing up on shore to be counted. The amount of toxins being dumped into the entire Gulf ecosystem are unprecedented threatening not only all the Gulf’s marine life, but the Gulf’s surrounding human population as well. By measuring the toxic levels of the Gulf’s dolphins and whales, we will be able to determine what the Gulf's baseline contaminant levels are and along the way as we carry out my research, we will help to rescue any distressed animals that we find.” (Globalgiving). The causes along with their descriptions were taken from a gift giving website called Globalgiving (www.globalgiving.org).

Both causes were pre-tested on their specificity, abstractness, and immediacy. The pre-test indicated that the outcome of donating to the humanitarian cause was perceived as more specific (\(M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 5.73, M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.69; t (50) = -7.39, p < .01\)), more concrete (\(M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 5.76, M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.67; t (50) = -6.72, p < .01\)) and more immediate (\(M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 2.43, M_{\text{environmental}} = 5.24; t (50) = 9.82, p < .01\)) than the environmental cause.

After reading the assigned scenario, the participants indicated their likelihood of donating money (1 = Not likely at all; 7 = Extremely likely).
Afterwards, participants’ empathetic arousal to the humanitarian [environmental] cause was assessed by the following items: 1) I was upset to know the sufferings of the distressed people [distressed marine lives], 2) I realized that helping the distressed people [distressed marine lives] would make me happy, 3) I was very upset to see the distressed people [distressed marine lives] in pain, 4) I was upset to see the helpless people [marine lives], 5) I felt bad at the sufferings of the hungry and poor people [distressed marine lives], 6) I realized that I would feel guilty if I don’t donate to the above cause, and 7) I realized that I would regret in the future if I don’t donate to the above cause. The items were adapted from the Griffith empathy measure (Bryant 1982; Mehrabian and Epstein 1972).

1.3.3.2 Results

1.3.3.2.1 Thinking style and donation to humanitarian vs. environmental cause. I conducted a 2 (environmental cause vs. humanitarian cause) × 2 (analytic thinking vs. holistic thinking) ANOVA, with intention to donate as the dependent variable. The analysis revealed a main effect of donation cause such that participants had a greater level of donation intention to the humanitarian cause than to the environmental cause ($M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.72; M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 4.58; F(1,164) = 9.31, p < .05$). The main effect of thinking style was non-significant ($M_{\text{environmental}} = 4.05; M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 4.18; F(1,164) < 1$). More importantly, the analysis showed a two-way interaction between donation cause and thinking style.
As shown in figure 2, participants in the analytic thinking condition had significantly higher donation intention to the humanitarian cause ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 4.97$) than to the environmental cause ($M_{\text{environment}} = 3.44$; $F(1, 76) = 15.02, p < .01$). However, those in the holistic condition did not differ in their donation intention toward these causes ($M_{\text{environment}} = 4.31$ vs. $M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 3.95$; $F(1, 83) = .79, p > .30$). Overall, the results support H2 in a between-subjects setting, indicating that analytic thinking leads to greater donation intention to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinking generates similar levels of donation intention to both types of causes.

![Donation Intention as a Function of Thinking Style and Cause Type](image)

Figure 3: Donation Intention as a Function of Thinking Style and Cause Type

1.3.3.2.2  
**Empathetic arousal.** I averaged the scores on the seven measures of empathetic arousal to create a single index ($\alpha = .91$). A 2 (donation cause) × 2 (thinking style) ANOVA on the empathetic arousal index revealed a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 119) = 5.06, p < .05$). Participants in the analytic
condition had a significantly higher empathetic arousal for the humanitarian cause ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 4.31$) than for the environmental cause ($M_{\text{environmental}} = 3.01$; $F(1, 57) = 8.04, p < .01$), whereas those in the holistic condition showed a similar level of empathetic arousal for both causes ($M_{\text{humanitarian}} = 3.90, M_{\text{environmental}} = 4.04$; $F(1, 62) = .09, p > .70$). These results support $H_{3a}$.

1.3.3.2.3 Mediation analysis. I now present evidence that, the effect of the thinking style × cause type interaction on individuals’ donation intention is mediated by empathetic arousal ($H_{3b}$). Mediation was assessed with the bootstrapping method (Preacher and Hays 2004), using Hayes’ (2012) PROCESS macro. A 95% confidence interval of the parameter estimates was obtained by running 5000 times of resampling. Supporting $H_{3b}$, the results indicated that the indirect effect of the interplay between thinking style and cause type on donation intention through empathetic arousal was significant (95% CI = -1.65 to -.16).

1.3.3.2.4 Follow-up study. Since cultural orientation can be reflected by individuals’ self-construal (Markus and Kityama 1991), it may be argued that individual’s self-construal rather than thinking style is driving my findings. I conducted a follow-up study to rule out self-construal as a possible alternative explanation.

I used a 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) × 2 (donation
cause: humanitarian vs. environmental) between-subjects design. One hundred and sixteen undergraduate students from a major university in Southern United States participated in this study in exchange for course credits.

Following Jain et al. (2007), I manipulated self-construal using a brief story about Sostoras, a Sumerian warrior who needs to select an officer for an upcoming battle. In the interdependent self-construal condition, Sostoras was portrayed as sending a family member, and the motivation behind this decision was to benefit Sostoras’s family. In the independent self-construal condition, Sotoras was described as selecting a talented general, and by doing so he could benefit himself. Subsequent to reading the warrior story, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they thought Sostoras’s decision would benefit his family or himself on a 7-point likert scale, followed by to what extent they agreed with Sostoras’s decision. Finally, participants reported their donation intention to either a humanitarian or an environmental cause, as used in study 2. If self-construal is not the key driver of the findings, I would expect the interaction between self-construal and donation cause to be non-significant.

Consistent to my expectations, the 2 (donation cause) × 2 (self-construal) ANOVA on donation intention was non-significant ($F (1,113) = 1.15, p > .25$). Similar to study 2, there was a main effect of donation cause ($F (1,113) = 4.74, p < .05$), but no main effect of self-construal ($F (1,113) = .01, p > .93$). Therefore, my findings are unlikely to be driven by individuals’ self-construal.
1.3.3.3 Discussion

Studies 2 and 3 provide consistent evidence in support of my thesis that analytic thinkers have more favorable attitudes toward humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are less of such discriminators in making donation decisions. Study 3 also demonstrates that it is analytic thinkers’ greater empathetic arousal to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes that leads to their bias in donation decision in favor of the humanitarian causes.

An important limitation of studies 2 and 3 pertains to the manipulation of cause type. Although the two types of causes did elicit different levels of specificity, concreteness, and immediacy, they might have also differed in other important dimensions. In particular, data from studies 2 and 3 indicated a main effect of cause type such that people wanted to donate more to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes. Thus, the manipulation of donation cause might have confounded cause type with other factors, such as perceived prevalence of the cause. The disaster of gulf oil spill might have been viewed as a rare case by the respondents, while starvation could be considered to be a common problem in society.

The next study is designed to address this important limitation. Study 4 controls for the potential differences in cause prevalence and other confounds associated with the use of different disasters to manipulate cause type.
Specifically, study 4 keeps the cause the same and varies only the nature of impact of donation to be humanitarian-focused or environment-focused. Study 4 attests to the robustness of my findings by showing that merely framing the outcome of the same cause as either saving human lives or saving the environment can elicit the differential effects of thinking style on donation type the same way as reported in studies 2 and 3.

1.3.4 Study 4: Donating to Flood Victims

1.3.4.1 Participants, Procedure, and Measures

One hundred and sixty five undergraduate students from a large public university in the U.S. participated in the study in exchange for partial course credits. The mean age of the respondents was 24 (SD =5.54) and 41% of them were females. Study 4 featured a 2 (thinking style: analytic vs. holistic) × 2 (nature of impact: saving the environment vs. saving human lives) between-subjects design.

Similar to studies 2 and 3, participants first completed the Embedded Figures Test (Monga and John 2007) as a manipulation of analytic or holistic thinking style. After completing the thinking-style priming task, the participants were randomly assigned to either the humanitarian condition or the environmental condition. In both conditions, participants read about a recent flood incident that took place in the Northern part of India. In the environmental condition, the
participants learned that the flood has caused substantial damages to the environment (a short description of the impact on the environment was provided), whereas in the humanitarian condition, the participants learned that the flood had caused substantial damages to human lives (a short description of the impact on human lives was provided). Following the description of environmental [humanitarian] sufferings, the participants read about a charity that would plant trees in the land downstream which will help protect future flood incidents. Thus in both conditions, the cause of donation (helping a tree plantation project) was kept the same, only varying the outcome of donation (saving human lives versus saving the environment). Finally, the participants indicated their likelihood of donating (1 = Not likely at all; 7 = Extremely likely) to that charity and saving the environment [human lives] in the future.

1.3.4.2 Results

Their intention to donate was submitted to a 2 (thinking style) × 2 (nature of impact) ANOVA. There was no main effect of either thinking style ($F < 1.5$) or nature of impact ($F < 1$). However, consistent with H$_2$, the analysis revealed a significant interaction effect of thinking style and nature of impact ($F (1,131) = 4.24; p < .05$). Planned contrasts showed that analytic thinkers had greater donation intention for saving human lives ($M = 4.46$) than for saving the environment ($M = 3.51; F (1, 61) = 4.05; p < .05$). But holistic thinkers did not
differ in their intention to donate to environmental reasons ($M = 3.87$) and to humanitarian reasons ($M = 3.58$; $F (1, 70) = .59; p > .40$). These results are presented in figure 3.

![Figure 4: Donation Intention as a Function of Thinking Style and Outcome Framing](image)

1.3.4.3 Discussion

Study 4 demonstrated that analytic thinkers wanted to donate more when the impact of donation was framed as saving human lives than famed as saving the environment, whereas holistic thinkers did not differ in their intention to help across the framing conditions. Such findings provide strong evidence that it is indeed peoples’ attention towards the nature of outcome of their donation that leads them to differentiate their donation decision across causes. In addition, people make such differentiation more in favor of humanitarian causes when they
are put into an analytic mindset. Study 4 also eliminates the possibility of the impact of cause-related confounds and the possibility that perceived prevalence of a cause may have influenced my findings.

The next study focuses on a direct marketing implication of my results. In this study, I develop an ad for a humanitarian cause, in which analytic/holistic thinking style is first primed and then the outcome characteristics of the humanitarian cause is highlighted either as specific and immediate or as broad and continued. If my theory is right, I should observe the However, the people activated with the holistic mindset would not be as sensitive to the outcome framing.

1.3.5 Study 5: Using Ad Appeals to Activate Thinking Style and Frame the Cause as Specific or Broad

1.3.5.1 Participants, Procedure, and Measures

One hundred and eighteen respondents were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in a 2 (thinking style: analytic vs. holistic) × 2 (outcome framing: specific vs. broad) between-subjects study. The average age of the respondents was 30 (SD = 10.31) and 37% of them were females. In this study I used the same humanitarian cause (i.e., providing food for hungry people) as used in study 4, but framed the outcome as specific or broad.

Thinking style was manipulated using ad appeals (see appendix). The ad
appeal used in the analytic condition contained the phrase: “Think More Analytically About the World” and “The universe is composed of isolated elements”. The appeal used in the holistic condition contained the phrase: “Think More Holistically About the World” and “Everything in the universe is connected”.

In the specific-outcome condition, the outcome of donation was framed as “making an immediate impact on human lives” and “creating a specific impact which can be realized in a short time”. The appeal used in the broad-outcome condition was framed as “making a continued impact on human lives” and “having impacts in multiple ways which can be realized over time”. After reading the ad appeal, the respondents indicated their intention to donate money to the cause (1 = Not likely at all; 7 = Extremely likely). Finally, the respondents answered the following manipulation check question related to the thinking style manipulation: “There are two types of thinkers: holistic and analytic thinkers. Holistic thinkers think that objects in the world are interconnected and have common characteristics, while analytic thinkers think that objects in the world are separated from each other and have unique characteristics. Please use the scale below to indicate the degree to which you thought like a holistic thinker or like an analytic thinker while reading the donation scenario. Here ‘1’ means you thought completely like a holistic thinker and ‘7’ means you thought completely like an analytic thinker”.

30
1.3.5.2 Results

The thinking style manipulation was deemed successful, in that the participants in the analytic thinking condition thought more like an analytic thinker ($M = 4.67$) than those in the holistic condition ($M = 4.07; F (1,118) = 5.24; p < .05$). Conversely, the participants in the holistic thinking condition thought more like a holistic thinker ($M = 3.93$) than those in the analytic condition ($M = 3.33; F (1,118) = 5.24; p < .05$). Outcome framing did not affect thought type ($F < 1$).

I performed a 2 (thinking style) × 2 (outcome framing) ANOVA with participants’ donation intention as the dependent variable. The analysis yielded no main effect of thinking style or outcome framing. However, there was a significant thinking style × outcome framing interaction ($F (1,116) = 4.55; p < .05$) that was consistent H2. As presented in figure 4, analytic thinkers’ intention to donate was significantly higher when the outcome of donation was framed as specific and immediate ($M = 4.78$) than when it was framed as broad and delayed ($M = 4.05; F (1, 74) = 3.04; p = .08$). For the holistic thinkers, the intention to donate was similar across the broad ($M= 4.36$) and the specific ($M = 4.06$) conditions ($F (1, 77) = .487; p > .40$).
The findings from study 5 confirmed the findings from earlier studies, indicating that analytic thinkers’ intention to help is discriminated significantly in favor of the humanitarian causes, whereas no such discrimination is evident among holistic thinkers. An important implication of this study is that, for the same cause, framing the outcome of donation in different ways can influence peoples’ donation. Overall, studies 2-5 provide consistent evidence in support for the core thesis of the paper: the effect of thinking style on donation is contingent on the types of causes.

Next, I shift my attention towards replicating my findings in a different donation context related to individual donation to an educational institution by its alumni. Previous research shows that people’s donation behavior to an institution
with which he/she had affiliation in the past is different on certain grounds than
their donation behavior to other causes (Diamond and Kashyap 2006). While
donation to non-affiliated charities are often driven by peoples’ moral emotions,
other factors may come in to play in the situation of giving to alma mater, such as
performance of the institution (McDearmon and Shirley 2009; Weerts and Ronca
2008), involvement with the institution (Wunnava and Lauze 2001), length of stay
(Okunade and Berl 1997), major, and family tie with the institution. If my
findings from the above studies are robust, then I am likely to still replicate my
findings on the differential effects of thinking style on donation causes in an
institutional donation context.

1.3.6 Study 6: Institutional Donation

1.3.6.1 Participants, Procedure, and Measures

One hundred and twenty three alumni donors (46% females; \( M_{\text{age}} = 35-44 \)) of a large public university in the U.S. participated this study. The study
featured a 2 (thinking style: analytic vs. holistic) \( \times \) 2 (cause type: humanitarian vs.
environmental) quasi-experimental design, whereby both thinking style and the
intention to donate to the humanitarian and environmental causes were measured
as within-subjects variables.

The Developmental Office of the institution provided us the contact
information of 400 alumni donors randomly selected from their database. In the
name of a student project, I sent an invitation letter to those donors to get their help in filling out a short questionnaire. The survey provided a list of causes for future institutional development, and the donors were asked about their intention to donate \(1 = \text{Not likely at all}; 7 = \text{Extremely likely}\) to each of these causes.

The environmental causes were related to facilitating pro-environment activities on campus, including 1) tree plantation on campus, 2) the development of a pollution free campus, 3) programs related to the reduction of the environmental impacts of campus operations and activities, and 4) waste reduction. The humanitarian causes were related to helping students in need: 1) students’ costs associated with their participation to exchange programs, 2) endowment to support the most promising students, 3) support for the students with significant financial need, and 4) funding to ensure no programs or staff are cut as a result of funding declines at the university. These causes were actually implementing by the Developmental Office of the institution at the time of study. The donation intention measures were reliable for both environmental and humanitarian causes. Therefore, these items were averaged to form a composite score for each type of causes.

The respondents also completed a shorter version of the Analysis-Holism scale (Choi et al. 2007), anchored at \(1 = \text{Strongly Agree}\) and \(7 = \text{Strongly Disagree}\): 1) Everything in the universe is somehow related to each other, 2) Everything in the world is intertwined in a causal relationship, 3) The whole,
rather than its parts, should be considered in order to understand a phenomenon, and 4) It is more important to pay attention to the whole than its parts.

Finally, the respondents indicated their age, gender, marital status, and income. Extant research demonstrates that such demographics may influence peoples’ donation decisions (Bendapudi et al. 1996).

1.3.6.2 Results

In hypothesis 2, I expected that analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both causes. To test this hypothesis, I computed an index of relative preference for environmental causes (the difference between the intention scores for environmental and humanitarian causes), with a greater score indicating a greater preference for environmental (vs. humanitarian) causes. To test H2, I performed a multiple regression analysis of relative preference for environmental causes, in which the explanatory variable was AHS scores. I also included age, gender, marital status, and income as covariates. Income had a negative effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = -.15; p < .01$). Marital status, age, and gender did not have any effects ($p$’s > .15). As expected, there emerged a significant effect of thinking style on the relative preference for environmental causes ($\beta = .34; p < .05$).
1.4 General Discussion

The current research shows that humanitarian and environmental causes differ in specificity, abstractness, and immediacy. Due to such qualitative differences between these two types of causes, analytic thinkers are more willing to donate to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes, whereas holistic thinkers are equally willing to donate to both. The mechanism underlying such effects is the level of empathy aroused by different causes. This pattern of findings is persistent when the same cause is framed as having benefits on humanitarian outcomes or environmental aspects. More importantly, my research also shows that marketers can use ad appeals (see study 5) to situationally activate individuals’ thinking style, as well as frame the cause’s outcome as specific or broad, to change their intention to donate.

People’s donation behavior has been studied in numerous donation
contexts. However, previous studies in the field have mainly focused on one specific cause to study donation. Recently, marketers in non-profit organizations have started to offer potential donors a wealth of causes for them to form their portfolio for donation. To understand what factors may drive donors’ portfolio formation in this regard, I provide a conceptual differentiation between humanitarian causes and environmental causes. I suggest that the donation causes have their own outcome characteristics that can be used as inputs in donation decision making. Such conceptual distinctions among donation causes open a new avenue for future research.

My research also contributes to the literature on message framing in the donation domain. Previous literature on the effect of message framing on donation has primarily focused on positive versus negative framing (Smith and Berger 1996) and use of positively and negatively valenced pictures in facilitating giving behavior (Chang and Lee 2009). Extending this domain, I demonstrate that the framing of the potential outcome of a particular cause (e.g., humanitarian or environmental benefits, specific or broad outcomes) is another effective way to shift individual donation behavior.

Prior research has shown that people’s intention to help others can be influenced by the mindset they are put into. Liu and Aaker (2008), for example, show that asking individuals to think about donation of time puts them into an emotional mindset which facilitates their donation behavior, whereas asking them
to think about donation of money suppresses such emotional arousal and leads to lesser intent to help. On a similar note, Vohs et al. (2006) find that activating the concept of money induces peoples’ self-sufficient behavior which makes people less sensitive towards others’ need for help. Dominance of peoples’ emotions over cognition is also evident in explaining their intention to donate to an identifiable victim (Kogut and Ritov 2005; Small and Simonsohn 2007). While such research attests the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al. 1991) by showing a greater contribution of empathetic reaction than deliberate thinking in donation decision making, my research is the first to demonstrate that individuals’ mindset (thinking style in this case) may in fact influence their empathetic reaction depending upon the cause they are donating to.

1.4.1 Managerial Implications

Findings from my study offer several important managerial implications. They show that marketers can capitalize on situationally activated thinking style to enhance individuals’ donation to a particular cause. The marketplace abounds in situational contingencies that impact the relative salience of holist and analytic thinking styles. My findings indicate that analytic thinkers show increased donation tendency to humanitarian causes than to environmental causes. Thus, when a particular is in an urgent need, managers can enhance individuals’ donation intention by increasing the congruency between the cause type and the
thinking style of the potential donors. For example, in the case when humanitarian causes are in priority, marketers may find it effective to use communication appeals to enhance individuals’ accessibility of the analytic thinking style (e.g., using the ad appeals that promote the isolated view of the world, as in study 5). Conversely, if marketers want to enhance donations for environmental causes, they can use ad appeals to boost individuals’ holistic thinking. As shown in studies 2-6, holistic thinkers have even a slightly higher tendency to donate for environmental causes.

Another approach is to frame the donation cause to match with a particular thinking style. This strategy is especially useful when the decision context is prone to inducing a particular type of thinking style. For example, in a context where analytic thinking is likely to be activated by situational contingencies (e.g., when individuals are working on word puzzles), marketers may find it effective to frame the outcome of the donation cause as having humanitarian benefits. However, when holistic thinking is likely to be salient (e.g., watching global news about how a disaster in Japan may affect the rest of world), it is desirable for markers to frame the cause of having environmental benefits because holistic thinking mindset enhances empathetic arousal toward environmental causes.

The present research also provides managerial insights on the donation strategies across nations. Since Easterners are more likely to have a chronic holistic thinking style, framing the outcome of the cause as having environmental
benefits or having broad impact to society may be fruitful. However, in Western countries, marketers may want to frame the causes more toward humanitarian benefits, and highlight specificity and immediacy of the impact.

1.4.2 Limitations and Future Research

Although the present research offers strong support to the role of thinking style and cause type in donation, it is not without limitations. First, all the data are self-reported. Although the consistent patterns found in different donation contexts enhance the rigor of the findings, future research is needed to test my framework using behavioral responses. In addition, future research can expand the present study by looking into additional boundary conditions for the effect of thinking style on donation. For example, it would be interesting to investigate whether the size of donation is influenced by donors’ mindset. My findings suggest that analytic mindset leads to more donations to the causes that feature specific and immediate impact. It is possible that analytic thinkers may prefer donating a onetime large sum, while holistic thinkers may prefer breaking down the donation in a series of sequential donation amounts. Finally, the present research focuses only on monetary donations. Previous research shows that currency (e.g., time and money) can interact with individuals’ mindset to affect donation intention. Liu and Aaker (2008), for example, show that asking individuals to think about donation of time puts them into an emotional mindset.
which facilitates their donation behavior, whereas asking them to think about
donation of money suppresses such emotional arousal and leads to lesser intent to help. Therefore, it is fruitful in the future research to examine how donation currency may set up a boundary condition for my findings.
Essay 2

Influence of Collaborative Communication on Alumni Donation

2.1 Introduction

During the recession years, the public higher education institutions received a drastic setback in state funding. The consequence of budget cuts included an increase in tuition rates, increase in dropout rates and reduced research productivity. National Science Foundation reported that public research universities have experienced a 20% reduction in funding between the years 2002 and 2010. In face of such dramatic setback from federal funding, higher educational institutions have become dependent on donation from its alumni members more than ever before. In this research I demonstrate how educational institutions can facilitate alumni donation through designing an efficient communication strategy. I propose and show that collaborative nature of institutional communication is more helpful in facilitating private donations than transactional nature of such communication.

The concept of relationship marketing emphasizes on the ‘stakeholders as partners’ view (Arnett et al. 2003). Collaborative communication could be one of many factors that induce such partnership. Research over the years has explored the coordinating and organizing role of collaborative communication. Previous research finds that in presence of a weaker control in a dyadic relationship,
collaborative communication can enhance outcomes (Mohr and Nevin 1996). Mohr and Nevin (1996) also demonstrate that a match of a collaborative channel condition and a collaborative communication strategy enhances outcomes. Given such relationship enduring role of collaborative communication, we are yet to know whether such communication is powerful enough to facilitate private donation to organizations. Higher education research intensively discusses about the antecedents of alumni donation to educational institutions. However such research mostly focuses on performance factors of the institution and donors’ personality factors. For example research shows that performance factors of the institution such as quality of education in the institution and its effort in the development process may facilitate donors’ intention to donate to a large extent (Baade and Sundberg 1996). Also, donors’ greater involvement with the institution is likely to facilitate their donation intention (Tsao and Coll 2004). Unlike communication, the performance factors are often hard to transform and there could be managerial infeasibility of implementing such donation inducing activities in the short term. For example, enhancing involvement of the donors and improving upon the performance factors of the institution may take time to be realized whereas revising the contents of communication may not be as effortful and time consuming. Thus there is a call for greater examination of the altruism inducing role of collaborative communication both from the theoretical and practical perspectives.
In this research, I am emphasizing on the fact that a greater degree of collaborative environment between the donor and the institution is likely to enhance donors’ intention to help the institution. Communication that are focused more on relationship enhancement are likely to contribute more in building a collaborative environment between the donor and the institution whereas communication that are more transaction oriented may induce a more transactional environment. For example, the alumni members of the institution receives different types of communications over the years including communications related to alumni events, institutions’ progress and development and funding and finances of the institution. I posit that while the first two communication types categories might facilitate a collaborative environment between the donor and the organization, the third type may create a more transactional environment.

I test such role of collaborative communication in shaping donation intention through a mediation model. I posit that collaborative communication reduces psychological distance of the potential donors with the institution which enhances their future donation intention. A more collaborative nature of the communication between the organization and the donors are likely to create a greater degree of overlap of the identity of the donors’ self with the identity of the institution. Such overlap with the identity of the self with that of the institution will in turn facilitate donors’ intention to help the institution over time. Thus I
demonstrate that a more collaborative nature of the communication facilitates
donation behavior both in the short term and the long term. On the other hand, a
more transactional nature of the communication is likely to induce distance
between the donors’ perceived identity of the self and that of the institution. Thus
while transactional communication may facilitate donation behavior in the short
term, such communication is likely to exert a negative impact on peoples’ giving
behavior in the long run.

In what follows, I present the analysis of an in depth interview conducted
among the alumni donors of a large public university. Next I develop my
conceptual framework based on my literature review and findings from the in
depth interview (study 1). In study 2, 3 and 4 I present the empirical test of my
model. In study 2 I collected responses from six hundred and thirty one alumni
association members of a large public university. In study 3 I surveyed three
thousand and seven hundred students of the institution who are likely to be
potential donors of the institution in future. I then present the analysis from a
behavioral data collected from the development office of the institution
comprising of the donation behavior of the alumni and the history of different
types of communication they had received over a period of seven years.
2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Qualitative Study (Study 1)

An in depth interview was conducted by graduate students among twenty alumni donor members of a large public university. A careful examination of the interviews revealed that information communication was repeatedly mentioned to be an important influence factor for donation intention. In terms of efficiency in information communication, donors were concerned about four key facets of it: (1) lack of focus on relationship building (2) clarity about the reasons behind donation (3) lack of communication regarding progress and developments of the institution and (4) clarity about how past donation are used. Other important and frequently mentioned characteristic of effective communication was the frequency of communication and mode of communication. Therefore, the important factors influencing communication efficiency were broadly identified as communication content, communication frequency and mode of communication.

In terms of frequency of communication, a number of donors have mentioned their dissatisfaction regarding receiving infrequent communication from the university. Also, they have mentioned that such communication should not focus only on donation; there could be other motives for such communication that would facilitate relationship building. Thus, infrequent communication (i.e. once or twice a year) and always asking for donation exert negative influence on donor intention. As one of the respondents expressed his dissatisfaction:
“Oh occasionally, and occasional phone calls but its always asking me for money.”

Moreover, respondents mentioned that other charities that are their priority destinations for donation communicate with them more frequently:

“I donate to the rotary club….Yes I’m on an email network with them and I receive emails and communication from them all the time.”

The mode of communication was also an important factor, mostly influencing the convenience for donation. Most of the donors have expressed their preference for an online system of donation since such mode of donation was thought to be most convenient:

“…………Mail is definitely the worst way to reach me”……… “In my case, an online donation form might get better results. I think I also receive communication in the mail, but that is definitely the worst way to reach me. In general, I feel that my family and I paid for my education, and I just don't feel that I owe them anything additional”

Regarding the content of information, of supreme importance were information about the reasons behind donation, information about need of the organization and information about how the past donations were used.
“They want you to pledge money but they really don’t give you any information as to what it’s for…” 

“Most of the others charities are pretty good about sending out information.”

Donors also emphasized on the importance of marketing communication that could enhance the visibility of the organization. A number of respondents mentioned the university as carrying a low profile which needs to be improved by advertising communication that makes the organization more visible.

“I don’t think their marketing scheme is very good. Like when I drive on I-30 and see their billboards they’re not very persuasive. Like who chose those people? The activities that they’re doing to persuade me it doesn’t jump out at me. “

In summary, the alumni members emphasized on making the nature of the communication more relation oriented, receiving information about the progress and development of the institution and being communicated about the usage of their donation money.
Figure 7 shows the framework for my study. The focus of my study is on the role of types of communication in inducing helping behavior of the donor members of an institution. My theorizing is based on the fact that greater share of relational communication than transaction communication induces greater degree
of collaborative environment with the donor-institution dyad. I expect that greater
degree of relational communication will facilitate donation intention and behavior
by enhancing the donor-organization identity overlap. In addition to the main
constructs I also control for the age, gender, marital status, number of children,
length of membership, ethnicity of the respondents and the respondents’
perception about the quality of education delivered by the institution. I controlled
for such factors since previous research demonstrates that donation behavior can
be influenced by such demographic factors and donors’ perception about the
institution (Bendapudi et al. 1994).

2.2.2 Hypothesis Development

2.2.2.1 Communication and Relationship Orientation

Usage of appeals in marketing communication has been extensively
studied in both psychology and social psychology literature. The most popular
forms of such appeals are legitimizing a paltry donation (LPD), anchoring,
positive/negative framing of donation message and guilt appeals (Bendapudi et al.
1996). LPD refers to the use of appeals that even a tiny amount of donation would
help (Shearman and Yoo 2007). Anchoring refers to including an anchor donation
amount (Smith and Berger 1996). The anchor may either be the donors’ own
donation at a previous time period or others’ donation amount (Smith and Berger
1996). Framing of the donation message in a positive or negative way is likely to
influence the donors’ valence which in turn would have context dependent impact on their helping behavior (Chang and Lee 2009). Labeling refers to the endorsement of the donor as a generous person which is likely to facilitate their helping behavior dependent upon the type of labels or feedback (Moore et al. 1985). Finally communication with guilt appeals typically reminds the donor of the consequence of not helping (Hibbert et al. 2006). While a majority of such appeals are used in influencing individual donation to charities, organizational communication may also influence donation behavior of the members of the organization. Certain types of organizational communication may create appeals to donors in certain ways. Communication is a means for persuading stakeholders (Frazier and Summers 1984) and plays an important role in enhancing trust and commitment in the relationship (Anderson and Narus 1990). However, its impact on relationship building is dependent on the nature of communication. For example, a two-way communication is often more relationship inducing than a one-way communication. Similarly communication content and therefore quality determines its impact on bilateral relations (Mohr and Spekman 1994). Mohr and Nevin (1990) investigate the impact of communication in a channel relationship and argue that a collaborative atmosphere is induced by a nature of communication that is more collaborative and has a more relationship enduring impact among channels partners. The significance of their work emanates from their classification of communication strategies into dimensions such as
frequency, direction, modality and content. Although a minimum amount of communication is required to enhance bilateral trust and coordination, care needs to be taken regarding overload of communication. That is, it is important to determine the optimal level of communication rather than relying on greater frequency of it (Mohr and Nevin 1990). The direction of communication is indicated by the direction of the flow of communication. Communication can flow both vertically and horizontally within an organization (Farace, Monge and Russell 1977). However such flow may also be between the organization and an external stakeholder. Similarly important is the content of communication which is the focus of my current study. I posit that communication content can be classified into types such as relational and transactional and a relational nature of communication may facilitate donation intention more than a transactional nature of communication. I propose that in contexts of donation to institutions, the persuasive power of communication is enhanced when it is collaborative in nature. Obvious features of collaborative communication are its intensity and relationship orientation (Mohr et al. 1996). In my proposed model I demonstrate that greater variety in relational communication may influence donation intention in both the short run and the long run whereas greater variety in transactional communication does not facilitate donation intention.

I define relational communication as the communication that is directed towards enhancing the relational bond between the donor and the organization.
The alumni members of an educational institution may receive multiple such communications throughout the year. For example, alumni members may receive a holiday messages from the president, appreciation for their contribution to the institution and invitation about participating in cultural events. Such communications are likely to contain a relational appeal in that they demonstrate the willingness of the institution to establish a long term relationship with the organization. Moreover, informing the alumni members about the progress and development of the institution may also be perceived as relational in nature since such communication is likely to reveal the identity of the institution. Such news could be about the institution overall as well as about the specific college/school/department the alumni graduated from. For example, in certain educational institutions the alumni may receive a letter from the president describing the annual developments in terms of improvements in facilities as well as progress in education and research. Such category of communication may also include information about activities that could influence the institutions progress and development (i.e., external speaker series). Transactional communications are classified as those communications sent to donors that ask for donation in a more direct way. For example, alumni members can be asked for a yearly donation during the end of the year, informed about the financial need of the institution, informed about the budget situation of the institution etc. Frequent solicitation attempts over the phone (phonathons) may also be classified as transactional
communications. My framework proposes that compared to an exchange oriented communication with donors, a more collaborative type communication is more effective in facilitating the donors’ helping intent over time.

Fiske (1992) proposes that as human beings my networks of social connections are organized in terms of social relations. The four basic types of social relationships as suggested by Fiske are communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching and market pricing. While market pricing is more of a transaction oriented type of social relationship, the other three types are more relation oriented. Particularly my focus is on the types of communication that may enhance a more communal relationship. Small and Simonsohn (2008) find that donors are more empathetic towards victims with whom they are engaged in a more communal relationship than in an exchange relationship. Their explanation is based on the fact that relationship closeness has impacts on empathetic reaction. Along similar lines, my framework posits that organizational communication that induces greater degree of collaboration with donor members induces members’ greater willingness to support the institution than exchange oriented communication. I also posit that such communication facilitates donors’ intent of belongingness to the groups and therefore their in-group membership.
2.2.2.2 Communication, Identity Salience and Donation Intention

The pathway through which the communication types may influence future donation intention is through enhancing the donor-organization identity overlap. I believe that a collaborative nature of the organizational communication will make a long term impact on donors’ intention to donate since such communication will enhance greater degree of donor-organization identity overlap.

Collaborative communications’ role in enhancing donor-institution identity can be explained from the perspective of Social Identity Theory. The tenets of the Social Identity Theory posit that people evaluate their identity based on their affiliation with certain social groups (Ashforth and Mael 1989). The motivation behind such classification emanates from peoples’ aspiration of belongingness to a certain group of individuals. Thus to identify themselves with that group, people try to adopt the characteristics of individuals already belonging to the group. Enhancement of such identity factors is facilitated by consumers’ perception about the company and personal experiences with the organization. Also the importance of the institution to the members is likely to facilitate such identification (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Of greater relevance to my context is the findings form research on customers’ embedded relationship (Granovetter 1985; Rao, Davis, & Ward, 2000). Such research invokes that greater degree of embedded relationship enhances customers’ insider orientation with the
organization and greater degree of insider orientation with the organization enhances peoples’ alignment of personal goals with organizational goals by reducing psychological distance with the organization. As a consequence, organization members are likely to demonstrate greater degree of helping attitude towards the organization. For members of educational and financial institutions, greater identification leads to greater financial and membership related support to the organization (Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Wan-Huggins, Riordan, & Griffeth, 1998).

In this research I assert that greater degree of collaborative communication may lead to donors’ greater intention of helping the institution in future through the ease of donor-organization identification. Here I am proposing a salience enhancing role of collaborative communication. Greater degree of relational (collaborative) communication is likely to facilitate developing organizational image to its donor members which in turn help the mapping of self-image with that of the organization. From the perspective of relationship marketing I am arguing that collaborative communication with its focus on relational orientation with stakeholders promotes the institution-self-identity in the hierarchy of identities that the stakeholders possess.

Based on the above discussion I posit that:
H1: Relational communication will have:

a) a short term direct impact on individuals’ donation intention and

b) a long term indirect impact on individuals’ donation intention through greater degree if donor-organization identity overlap

H3: Transactional communication will have no impact on individuals’ intention to donate.

H4: Greater degree of donor-organization identity overlap will have a positive impact on individuals’ intention to donate.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Study 2

2.3.1.1 Sample

The alumni from a large public university were sampled. The survey was administered as an online panel study. The respondents received an invitation email to participate in the study. From among the pool of respondents, one randomly selected respondent was rewarded with a $100 cash prize. A total of 4450 invitation emails were sent to respective alumni members, of which 621 complete responses were received yielding a response rate of 14%. Among the respondents 51% were females. The average age of the respondents was in the range of 35-44 years. About 55% of the respondents were married. The average
annual household income for the respondents was in the range of $100,000 to $124,999.

2.3.1.2 Measures

Individuals’ intention to donate money was measured by assessing their intention to donate to seven possible programs at the university that required their support. The programs included: 1) supporting costs of building state-of-art facilities, 2) Contributing to research projects conducted at UTA, 3) ensure no programs or staff are cut as a result of funding declines to UTA, 4) building an endowment to support those students who have displayed significant financial need, 5) building an endowment to support the most promising or accomplished students, 6) supporting the costs of sending UTA students to contests or competitions and 7) supporting students' cost associated with participating in international exchange programs. The dependent variable was the summated measure of the respondents’ intention to donate to the seven different programs. The content of relational communication was measured by the number of different types of communications received by the alumni members that were focused on enhancing relationship between the alumni member and the institution and informing the alumni members on the progress and development of the institution. I had identified six such communications sent from the institution to the alumni members over a period of twelve months. The participants indicated
which communications from the list they had received in the past twelve months (see appendix for the exact measure). I also had identified five possible communications related to the institutions’ funding and finances sent to the alumni members over a period of twelve months and the respondents indicated which communications they had received during the previous twelve months. Next the respondents indicated in which modes they had received communication in the past twelve months. I had identified seven possible modes through which the respondents could have received communication from the institution. The list of modes included: 1) email, 2) telephone, 3) face to face meetings, 4) text messages, 5) direct mail, 6) facebook and 7) twitter. The content of relational (transactional) communication was measured by taking the sum of such communication received in each mode. The respondents also indicated their perception of the frequency of each type of communication received. The identity measure was adopted from Ahearne et al. (2005). The respondents indicated how much overlap they perceived between the identity of themselves and the identity of the institution.

Finally, the respondents completed the demographic questions related to age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and income. The demographic variables were used as control variables since previous literature indicated that donors’ donation intention and behavior can be influenced by certain demographic variables. The
respondents also indicated their perception about the quality of education at the institution.

2.3.1.3 Analysis and Results

The index for each type of communication received by the respondents was the sum of each type of communication they had received across all possible modes. The frequency of each of communication was the average of the frequency of each type of communication received.

The results of the regression models are presented in table 1. In terms of the control variables, gender had a strong relationship with individuals’ intention to donate in that males intended to donate more than females. Age had a strong relationship with intention to donate in that younger individuals wanted to donate more than the older individuals. The finding can be explained by the fact that the length of time staying away from the institution increases with an increase in age of the alumni. Marital status had a significant impact on donation intention in that individuals with a family wanted to donate less. Surprisingly, income of the alumni did not have an impact on the alumni’s donation intention. I also didn’t find any impact of the length of membership. Finally, donors’ perception about the quality of education provided by the institution had a strong positive impact on their donation intention.
In terms of the main effects, I had predicted that relational communication will have both a direct and indirect impact (through donor-org identity overlap) on individuals' intention to donate. I also had predicted that transactional communication will have a nonsignificant impact on donation intention. The analysis provides direct support to my predictions. Relational communication had strong positive impact on both donation intention and identity overlap (supporting H1). Transactional communication neither had a direct impact nor an indirect impact on donation intention (supporting H3). Another notable finding was the impact of perceived frequencies of each type of communication on donor-organization identity overlap and donation intention. My analysis indicated that frequency of communication had neither an impact on donation intention nor on donor-organization identity overlap.

A mediation analysis was conducted (see table 2) following the Baron and Kenny (1986) procedure. I found that the impact of relational communication on donation intention was partially mediated by donor-org identity overlap. The impact of relational communication on
Table 1: Influence of Relational Communication on Alumni Donation Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type (Constant)</td>
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<td>0.14**</td>
<td>0.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.09**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.25***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>0.11***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Quality</td>
<td>0.18***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.65***</td>
<td>3.08***</td>
<td>5.82***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .05   (t > 1.96)
***p < .01   (t > 2.58)
Table 2: Influence of Relational Communication on Donation Intention (Mediation Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IV $\rightarrow$ DV (Don. Intention)</th>
<th>IV $\rightarrow$ Mediator (Donor-Org Identity)</th>
<th>IV+ Mediator $\rightarrow$ DV (Donation Intention)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Communication Type</strong></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>0.19***</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Frequency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency (Relational)</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>Frequency (Relational)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency (Transactional)</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>Frequency (Transactional)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.09**</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>0.11***</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>-0.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-0.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Quality</td>
<td>0.18***</td>
<td>Perception of Quality</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>Membership Length</td>
<td>-0.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>5.82***</td>
<td>15.68***</td>
<td>6.59***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R Sqr.</strong></td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj R Sqr.</strong></td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .05 (t > 1.64)  
***p < .01 (t > 2.58)
donation was significant, in the second regression the impact of relational communication on donor-org identity overlap was significant and in the third equation the impact of relational communication on donation intention became weaker when I included both the mediator (Donor-Org Identity Overlap).

2.3.2 Follow up Study 2

I had conducted a follow up study where I surveyed two thousand and thirty three students from a large public university. The average age of the respondents was 27 (SD = 9.93) and 67 % of them were females. The mean household income of the respondent group was $22,590. First the respondents indicated a possible list of modes (i.e, newsletter, email, mail, face to face, phone, text messaging) in which they could have received communication asking for joining the alumni association. They were asked to select the modes in which they received such communication. The respondents could select multiple options had they received such communication from multiple modes. The sum for each respondent was coded as the extent to which a respondent had received communication asking for joining the alumni association. The respondents also indicated whether they received communication related to sports and cultural activities and whether they received communication related to the alumni association. Similarly, the respondents indicated how often they had received
communication from the university asking for their monetary support. They also indicated how often they received information about UTA’s usage of donation money and alumni donation. Following the questions related to communications received, the respondents indicated their frequency of engagement in a variety of activities. Certain engagements were classified as utilitarian engagements as their primary purpose was to achieve some functional goals such as academic and professional excellence, spiritual purity etc. Engagement into honors programs, professional clubs, religious organizations on campus, student government were classified as utilitarian engagements. Also, the primary purpose of engaging in certain activities on campus could be for fun, fantasy and emotional well beings. Examples of such engagements could include engagement in intramural sports, cultural events, social clubs, homecoming celebrations etc. Participants received a list of both hedonic (for fun and emotional wellbeing) and utilitarian events (for functional purposes) and indicated how frequently they had participated in such events where 1= never and 7= very often. The summated score of the participants’ frequency of engagement into utilitarian events were coded as their frequency of engaging in utilitarian events and that of their engagement into hedonic events was coded as their frequency of engaging in hedonic events. My expectation is that similar to relational communications hedonic engagements will have a direct impact of individuals’ donation intention as well as an indirect impact through donor-organization identity overlap. On the other hand similar to transactional
communication, utilitarian engagement will not have any impact on donation intention.

2.3.2.1 Analysis and Results

The results of an OLS analysis are presented in table 3. The analysis revealed that relational communication had a significantly positive direct impact on donation intention as well as an indirect impact through donor-organization identity overlap. Transactional communication neither had a direct impact on donation intention nor an indirect impact through donor-organization identity overlap. A mediation analysis following Baron and Kenny (1986) procedure indicated that donor-organization identity fully mediated the impact of relational communication on donation intention. In terms of engagement factors, I found that hedonic engagements had a direct impact on donation intention as well as an indirect impact through donor-organization identity overlap whereas utilitarian engagement did not have any impact on donation intention. Also notable is the finding that the impact of relational communication and hedonic engagement was fully mediated by donor-org identity overlap.
Table 3: Influence of Relational Communication and Hedonic Engagement on Donation Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IV $\rightarrow$ Don. Int.</th>
<th>IV $\rightarrow$ Identity</th>
<th>IV+Identity $\rightarrow$ Don. Int.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Comm. Type:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>n.s</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LogIncome</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adj. R Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$p < .05$** (t > 1.96)

***$p < .01$** (t > 2.58)
2.3.3 Study 3

In study 3, I had collected behavioral data about the alumni donors’ history of donation behavior. I also had collected data about the types of communication received by each individual donor over a period of seven consecutive years (2006 - 2013). I had collected the samples of communication received from the development of the institution. After reviewing the communication materials, I could apparently classify them into two types: relational and transactional.

2.3.3.1 Analysis and Results

The independent variable was the relative percentage of relational communication received. A tobit analysis (see table 4) revealed that the relative percentage of relational communication had a significant positive impact on total amount donated by the donors. That is, greater share of relational communication relative to transactional communication facilitated donation intention. I had estimated the following equations:

1) \( \text{Logdonation}_i = \beta 1 \text{Relational communication} + \varepsilon_i \)

2) \( \text{Logdonation}_i = \beta 1 \text{Relational communication}_t + \beta 3 \text{Relational communication}_{t-1} + \varepsilon_i \)

3) \( \text{Logdonation}_i = \beta 1 \text{Relational communication}_t + \beta 2 \text{Relational communication}_{t-1} + \beta 3 \text{Membership Category} + \beta 4 \text{Membership} \)
Consecutive Years $\beta_5$ rating as Gift Giver $\beta_6$ Gender $\beta_7$ Marital Status $\epsilon_i$

I also had estimated the following panel regression using the random effects model:

1) $\text{Logdonation}_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Relational communication}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Relational communication}_{it-1} + \beta_3 \text{Membership Category}_i + \beta_4 \text{Membership Category}_i + \beta_5 \text{Consecutive Years}_i + \beta_6 \text{Rating as Gift Giver}_i + \beta_7 \text{Gender}_i + \beta_7 \text{Marital Status}_i + \epsilon_i$

### Table 4: Influence of Relational Communication on Donation Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tobit</th>
<th>Panel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Relational Communication (base)</strong></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.98***</td>
<td>5.06***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Relational Communication (lagged)</strong></td>
<td>3.86***</td>
<td>2.55***</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Membership Category</strong></td>
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<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership Consecutive Years</strong></td>
<td>.16***</td>
<td>.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gift Rating</strong></td>
<td>-.72***</td>
<td>-.15***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>-.98</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** $p < .05$ (t > 1.64)
*** $p < .01$ (t > 2.58)
2.4 General Discussion

Even though the primary benefits received from a marketing exchange are monetary, often individuals involve in marketing exchanges looking for non-monetary benefits (Arnett et al. 2003). The motivations behind such exchanges are non-monetary in that individuals look for either emotional or familial utility from such exchanges rather than economic utility (Sergeant et al. 2008). Organizational factors play critical roles in facilitating social exchange behavior. In my research I focus on the influence of organizational communication on donation motive of its members. Specifically, I examine the influence of organizational communication on donation intention through the lens of relationship marketing. In study 1 I conducted a qualitative study, an in depth interview with the alumni association members of a large public university as an attempt to explore the factors influencing their donation behavior to the organization. I follow study 1 with a survey of the alumni donors, students of an educational institution and a secondary data about alumni donation behavior collected from an educational institution to gather supportive evidence of my prediction and present a confirmatory analysis of my conceptual framework.

Overall, the series of studies conducted revealed that the relational aspect of organization communication is important in enhancing helping behavior. From my research it is evident that effective implication of communication factors indeed enhances helping behavior. Such effectives emanates from the inducement
of greater share of relational than exchange oriented components while communicating with alumni donors. I further demonstrate that relational communication enhances donor-organization identity overlap and therefore is likely to exert a long term positive impact on donation behavior.
Appendix A

Stimuli for Study 5 (Essay 1)
Appendix B

Communication Content- Study 2 (Essay 2)
Of the information you received from the university during the past 12 months, please indicate in which of the following modes did you receive those information (Please select all that apply).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Face to face meeting</th>
<th>Text messages</th>
<th>Direct mail</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Other social media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Alumni Mixer<br>The Alumni and Friends picnic<br>The Distinguished Alumni Gala<br>Campus development or construction<br>Faculty achievements<br>School/college you graduated from

Usage of donation money<br>Alumni contributions<br>University's budget<br>University's need for financial support<br>UT Arlington expenses<br>Request for donation
References (Essay 1)


Globalgiving, “www.globalgiving.org”


References (Essay 2)


Correlates Among Art Museum Members,” *Journal of Marketing*, 59(October), 46-57.


Biographical Information

Mehdi Tanzeeb Hossain received his B.S.S (Honors) in Economics from the University of Dhaka in 2006, M.S.S in Economics from the University of Dhaka in 2008 and Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2014. Prior to joining the Ph.D. program at UT Arlington, Mehdi used to work for a multinational telecommunication company. During his years in the Ph.D. program Mehdi has achieved several academic excellence including publishing in prestigious marketing outlets, receiving an award for his teaching and research excellence, receiving doctoral fellowship and being awarded with a Phi Kappa Phi honor society membership. His area of research interest is consumer behavior that investigates how consumers’ emotions and cognition interplay in influencing their decision making in the market place.