



# Pride and gratitude: Egoistic versus altruistic appeals in social media advertising<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

In an examination of charitable advertising on social media, the authors show that pride and gratitude determine the effects of egoistic versus altruistic appeals. Across three experimental studies of prosocial advertising conducted in the United States and India, participants who are induced to feel pride are more influenced by Twitter and Instagram ads that focus on egoistic (vs. altruistic) benefits, while participants who are induced to feel gratitude are equally influenced by ads that focus on egoistic and altruistic benefits in terms of donating greater amounts (Study 1) and intending to donate (Studies 2 and 3). Theoretical insights and practical implications for social media fundraising campaigns are discussed.

## 1. Introduction

Individual charitable giving is the main driver of global philanthropy. In 2020, individual donors gave more than 69% of nearly \$471.4 billion of total charitable giving (Giving USA Foundation, 2021). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become promising venues to promote individual donations for top-rated charities such as UNICEF, United Way, and Red Cross. About 18% of individual donors worldwide have used Facebook fundraising tools, and 55% have engaged with charitable organizations on social media (NP Source, 2020). Thus, philanthropic organizations are particularly interested in understanding the message factors that motivate individual donors.

Charity campaigns often use two contrasting message strategies. They may use egoistic, self-benefit appeals to emphasize that donors themselves will benefit by giving, or they may use altruistic, other-benefit appeals to highlight that recipients in need will benefit. For example, World Vision International runs several Google ads that use self-benefit approaches through slogans such as “Maximize your tax benefits by donating” and other-benefit approaches through slogans such as “Give to children and families in need.”

Are self-benefit or other-benefit appeals more effective for driving charitable giving? Numerous efforts to answer that question have

produced mixed findings (e.g., Brunel & Nelson, 2000; Fisher, Vandenbosch, & Antia, 2008; Kim et al., 2021; White & Pelozo, 2009). Negative emotions, particularly guilt and shame, have been shown to strongly affect reactions to appeals (Bae, 2020; Baek et al., 2019; Bashir et al., 2018; Chang, 2014; Fisher, Vandenbosch, & Antia, 2008; Lee, Choi, & Muldrow, 2020; Mitchell & Nelson, 2018), but we lack studies showing whether positive emotions such as pride and gratitude also affect persuasiveness. Indeed, positive emotions are known to generally motivate prosocial behaviors and monetary donations (Baek & Reid, 2013; Goenka & Van Osselaer, 2019; Michie, 2009). More specifically, pride and gratitude can motivate prosocial behaviors, so donation campaigns often choose pride and gratitude over other positive emotions such as happiness and hope (Paramita, Septianto, & Tjiptono, 2020; Septianto & Garg, 2021). Recognizing a need to fill the gap in the literature, we designed our research to examine how pride and gratitude systematically shape responses to social media donation campaigns using self-benefit and other-benefit appeals.

Appraisal-tendency theory (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Lerner & Tiedens, 2006) explains that pride is closely linked to self-agency appraisals, while gratitude is closely linked to other-agency appraisals. Drawing on the theory, we suggest that pride and gratitude will drive the effectiveness of donation appeals. To analyze how social marketers should frame message appeals, we conducted three studies observing

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how the positive emotions prevalent in target audiences interact with message framing for eliciting responses to charitable appeals. Our studies were based on the premise that message recipients who feel proud will be more persuaded by messages that use egoistic framing, while recipients who feel grateful will be more persuaded by messages that use altruistic framing.

Therefore, our primary purpose in this research is to examine whether individuals who feel proud (grateful) respond more favorably to donation appeals that highlight self-benefits (other-benefits) on social media posts. Our work advances the literature that has shown the effects of internal and external cues for prompting socially desirable behavior (Baek & Yoon, 2017, 2020; Baek, Yoon, & Kim, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018, 2020; Lee, Zhao & Chen; 2021, Lim et al., 2020; Pittman & Sheehan, 2021; Septianto & Garg, 2021; Yoon, Kim, & Baek, 2016).

Next, we review self-benefit and other-benefit appeals for their efficacy in charitable campaigns and consider how egoistic and altruistic motives drive the effects. Then we discuss how and why pride and gratitude may play critical roles in altering individual responses to donation campaigns.

## 2. Self-benefit versus other-benefit appeals

Charitable advertising campaigns frequently use self-benefit appeals to motivate donors who tend to support charities for egoistic reasons, or they use other-benefit appeals to motivate donors who support charities for altruistic reasons (Chang, 2014). Self-benefit appeals emphasize that donors themselves will be the primary beneficiaries through tax benefits or the good feelings from giving. In contrast, other-benefit appeals highlight that individuals or organizations needing help will be the main beneficiaries and use appeals that emphasize opportunities to help others and make the world better (Baek et al., 2019; White & Peloza, 2009).

Some scholars believe that people are basically selfish and act pro-socially only to boost their own well-being (Slote, 1964). That is, they want to enhance the happiness of others only if their beneficence enhances their own happiness (Feinberg, 2013). The selfish view would indicate that self-benefit appeals that directly pertain to egoistic motives, such as receiving tax deductions or posting good deeds on social media, would be most persuasive. A contrasting view is that people are altruistic and empathetic, are genuinely concerned about the welfare of others (Batson, 1991; Fisher, Vandenbosch, & Antia, 2008), and will respond to other-benefit appeals.

Several factors have been shown to affect the persuasiveness of self-benefit and other-benefit appeals in charity campaigns (e.g., Baek et al., 2019; Brunel & Nelson, 2000; Fisher, Vandenbosch, & Antia, 2008; White & Peloza, 2009). For example, people who have strong (weak) impression management needs are more likely to donate in response to other-benefit (self-benefit) appeals (White & Peloza, 2009). Women (men) respond more favorably to other-benefit (self-benefit) appeals (Brunel & Nelson, 2000). Consumers feeling ethical dissonance are more (less) likely to support prosocial campaigns using other-benefit (self-benefit) appeals (Kim et al., 2021).

Negative emotions such as guilt and loneliness have been shown to influence responses to self-benefit and other-benefit appeals. For example, in one study (Chang, 2014), student participants viewed an ad recognizing students who donated their scholarships to the United Way. The results showed that participants who felt guilty responded more positively to an egoistic ad (“Giving makes you happy”) and less positively to the altruistic ad (“Your contribution can help others lead a happier life”). Other research has used the “Cyberball” task, a ball-tossing game, to induce states of social exclusion (inclusion): participants in exclusion (inclusion) conditions receive fewer (more) ball tosses and are then more persuaded by other-benefit (self-benefit) appeals (Baek et al., 2019). However, scant attention has been paid to the effects of positive emotions except to show that positive emotions are stronger

than negative emotions for motivating prosocial behaviors (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

Researchers are increasingly interested in examining whether discrete emotions rather than the valence of emotion have the greatest power to shape charitable behaviors (Goenka & Van Osselaer, 2019; Villegas & Morton, 2020). Discrete positive emotions—love, pride, gratitude, hope, and compassion—have been shown to promote prosocial behaviors and increase monetary donations (e.g., Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce, 2015; Ma, Tunney, & Ferguson, 2017; Paramita, Septianto, & Tjiptono, 2020; Septianto & Garg, 2021). Love, however, was shown to be more powerful than hope, pride, compassion, and neutral emotions for increasing donations that benefit distant others (Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce, 2015). The next section explains why we believe that social marketers should align self-benefit (other-benefit) appeals with pride (gratitude).

## 3. Pride and gratitude

Appraisal-tendency theory posits that positive emotions trigger positive assessments, while negative emotions trigger negative assessments (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Lerner & Tiedens, 2006; Lee, Kim, & Lim, 2021; Pounders, Roynce, & Lee, 2019; Tian & Li, 2021; Villegas & Morton, 2020). Emotions have six cognitive appraisal dimensions influencing subsequent judgments: certainty, pleasantness, attentional activity, control, anticipated effort, and responsibility (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). For example, when individuals appraise events as being certain and controllable (uncertain and uncontrollable), they feel happiness (anger) and form positive (negative) appraisals (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Appraisal-tendency theory also explains that emotion-eliciting situations provide appraisal information that predicts subsequent judgments and behaviors (Salerno, Laran, & Janiszewski, 2015). For example, Venmahavong et al. (2019) compared carryover effects of positive versus negative emotions to show that YouTube viewers watching comedy (tragedy) clips gave positive (negative) evaluations of midroll ads. Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards (1993) evoked sadness by having study participants imagine the death of their mothers and evoked anger by having them imagine receiving a low grade from an unfair teaching assistant. Then participants were asked to imagine their feelings after missing a plane. Participants primed with anger tended to make dispositional attributions (e.g., “I am late because of a careless cab driver”), while participants primed with sadness tended to make situational attributions (e.g., “I am late because of bad traffic”). When Bang, Yoo, and Choi (2017) showed video clips of 9/11 memorials to manipulate sadness or clips of natural disasters to manipulate fear, they found that fearful (sad) participants responded more favorably to prevention-focused (promotion-focused) patriotic ads.

Pride has been shown to drive egoistic motivations, while gratitude drives altruistic motivations (Agrawal, Han, & Duhachek, 2013; Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Goenka & Van Osselaer, 2019). That is, people tend to feel that they have personal control over emotions such as guilt and shame: they blame themselves for wrongdoing and are thus likely to be more receptive to new information coming from others. Similarly, pride is a positive emotion associated with self-control (e.g., “I feel good about myself”). In contrast, when people feel negative emotions such as anger, they tend to think that others are in control, to blame and distrust others or situations and thus resist new information. Gratitude is also linked with controlling others/situations (e.g., “I am thankful for the kindness of others”). More relevant to our research, Paramita, Septianto, and Tjiptono (2020) found that pride increased publicly recognized donations, but gratitude increased both publicly recognized and anonymous donations. In sum, pride and gratitude have positive but distinct effects on appraisal tendencies, with divergent influences on responses to subsequent information (Michie, 2009).

Individuals feel pride when they positively appraise their personal competence, behaviors, and achievements (Tracy & Robins, 2007;

Weiner, 1986). For example, students feel proud when they do well on difficult exams; employees feel proud when they are selected for promotions. Pride evokes self-esteem, feelings of being separate and somewhat more accomplished than others (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Salerno, Laran, & Janiszewski, 2015; Tracy & Robins, 2007; Trope, 1980), which can affect self-regulatory goals (Salerno, Laran, & Janiszewski, 2015), decisions to purchase luxury brands (McFerran, Aquino, & Tracy, 2014), and sustainable consumption (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014). Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen (2011) conducted a study in which participants in the pride condition (control condition) wrote about an accomplishment that made them feel proud (a typical day) and then chose gift certificates for entertainment (the self-indulgent choice) or school supplies (the practical choice). Participants manipulated to feel pride were more likely to choose the indulgent behavior. In addition, pride was shown to promote prosocial judgments, such as altruism and relationship maintenance (Tracy & Robins, 2007). In contrast, the loss of pride threatens egotism and may trigger aggression, hostility, and other maladaptive behaviors (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998).

Gratitude arises when individuals feel that they have benefitted from the concern and kindness of others, even if the benefits are unearned (Emmons, 2004; Goenka & Van Osselaer, 2019; Ma, Tunney, & Ferguson, 2017; McCullough et al., 2001). Gratitude also comes from taking the perspective of others and imagining their thoughts, feelings, or concerns in particular situations (Epley, Caruso, & Bazerman, 2006; Poelker, Gibbons, & Maxwell, 2019). Considering the effects of gratitude and compassion, Goenka and Van Osselaer (2019) suggested that organizations that promote the welfare and humanitarian relief causes, such as the Red Cross, should use messages that evoke compassion, while organizations that promote justice and equality, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, should use messages that evoke gratitude.

The kindness of others strengthens social bonds, triggers gratitude, and motivates desires for reciprocity (Agrawal, Han, & Duhachek, 2013; Ma, Tunney, & Ferguson, 2017). Indeed, consumers who felt gratitude rather than pride were shown to be more likely to purchase products in donation-promoting campaigns (Septianto & Garg, 2021).

To summarize, we contend that pride and gratitude have different effects on appraisal tendencies and reactions to subsequent self-benefits versus other-benefits appeals. Integrating the literature on other-benefit versus self-benefit appeals and pride versus gratitude, we propose that message recipients are likely to be more receptive to messages that match their emotional states. Thus, we postulate that charitable donation intentions are likely to increase when social media charitable campaigns induce pride (gratitude) matched with self-benefit (other-benefit) appeals. We hypothesize:

**H1a:** For individuals experiencing pride, self-benefit rather than other-benefit appeals will lead to greater donation intentions.

**H1b:** For individuals experiencing gratitude, other-benefit rather than self-benefit appeals will lead to greater donation intentions.

We test our hypotheses in three studies examining both incidental and integral emotion induction procedures and using diverse samples of college students and nonstudent U.S. and Indian adults. In Study 1, student participants perform an essay-writing priming task in which they recall and write about an experience that made them feel pride or gratitude. They then view a Twitter message that uses self-benefit or other-benefit appeals for charitable donations. Essay-writing tasks are commonly used to manipulate incidental context-induced emotions that are irrelevant to the focal ad (Baek & Yoon, 2017; Baek et al., 2019; Septianto & Garg, 2021). In Study 2, we use a nonstudent U.S. adult sample and induce feelings of pride or gratitude through an Instagram message, a practical way to induce integral and relevant emotion (Chang, 2006; Paramita, Septianto, & Tjiptono, 2020). In Study 3, we replicate the findings from Studies 1 and 2 with an Indian adult population but add a control condition to compare message-induced pride

and gratitude.

#### 4. Study 1

In Study 1, we primed participants with positive emotions and examined their responses to Twitter ad messages that promoted charitable giving for a humanitarian organization.

##### 4.1. Method

The study was a 2 (incidental emotion: pride vs. gratitude)  $\times$  2 (message appeal: self-benefit vs. other-benefit) between-subjects design. One hundred forty undergraduate students (47.1% men, average age: 20.1) from a southeastern U.S. university participated in exchange for course credit.

To induce pride and gratitude, we used an essay-writing priming task (Baek & Yoon, 2017). Participants in the pride condition wrote about an event that made them feel proud; those in the gratitude condition wrote about an event that made them feel grateful. Next, participants viewed one of two fictitious Twitter postings from Habitat for Humanity with self-benefit appeals (“Charitable giving makes your life more meaningful and earns tax benefits”) or other-benefit appeals (“Donating can improve life for others”) (Appendix A).

As a dependent variable, we measured donation amounts by asking participants to imagine having \$100 to donate and to indicate how much they would donate, from \$0 to \$100 (Baek et al., 2019). For the manipulation checks, participants rated their feelings of pride or gratitude (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*), and evaluated donation appeals on a three-item, 7-point scale anchored by *benefits for others/for you*; *helping others/yourself*; and *looking out for the interests of others/of yourself* ( $\alpha = 0.97$ ; Baek et al., 2019).

##### 4.2. Results

Emotion and donation appeal manipulations were successful. For the essay-priming task, participants in the pride condition reported more pride than gratitude ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 5.77$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 3.30$ ;  $t = 7.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while those in the gratitude condition reported more gratitude than pride ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 3.96$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 6.46$ ;  $t = 7.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For the donation appeals, participants reported that the self-benefit appeal emphasized helping oneself ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 4.49$ ), and the other-benefit appeal emphasized helping others ( $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 3.24$ ,  $t = 3.47$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

ANOVA results revealed no main effects of emotion ( $F(1, 136) = 0.03$ ,  $p = .85$ ) and message appeal ( $F(1, 136) = 0.32$ ,  $p = .57$ ). However, emotion and message had significant two-way interaction effects on charitable giving ( $F(1, 136) = 4.93$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As Fig. 1 shows, in support

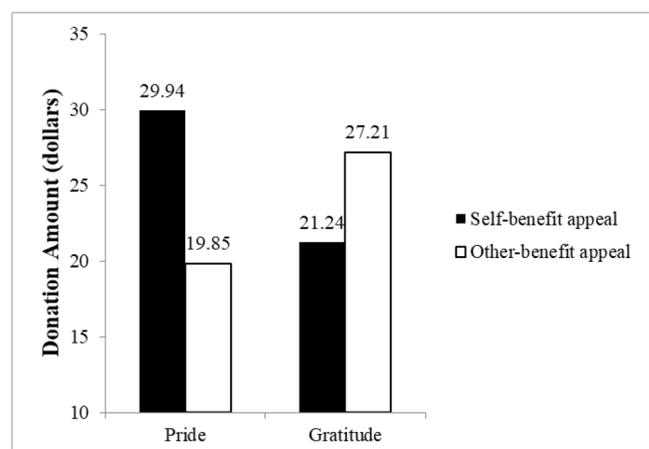


Fig. 1. Study 1 Results: American student sample.

of H1a, follow-up contrasts indicated that participants in the pride condition would give more money when they viewed a self-benefit rather than other-benefit appeal ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = \$29.94$  vs.  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = \$19.85$ ;  $t = 2.02$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.48$ ). However, under the gratitude condition, the direction of the mean difference was consistent with H1b, but self- and other-benefit appeals showed insignificant differences ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = \$21.24$  vs.  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = \$27.21$ ;  $t = 1.14$ ,  $p = .26$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.27$ ).

#### 4.3. Discussion

Study 1 provides support for H1a, which posits that individuals experiencing pride are more persuaded by self-benefit rather than other-benefit messages. However, the study fails to give statistical support for H1b: that is, self- and other-benefit messages appear equally persuasive for individuals experiencing gratitude.

### 5. Study 2

In Study 2, we replicated the findings from Study 1 in a different setting. Using a new ad campaign for a different charity organization, we created four advertisements that simultaneously induced emotions and manipulated message appeals.

#### 5.1. Method

Study 2 used a 2 (emotion appeal: pride vs. gratitude)  $\times$  2 (message appeal: self-benefit vs. other-benefit) between-subjects design. The goal was to conceptually replicate the findings from Study 1 with three variations. First, we used a nonstudent sample to increase generalizability. We recruited 241 nonstudent American adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk (58.1% men, average age: 36.6). Amazon MTurk samples have been found to be more valid and demographically representative than college student samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling 2011).

Second, we induced feelings of pride and gratitude by altering the advertising messages (Paramita, Septianto, & Tjiptono, 2020) instead of using the essay-writing priming from Study 1. That is, we varied the advertising messages to prime the emotion simultaneously and manipulate the donation appeal, resulting in four advertisements (Appendix B), with two variations: the slogans highlighted either self-benefits (“Make your life more meaningful and earn a tax deduction by giving your support”) or other-benefits (“Help others suffering from hunger and make our community a better place by giving your support”); and the testimonials highlighted pride or gratitude (“I really want to fight hunger and spark positive change in our community. I am very proud/grateful to be part of this change”).

Third, we used a food bank as the charitable organization and changed the dependent variable to donation intentions. We asked participants to indicate their likelihood of donating on a 7-point scale anchored with *unlikely/likely*, *impossible/possible*, and *improbable/probable*, where higher numbers represent higher likelihoods (Baek & Yoon, 2017).

#### 5.2. Results

Participants in the pride condition rated more feelings of pride than gratitude ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 4.44$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 3.59$ ;  $t = 3.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while those in the gratitude condition reported more feelings of gratitude than pride ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 3.11$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 4.56$ ;  $t = 5.85$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, participants perceived that the self-benefit appeal focused on helping oneself ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 4.31$ ) and the other-benefit appeal highlighted helping others ( $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 2.39$ ,  $t = 7.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

ANOVA results showed no main effects of positive emotion ( $F(1, 237) = 0.17$ ,  $p = .68$ ) and message appeal ( $F(1, 237) = 1.85$ ,  $p = .18$ ). As anticipated, a significant two-way interaction effect occurred for

donation intentions ( $F(1, 237) = 3.94$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As Fig. 2 shows, contrasts indicated that participants in the pride condition had stronger donation intentions when they viewed a self-benefit appeal rather than other-benefit appeal ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 5.31$  vs.  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 4.51$ ;  $t = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.41$ ). In contrast, under the gratitude condition, self- and other-benefit appeals showed no significant differences ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 4.93$  vs.  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 5.08$ ;  $t = 0.46$ ,  $p = .65$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.08$ ).

#### 5.3. Discussion

Study 2 replicates the findings of Study 1 by showing that a self-benefit appeal has stronger effects than an other-benefit appeal when combined with a pride-inducing advertising message (H1a). However, as in Study 1, we fail to observe a mirror effect for the gratitude message: contrary to H1b, other-benefit appeals fail to have stronger effects than self-benefit appeals when combined with a gratitude-inducing message.

### 6. Study 3

The objective of Study 3 was to replicate and generalize the findings from Study 2 with an Indian population. Study 3 also incorporated an additional control condition in which emotions were not primed.

Social media is allowing philanthropy to become increasingly globalized. We need to know whether our predictions are generalizable to other countries that have flourishing economies, such as India, where individual philanthropy accounts for about 60% of private charitable funds (Sheth, 2019). Compared with the United States, India scores higher on power distance (77) and long-term orientation (51) dimensions; it has relatively coexisting individualistic and collectivistic traits, as indicated by an individualism score of 48 (Hofstede-Insights, 2021). In the United States, religiosity strongly drives helping motivations, but in India, religiosity is weakly related to charitable behaviors (Mathur, 2012).

#### 6.1. Method

We recruited 257 Indian, nonstudent adults (72.4% men, average age: 32.4) from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants were randomly assigned to one of six fictitious Instagram postings for the Indian Cancer Society in a 3 (emotion appeal: pride vs. gratitude vs. control)  $\times$  2 (message appeal: self-benefit vs. other-benefit) between-subjects design. In the stimulus ads (Appendix C), participants in the pride condition read headlines that stated, “Be proud of what you can do to make a difference.” Participants in the grateful condition viewed the statement, “Be grateful for what you can do to make a difference.” In the control condition, there was no headline. The sub-headlines highlighted

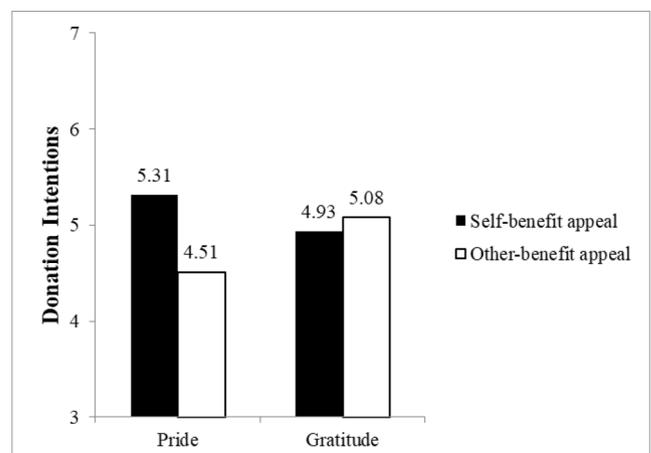


Fig. 2. Study 2 Results: American nonstudent sample.

self-benefits by stating, “Save your life. Make your life more meaningful and earn a tax deduction by giving your support.” or other-benefits by proclaiming, “Save the lives of cancer patients. Help people with cancer and protect their future by giving your support.”

## 6.2. Results

Participants in the pride condition rated more feelings of pride than those in the gratitude and control conditions ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 5.83$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 3.95$  vs.  $M_{\text{control}} = 3.12$ ;  $F(2, 254) = 54.67, p < .001$ ). Participants in the gratitude condition reported more feelings of gratitude than those in the pride and control conditions ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 3.87$  vs.  $M_{\text{gratitude}} = 5.56$  vs.  $M_{\text{control}} = 3.24$ ;  $F(2, 254) = 49.25, p < .001$ ). They also judged the self-benefit appeal to be focused on helping oneself ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 4.25$ ) and other-benefit appeal to be focused on helping others ( $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 3.45, t = 3.10, p < .01$ ).

ANOVA results showed no main effects of positive emotion ( $F(2, 251) = 0.90, p = .41$ ) and message appeal ( $F(1, 251) = 0.23, p = .63$ ). As expected, a significant two-way interaction effect emerged for donation intentions ( $F(2, 251) = 4.71, p < .05$ ). As Fig. 3 shows, contrasts revealed that participants in the pride condition had stronger donation intentions when they viewed self-benefit rather than other-benefit appeals ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 6.19$  vs.  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 5.70$ ;  $t = 2.41, p < .05$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.59$ ). In contrast, the directional opposite, yet insignificant difference between self- and other-benefit appeals occurred for participants in the gratitude condition ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 5.61$  versus  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 5.94$ ;  $t = 1.65, p = .10$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.34$ ) and in the control condition ( $M_{\text{self-benefit}} = 5.77$  versus  $M_{\text{other-benefit}} = 6.10$ ;  $t = 1.62, p = .11$ ; Cohen's  $d = 0.34$ ).

## 6.3. Discussion

Study 3 results conceptually replicate the findings from Study 2 in a culturally different setting with an additional control advertisement. In addition, the study broadens the conceptualization to a global context.

## 7. General discussion

In three studies of charitable messaging on social media, we argue that message appeals should be aligned with emotions, based on research showing that emotions affect subsequent appraisals (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Lerner & Tiedens, 2006; Roseman, 1991). We conduct three experiments to investigate how self-benefit and other-benefit donation appeals paired with pride and gratitude affect donation amounts and donation intentions. We find that participants induced

to feel pride donate greater amounts and donate more frequently when they view messages that focus on the benefits to donors themselves rather than focus on benefits to others in need. However, self-benefit and other-benefit appeals are equally effective when we induce gratitude. The United States and India exhibit similar patterns, indicating cross-culture robustness. The data support our hypothesis regarding the effects of pride, but we are somewhat puzzled that we fail to find support for our hypothesis regarding the impact of gratitude.

Null effects in the gratitude conditions may have occurred because pride and gratitude have somewhat asymmetrical influences. Pride is driven by egoistic motives, while gratitude is driven by altruistic motives (Agrawal, Han, & Duhachek, 2013; Goenka & Van Osselaer, 2019), so we might expect pride to have more influence. Psychologists and philosophers generally agree that we humans are motivated by self-interested egoism, but some doubt the power or even the existence of altruistic motives, which leads to the logical conclusion that self-interest is generally more powerful than other-interest, if it exists. By correlating egoistic motivations with pride and linking altruistic motivations with gratitude, we imply that pride combined with self-benefit appeals will be more motivating than gratitude combined with other-benefit appeals. Findings in all three studies uphold the argument that self-benefits yield greater effects in pride conditions in comparison with other-benefit appeals in gratitude conditions. Specifically, the effect sizes for the pride conditions (Cohen's  $d$ 's ranging from 0.41 to 0.58) were greater than those for the gratitude conditions (Cohen's  $d$ 's ranging from 0.08 to 0.34). Future research might examine ways to boost the effects of other-benefit appeals versus self-benefit appeals in gratitude conditions. Perhaps certain population segments such as past charity beneficiaries might be more sensitive to gratitude priming. For example, individuals who received college scholarships might respond more intensely to gratitude priming.

Our research has several theoretical implications. First, we contribute to the literature by identifying pride and gratitude as determining the relative effectiveness of self-benefit versus other-benefit appeals. Prior research on the self-other perspective has shown equivocal results regarding types of messages that best encourage charitable behaviors (Baek et al., 2019; Brunel & Nelson, 2000; Fisher, Vandebosch, & Antia, 2008; Kim et al., 2021; White & Peloza, 2009). Some scholars have reported that negative emotions such as guilt and sadness determine effects of egoistic and altruistic appeals on donation behaviors (Chang, 2014; Cialdini et al., 1987), but researchers have failed to examine whether message recipients who feel proud or grateful will react differently to appeals. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to investigate how positive emotions can be specifically matched with message appeals to influence donation amounts and intentions to

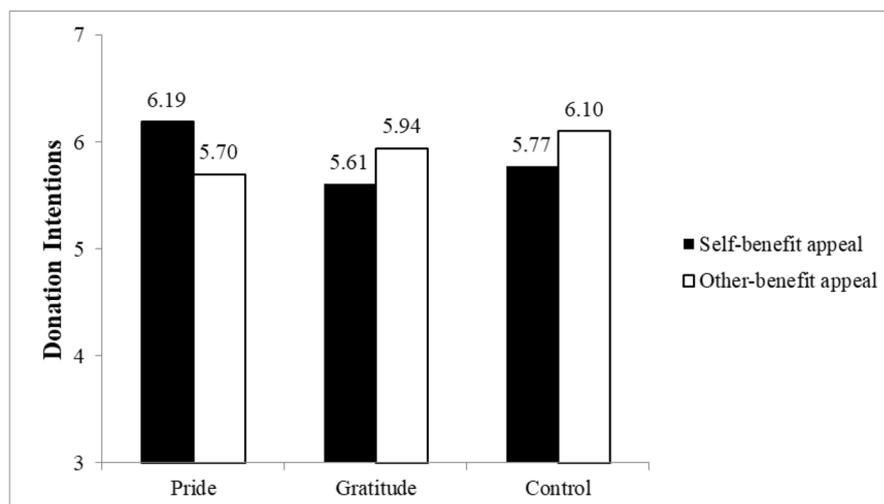


Fig. 3. Study 3 Results: Indian nonstudent sample.

donate.

Second, our findings add to the broader literature that has generally used internal and external cues to promote prosocial behaviors (Baek & Yoon, 2017, 2020; Baek, Yoon, & Kim, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018, 2020; Lim et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2016). Specifically, our work complements prior charitable giving research that assessed individual differences in pride and gratitude tendencies (Michie, 2009). Instead, we show that advertising messages could have consumers recall past events to stimulate pride and gratitude. In addition, researchers could use our emotion-induction techniques to examine how incidental and integral emotions may have similar or distinct effects on subsequent message evaluations. In an approach similar to the approach we used in Studies 2 and 3, Paramita, Septianto, and Tjiptono (2020) induced pride through an advertising message that said, “Be proud of what you did” and induced gratitude with a message that said, “Be grateful for what you have.” They found that participants who felt pride formed stronger donation intentions only when they received public recognition for donating. Future research could examine how internally versus externally induced emotions might change the dynamics of charity persuasion.

Third, the findings enrich our understandings of cross-cultural differences and similarities in acceptance of message appeals. For example, the United States and Canada have been identified as overall masculine cultures, where men (women) are more persuaded by egoistic (altruistic) appeals. Denmark and Norway are considered feminine cultures and show opposite patterns (Nelson et al., 2006). Although Western and Eastern cultures are supposed to show contrasting responses to advertisements in many prosocial domains (Kim et al., 2017; Yoon, Kim, & Baek, 2016), we find that Americans and Indians respond similarly to emotion-laden message appeals. Indeed, Americans and South Koreans have been shown to respond alike to animated characters in online advergames for publicly versus privately consumed products (Choi, Yoon, & Lacey, 2013). Thus, we need more study regarding factors that evoke cultural differences or similarities in responses to charity advertising.

Our research has straightforward practical implications for charity fundraisers. Nonprofits often use pride and gratitude appeals. Our results suggest that social media fundraisers should activate emotional states and then match the emotional states with the appropriate appeal. Charity fundraisers might use social media content to trigger feelings of pride and gratitude through corresponding emotion-laden hashtags depending on whether the posting contains egoistic or altruistic messages. For example, Instagram fundraisers might use self-benefit appeals in the form of sponsored content such as “make your life more meaningful by giving your support” with hashtags such as #proud. Or they might use other-benefit appeals such as “make our community a better place by giving your support” with hashtags such as #grateful.

Relatedly, social marketers might tailor messages for specific audiences on Amazon Smile—a platform that allows online shoppers to donate a percentage of their purchase to charities. Some social media platforms are specifically designed for giving purposes. For example, crowdfunding sites such as Kiva and GoFundMe are alternative charity platforms where social motives drive most donations. Future research might consider that the effects we report may change when the same solicitation messages appear on general social media channels such as

Instagram and Facebook or platforms designed specifically for charitable aims such as Kiva and GoFundMe.

In the introduction, we explain that our work is focused on well-known charitable brands such as UNICEF, United Way, and Red Cross, but across three studies, we cover a wide range of charity organizations in various settings. In Study 1, the Twitter posting solicits donations for the nationally known Habitat for Humanity. In Study 2, the stimulus ad resembles ads commonly used for local food banks. In Study 3, the ad is for India’s large nonprofit Indian Cancer Society. In future research, business scholars might examine whether message-emotion dynamics change for relatively unknown charity brands.

Nonprofit organizations advertising on Facebook and Twitter might highlight their achievements and then provide individualized congratulatory emails that make recipients feel proud or grateful. For example, World Wildlife Fund could advertise its success in saving endangered species from extinction and then send thank you messages that evoke gratitude. St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital could advertise its success in increasing survival rates through innovative research and then send messages that would evoke pride. In addition, future research may examine whether other positive emotions such as compassion, hope, and awe are similarly associated with self-agency versus other-agency appraisals for other prosocial behaviors, such as recycling and eco-friendly product consumption (Tong, 2015).

### 7.1. Limitations and directions for future research

Our investigation has limitations that warrant future research. First, religion is a powerful source of moral values and prosocial behaviors (Oviedo, 2016) and may affect how pride and gratitude drive donation choices (Paramita, Septianto, & Tjiptono, 2020). Further research is needed to examine the effects of religiosity on the dynamics between pride (gratitude) and self-benefit (other-benefit) appeals.

Second, we temporarily primed study participants with incidental or integral feelings of pride and gratitude. As an alternative, researchers could use dispositional pride and gratitude scales (Septianto & Garg, 2021) to replicate our findings (Michie, 2009).

Finally, in Studies 2 and 3, we collected data from an Amazon MTurk online panel, a prevalent and convenient source for advertising and business researchers (Baek & Yoon, 2017; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). However, the source may draw professional study participants with self-selection bias. Future research should enhance generalizability by utilizing a representative sample of social media users.

### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Tae Hyun Baek:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Investigation, Writing – original draft. **Sukki Yoon:** Validation, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## Appendix A. Study 1

### Self-benefit appeal

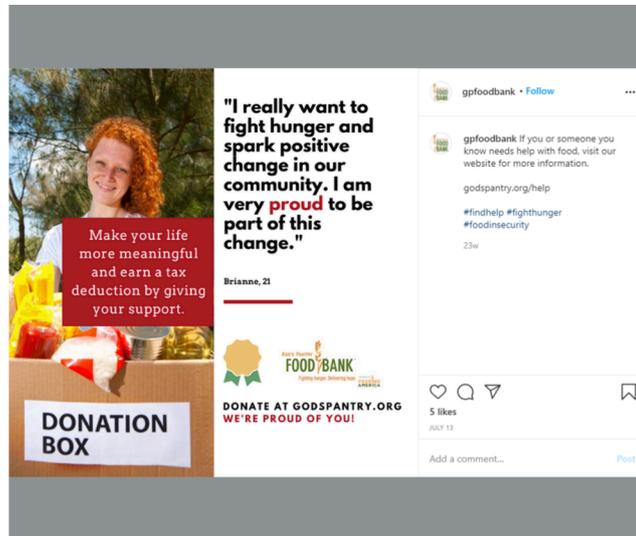


Other-benefit appeal

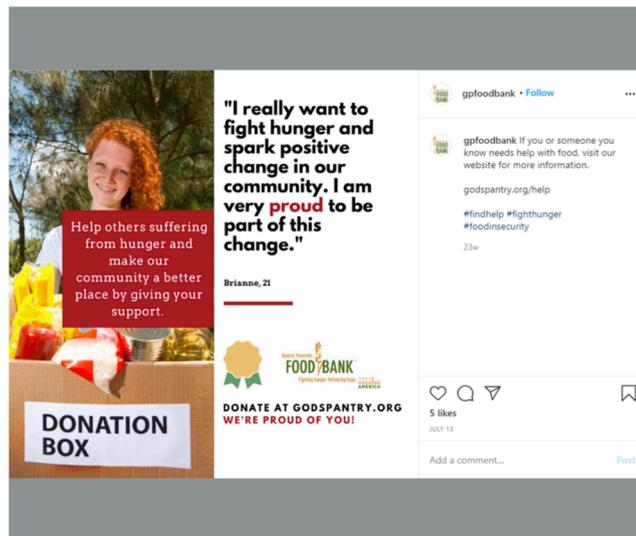


Appendix B. Study 2

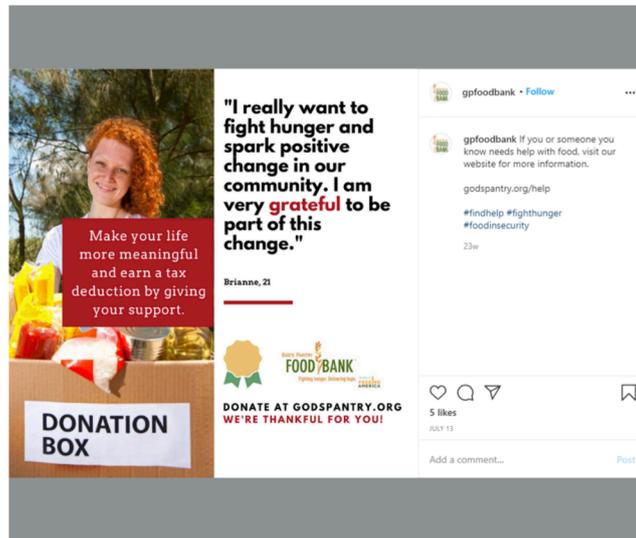
Pride and self-benefit appeal



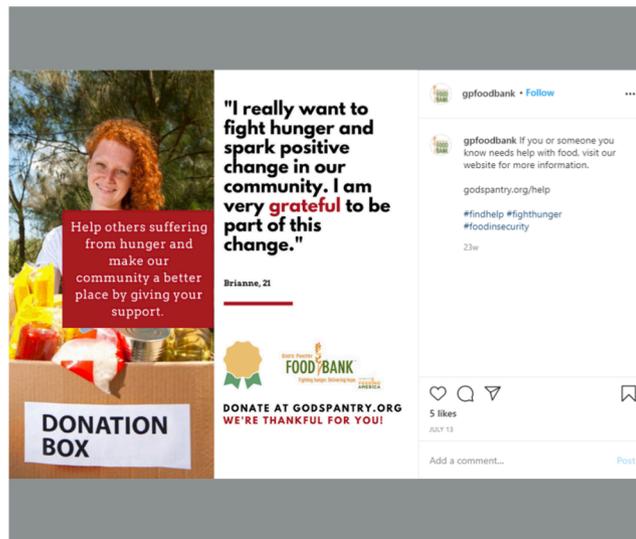
Pride and other-benefit appeal



Gratitude and self-benefit appeal

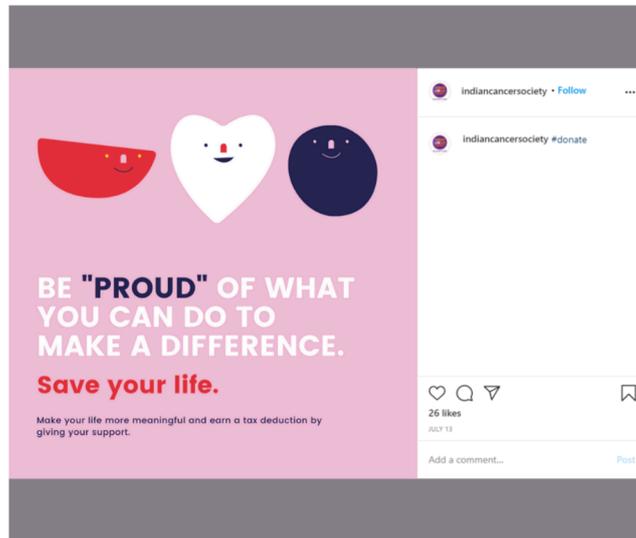


Gratitude and other-benefit appl

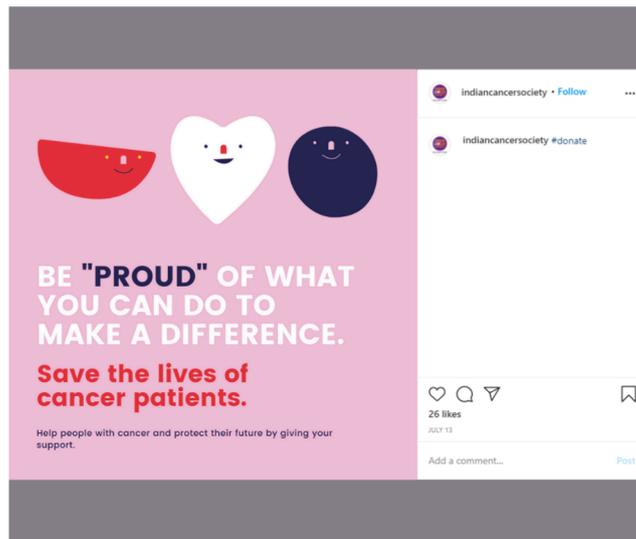


### Appendix C. Study 3

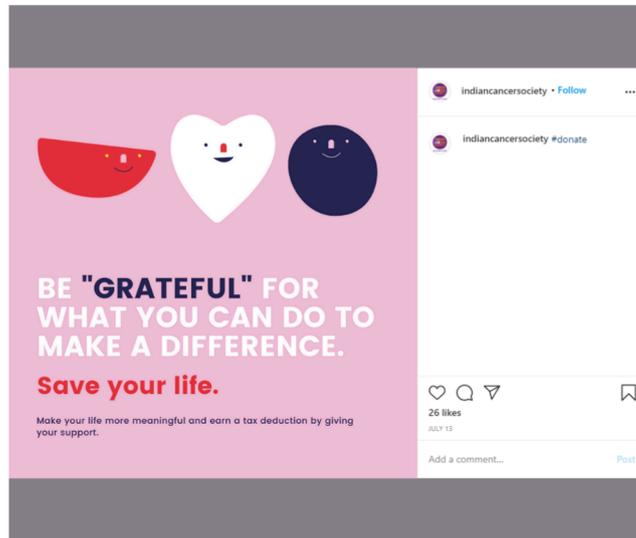
Pride and self-benefit appeal



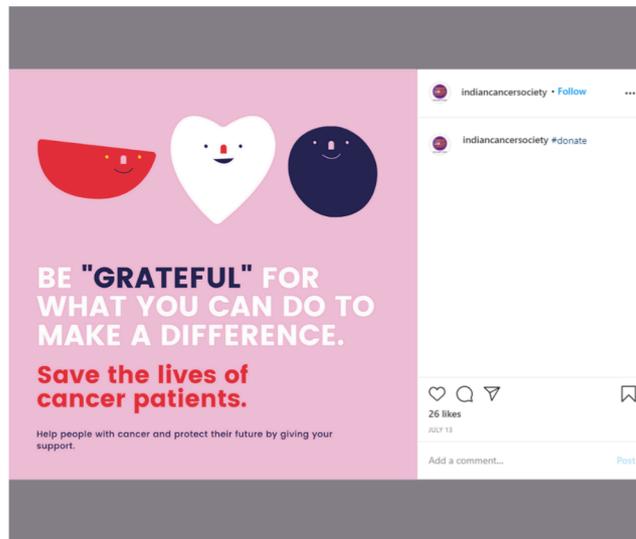
Pride and other-benefit appeal



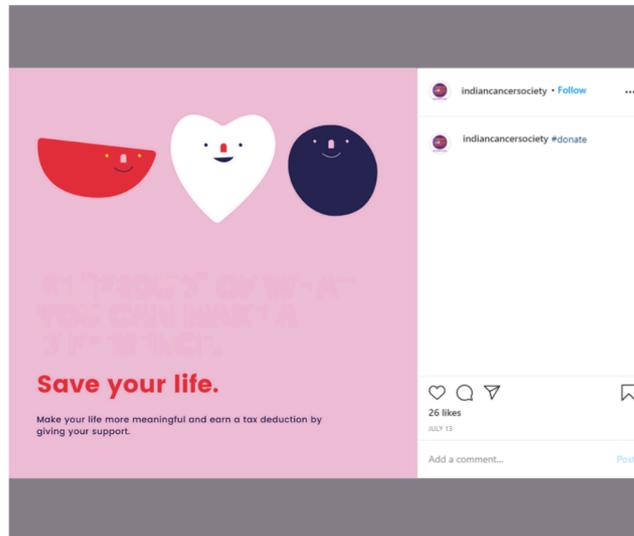
Gratitude and self-benefit appeal



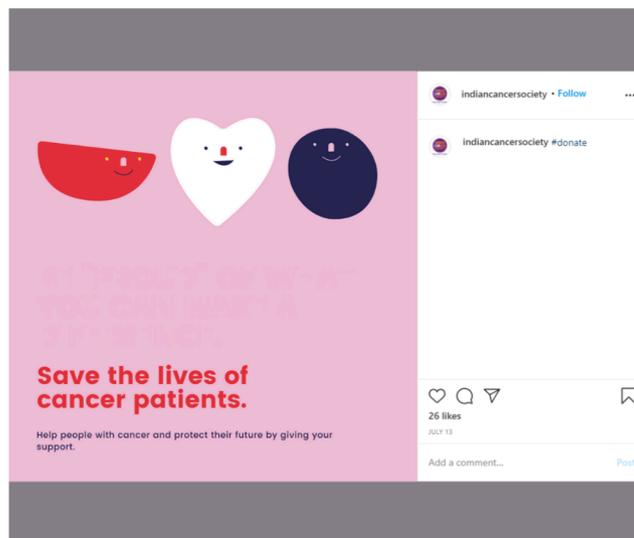
Gratitude and other-benefit appeal



Control and self-benefit appeal



### Control and other-benefit appeal



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