Introductions

This study examined how both social identification and peer generosity influences giving behaviour. Participants (n = 40) were exposed to two “Go Fund Me” like pages requesting donations. The first request involved a student, while the second request was to support a non-profit organization. Half the participants were exposed to a list of more generous donors with higher average donations, while the second half were exposed to less generous donations. When exposed to more generous donations and similar individuals, participants donated significantly more.

This research increases our understanding of how online donations can be manipulated.

Abstract

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Introduction

• Historically, group obedience has often been associated with maladaptive behaviour. For example, Solomon Asch researched how humans conform against basic logic/reason.
• Social norms can also influence individuals to engage in proactive behaviour. For instance, there is a positive association between observing prosocial behaviour and subsequently engaging in empathetic actions (Nook, Ong, Morelli, Mitchell, & Zaki, 2016).
• With new charity websites like “Go Fund Me”, donators and their donations are visible. Does the presentation of others, their identities, and their donations influence other’s donation behaviour?

Method

• Participants (n = 40) were conveniently sampled from the Vancouver Island University (VIU) Nanaimo campus.
• All participants were shown two “Go Fund Me” charity scenarios that included a list of donators and an average donation (see Image 1 & Image 2). Half the participants were further exposed to VIU student donations (see Chart 1).

Results

• A significant difference was found in relation to students donating similarly as students (t(37) = 1.86, p = 0.035). This finding only applied to the charity directed towards an individual (see Figure 1).
• A repeated measures t-test was also conducted to compare the mean donation for the individual and organization charity. A significant difference was found with more being donated to the organization (t(36) = 4.4678, p < 0.001; see Figure 2).

Discussion

• A charity directed towards an individual in need evokes a significant level of peer conformity. It can be supported that donators will donate similarly as other students in this context. Organization orientated charities do not appear to elicit a significant amount of peer conformity.
• The generosity of a participant's donation is influenced by exposure to an ungenerous/generous list of donators and an average donation. This relationship does not appear to be affected by the type of charity.
• These findings will allow non-profit organizations to tailor their charities to their target population and potentially maximize their profits.

Reference


Keywords: prosocial conformity, donation behaviour, social identification, peer groups, empathy