

Altruism, warm glow, and generosity: A national experiment (#1872)

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1) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

The main research question in this study is: To what extent are citizens in the Netherlands responsive to knowledge about third party contributions to charitable organizations?

The key hypotheses are: 1. Participants will reduce their donations when third party contributions increase ('crowding out'), but the crowding out-effect is less than unity. 2. The crowding-out effect is smaller at higher third party contribution levels.

A secondary research question in this study is: To what extent is giving behavior by citizens in the Netherlands responsive to social information and appeals to prosocial values and guilt? The hypotheses are: 3. The appeal to prosocial values, the appeal to guilt and the provision of social information condition increase the warm glow index and hence total giving. 4. Dispositional principle of care is positively associated with the warm glow index. 5. Dispositional empathic concern is positively associated with the altruism index. 6. The warm glow index declines with the number of decisions made, the altruism index does not.

2) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

The dependent variables in the test of the key hypothesis are the amount donated in each of the six budgets participants think about, and the responsiveness to the amount contributed by a third party. The dependent variables in the hypothesis tests of the secondary research question are the principle of care, the generosity expected of others, feelings of guilt, and the amount donated across all six budgets.

3) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

All participants will evaluate six budgets in an incomplete 2 (income: €40 or €46) x 6 (third party contribution: €4, €10, €28, €34) design. Between subjects, participants are randomized to eight sequences, with each sequence listing the six budgets in a different order. In addition, participants will be assigned to one of four (between subjects) conditions: (1) control; (2) prosocial value appeal; (3) social information; (4) guilt appeal. Assignment to the sequences and motivation manipulations are independent. The experiment will first be conducted with hypothetical budgets, before it will be conducted with real money.

4) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

First we regress giving behavior on income and third party contributions to determine the level of altruism (α) and warm glow (β) in the responsiveness to third party contributions from the budgets. Then we regress total generosity $\Gamma = \alpha + \beta$ and the altruism and warm glow parameters on the dispositional principle of care and a set of covariates known to be related to giving behavior measured in GINPS16.

To answer the secondary research question, we will report straightforward comparisons of means for giving behavior, the principle of care (state and trait), generosity expected of others, and (state) feelings of guilt. We employ an instrumental variable analysis to determine the effect of the manipulations.

5) Any secondary analyses?

We check whether generosity (total giving Γ conditional upon income) as well as the altruism index ($\tau = \alpha / \Gamma$) and the warm glow index ($\nu = \beta / \Gamma$) vary between different sequences of budgets and how depend on the use of hypothetical vs real money. We explore how the level of crowding out varies between individuals in relation to the principle of care, empathic concern, and total giving in the past calendar year.

6) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

915 respondents in the Giving in the Netherlands Panel Survey 2016 (GINPS16) will be invited to participate in the current experiment. At an expected response rate of 70% about 640 participants will be recruited for the experiment, so that each condition includes 160 participants. A series of power analysis demonstrates that differences of 3.33 or higher in the slopes for two groups of 160 in the tests for the primary research questions yield 80% power. For the tests of the secondary research questions effect sizes of 0.3 can be detected at 85% power or more with 160 participants. The budget for the experiment with real money allows for 480 participants, yielding 75% power for effect sizes of 0.3 and differences in slopes of 4 and higher.

7) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., data exclusions, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

The materials for this experiment are made available at the project page on the Open Science Framework, <https://osf.io/hr4sn/>

This list of organizations used in this experiment is created by 'Cooperation with experiments for charity', <https://osf.io/m3jha/>

8) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet