
Literature Review

Frances Huehls

is associate librarian for the Joseph and Matthew Payton Philanthropic Studies Library at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. She holds masters degrees in philanthropic studies and library science, as well as a PhD in higher education from Indiana University. Dr Huehls is editor of *Philanthropic Studies Index*, an online periodical literature index and *PRO: Philanthropy Resources Online*, a full-text resource for the field of philanthropic studies.

International Journal of Educational Advancement (2011) 10, 211–216.
doi:10.1057/ijea.2011.4

**ALTA F. MERCHANT,
JOHN B. FORD AND
ADRIAN SARGEANT
(2010) CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATIONS
STORYTELLING INFLUENCE
ON DONORS' EMOTIONS
AND INTENTIONS. *JOURNAL
OF BUSINESS RESEARCH* 63:
754–762**

Storytelling is often utilized in fund raising solicitations. Stories are a means to engaging the empathy of prospective donors, differentiate organizational mission and facilitate a positive emotional outcome for donors by providing a means of participating in the story and its outcome through their gifts.

As stories unfold, they initiate distinct emotional stages. The statement of need often triggers negative reactions such as anger or sadness. The response to the negative emotion is to try to move back toward a more positive steady emotional state. The opportunity to donate helps the reader move in a positive emotional

direction. This effect can be enhanced by acknowledgement of the gift and its impact – essentially, a happy ending to the story. Although stories have been used throughout fund raising history, no research has been done on the emotional response to fund raising stories.

Methodology

The authors used several existing scales. Intent to donate was measured using the Raganathan and Henley (2007) intention to donate scale. PANAS (positive affect-negative affect schedule Watson *et al*, 1988) and the pleasantness/unpleasantness scale (Watson and Tellegen, 1985) were used to measure emotions.

Participants were 319 undergraduates at a major American university. The story utilized a fictitious charity and problem statement. All participants were exposed to the same problem but were randomly assigned to one of three feedback scenarios.

The five hypotheses tested and the outcome of the analysis were as follows.

The problem presented in the story is more likely to evoke feelings of

Correspondence: Frances Huehls
IUPUI University Library, 755 W. Michigan, Indianapolis,
Indiana 46202, USA
E-mail: fhuehls@iupui.edu

anger or sadness than more pleasant and positive reactions, stated as:

Hypothesis 1: The statement of the problem evokes higher levels of negative emotions than positive emotions (p. 758).

The data support the hypothesis. In the next stage of the appeal, the reader is encouraged to donate to help resolve the problem. This opportunity allows the mood to move from negative back toward positive, reestablishing a steady state. This is stated as:

Hypothesis 2: The opportunity to donate will evoke higher levels of anticipated positive emotions than negative emotions (p. 758).

The data support the hypothesis. The act of donating further repairs the negative mood, stated as:

Hypothesis 3: The levels of positive (negative) emotions that consumers experience after reading the statement of the problem will increase (decrease) after donating to charity (p. 758).

The data fully support the hypothesis.

Feedback helps donors decide if their gifts are effective. To determine the effect of feedback or its absence, two hypotheses were generated:

Hypothesis 4a: The levels of positive (negative) emotions arising out of donating to charity increase (decrease) after receiving feedback from the charitable organizations (p. 758).

The data partially support the hypothesis. Positive emotions did not increase after receiving feedback from the organization.

Hypothesis 4b: The levels of positive (negative) emotions arising out of donating to charity decrease (increase) after receiving no feedback from the charitable organization (p. 758).

The data fully support the hypothesis. The final three-part hypothesis addresses the role of feedback on intent to donate in the future, stated as:

Hypothesis 5a: The levels of intention to donate to the focal charity increase after receiving feedback from that charitable organization (p. 758).

Hypothesis 5b: The levels of intention to donate to the focal charity decrease after receiving no feedback from that charitable organization (p. 758).

Hypothesis 5c: The levels of intention to donate to the focal charity are higher for consumers receiving feedback in comparison with those that do not receive feedback from that charity (p. 758).

The data supported all of the three parts of the hypothesis.

Implications for research and practice

The outcome of this study has implications for both academics and practitioners. The current work should be expanded over a wider range of consumer types and across a wider



geographic area. In addition, future studies should test for effectiveness of certain types of problem statements and the degree to which empathy affects reaction to the story. Actual giving behavior should be compared with measures of intent to donate, as intent may be inflated as there is no actual cost. Fund raisers should recognize the value of stories as a means of attracting donors. The study demonstrates the importance of feedback. All donors should receive an acknowledgment of their gift.

REFERENCES

- Raganathan, S.K. and Henley, W. (2007) Determinants of charitable donation intentions: A structural equation model. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13(1): 1–11.
- Watson, D., Clark, L.A. and Tellegen, A. (1988) Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54(6): 1063–1070.
- Watson, D. and Tellegen, A. (1985) Toward a consensual structure of mood. *Psychological Bulletin* 98(2): 219–235.

**RACHEL T.A. CROSON,
FEMIDA HANDY AND JEN
SHANG (2010) GENDERED
GIVING: THE INFLUENCE
OF SOCIAL NORMS ON
THE DONATION BEHAVIOR
OF MEN AND WOMEN.
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF NONPROFIT AND
VOLUNTARY SECTOR
MARKETING 15: 199–213**

The nonprofit literature continues to address ways to increase fund raising effectiveness. The focus of this article is on how social norms influence donations and how much of this influence is determined by gender. No prior research has been done on the

combined effect of social norms and gender on charitable giving behavior. In this study of supporters of a public radio station that used field and laboratory examinations, the authors found that men show increased giving behavior in response to social norms.

Prior research indicates that social norms influence behavior. Self-focused mechanisms influence how people react to maintain their own vision of themselves, whereas relationship mechanisms influence what people do to retain positive relationships with those groups who support the social norm. The extent to which either type of norm will influence a person is based at least in part by gender. Prior research indicates that men are more sensitive to self-focused social norms and women are more sensitive to relationship norms.

Both types of norms can influence giving behavior. If self-sustaining behaviors are what is significant in public radio giving, then the following hypothesis would be supported:

Hypothesis 1a: Descriptive social norms will influence the level of contributions by men more than by women (p. 202).

However, if donations to public radio are relationship driven, females should react more strongly to social information influencing the fund raising solicitation.

Hypothesis 1b: Descriptive social norms will influence the level of contributions by women more than by men (p. 202).

In the field study, the authors conducted a survey of active and recently lapsed donors to a public

radio station. The survey was sent during a random renewal month along with the renewal request. It asked donors to respond to a list of 21 motivations for giving to the station and asked respondents to rank these on a 1–5 scale. The survey also asked about listening habits and history, the importance of public radio for them, and asked for an estimate of what other people donate. Out of a mailing of 7123 surveys, the initial response was 975 (13.7 percent). Of these, 394 identified themselves and answered all questions. Regressions were carried out on three scenarios that used dependent variables of average contributions, contributions in year before the survey and contribution in year following the survey. Results indicated that men are more strongly influenced by social norms than are women, supporting H1a. This suggests that in public radio fund raising, solicitations that support self-concept preservation will be more effective than those that focus on relationship maintenance.

To verify these findings, the authors carried out a laboratory experiment. In this phase, social information was provided to participants and then examined for how gender affected response.

Undergraduate participants were presented with a fictional scenario about donating to public radio and were told that they had decided to contribute a specified amount to the station. Then the participant was told that another donor had contributed either much more or much less than that amount. The participant was asked how much they thought an average contribution would be and then how much he or she would contribute at a later time. There was

a clear gender difference in the relationship between the social norm and the intended future donation. Results were consistent with the field experiment: social norms influence giving behavior but mostly for men. Follow-up tests on the data confirmed these findings.

Male giving is influenced by the introduction of social norms but women's giving is not. The significance for fund raising is that public radio stations and other non-relationship-based nonprofit organizations should focus their fund raising efforts on appeals that connect to the donors' sense of self.

**DAVID J. WEERTS,
ALBERTO F. CABRERA
AND THOMAS SANFORD
(2010) BEYOND GIVING:
POLITICAL ADVOCACY AND
VOLUNTEER BEHAVIORS
OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI. RESEARCH IN
HIGHER EDUCATION 51:
346–365**

Alumni support higher education in numerous ways, including monetary contributions, lobbying, professional expertise, mentoring of younger alumni and recruitment of students. The focus of research has been limited to monetary contributions. Because of this 'campus leaders know very little about the impact of these efforts, the types of alumni most likely to serve the institution, and the range of ways that alumni support the institution' (p. 347). This research seeks to fill that gap by documenting the variety of activities that alumni participate in to support higher education.

Confirmatory factor analysis is used to determine if these activities fall



into one or more conceptual categories.

The study is significant because it can help campus administrators evaluate whether their efforts to involve alumni are effective and create a foundation for further research to determine the characteristics of alumni who would be attracted to various support roles. In addition, practitioners may be able to use results to 'better match alumni with support opportunities, increase the efficiency and quality of alumni recruiting efforts, and achieve better advancement outcomes' (p. 347).

A two-phase methodology of qualitative focus groups followed by a quantitative survey was used to study one research extensive public university. The objectives of the focus groups were to understand how alumni felt about the institution, to determine the activities that alumni use to support the institution, and gather information about how to increase alumni involvement. Focus group participants were already strong supporters of the institution. The authors found that alumni activities other than donations fell into the areas of political advocacy and volunteerism.

The focus group information was used to develop an instrument called the Alumni Connections Survey that queried a range of behaviors and alumni level of involvement using a 4-point scale. The survey was sent to 2400 alumni. Of the 60 percent or 1441 respondents, the focus of analysis was on 514 alumni who indicated that they engage in service for the institution.

The two constructs that emerged were political and volunteerism roles. Political advocacy roles included

contacting legislators, the governor's office or local politicians and participation in a political action team. Volunteerism roles were recruiting new students, mentoring alumni and participation in special events. In many cases, political advocacy and volunteer roles fell outside the formal organization structure. For campus administrators, the 'question remains about whether the messages from political advocates outside this network are in line with those promoted by the institution' (p. 355). Where do alumni get their information and is it in line with institutional policies? Although alumni participation through volunteerism is an encouraging sign for administrators, the direction of these efforts is not always clear. For example, administrators need to ask whether alumni are encouraging the types of recruits that the institution wants.

In addition to redefining alumni roles into donors, volunteers and political advocates, the results indicate a number of new roles and responsibilities for alumni relations staff. Because of the level of activity going on under the radar, alumni relations staff need to get in touch with the types of ways that alumni are participating to make sure that they are in line with institutional goals. Alumni who are already engaging in advocacy and volunteer activities need to be guided into formalized institutional programs. Particularly in the area of political advocacy, alumni relations need to be sure that the messages of alumni and the institution do not conflict. The information sources that alumni are getting must carefully articulate the institution's priorities.



This research also suggests that it is possible to identify alumni who would be most willing to serve in certain roles. Additional work is needed to uncover the attributes of alumni who would be most inclined to serve in advocacy, volunteer or both roles.

OTHER RECENT RESEARCH OF NOTE

Bekkers, R. (2010) Who gives what and when? A scenario study of intentions to give time and money. *Social Science Research* 30: 369–381. Study uses a factorial survey to examine material, social and psychological reasons for giving and volunteering, as well as socio-demographic and personality traits. Social factors tend to increase giving and volunteering, as well as factors that appeal to efficiencies in donation or are for local causes. Empathy and education also increase giving and volunteering tendencies.

Bernholz, L., Skloot, E. and Varela, B. (2010) Disrupting philanthropy: Technology and the future of the social sector. Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/31178075/Disrupting-Philanthropy-FINAL>. Reports on how information networks have fundamentally changed the philanthropic world during the last decade.

Hope Consulting. (May, 2010) Money for good: The US market for impact investments and charitable gifts from individual donors and investors, http://www.hopeconsulting.us/pdf/Money%20for%20Good_Final.pdf. The study was structured around three areas of inquiry: how nonprofits can increase dollars raised from individuals, how to guarantee that the most effective nonprofits get the highest share of donated dollars and understanding the market for impact investing and how it can be met. A qualitative phase consisting of focus groups and interviews was used to formulate a survey administered online to 4000 high income individuals.