

Expectation, Commitment, and Charitable Giving: The Mediating Role of Trust and the Moderating Role of Social Status

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Abstract This study suggests that the expectation of an individual about the outcome of their charitable donating can guide their action. Based on reciprocity theory and research, outcome expectation was dichotomized as altruistic versus egoistic, and an expectation-based psychological model of giving has been proposed. In this model, expectation leads to trust in charities, manifesting in strengthened engagement, which in its turn generates an increased amount of donations. In addition, social status moderates the effect of outcome expectation on charitable commitment. Overall, the proposed model was supported by the results of 530 responses of an online survey. Furthermore, social status moderated only the effect of egoistic expectation on charitable commitment. This indicated a stronger positive relationship between egoistic expectation and commitment for individuals of low social status than for those of high social status.

Keywords Charitable giving · Reciprocity · Expectation · Trust · Social status

Introduction

Charitable giving by individuals constitutes an indispensable part of charitable fundraising. According to the China Charity Information Centre, individual charitable contributions approached RMB 3.9 billion in 2014 and accounted

for 11% of all receipts of nonprofit organizations (Peng 2015). Contributions of individual Americans comprised 72% of all charitable donations in 2016 (Giving USA 2017). Globally, the level of money donations across all countries remained at 31% (CAF 2016). It can be seen that charitable giving by individuals is both pervasive and significant on a global level (Einolf 2017). However, why individuals choose to give remains a mystery in theory and research.

Economists generally insist that rational people would not sacrifice their self-interests for the benefit of others. Consequently, economists argue that if people do not demand a monetary reward, they must expect to receive a different type of reward instead (e.g., prestige, or signaling about income; Hyánek and Hladká 2013). However, evidence supports that people give their money to other people, even when their contributions remain anonymous (DeScioli and Krishna 2013). This demonstrates that in general, people are generous, contributing their money and other valued resources to charitable causes. Moreover, research suggests that the motivation of individuals to donate is diversified (Bock et al. 2016; Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007b). One debate regarding the mystery of motive for charitable giving considers whether charitable giving is stimulated by altruistic or selfish considerations. Do these opposite considerations take an effect on charitable giving in a same way? How do they interact with individuals' social motive (e.g., striving for higher social position) to influence charitable giving? To find a possible solution for this debate requires an understanding of the psychological processes that underlie the decisions for whether to donate to charities.

In this study, charitable giving is broadly defined as sacrificing one's own resources (money, property, assets, or goods) to benefit others in need (Liu and Hao 2017). Other

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than giving resources to target charities, people often donate to others in need in many different ways. People may thus get involved in charitable causes. To understand the underlying psychological processes of charitable giving, I argue that charitable giving predominantly starts with the rational judgment of an individual that his or her donation will produce a resulting outcome. Thereby, the goal of the study is to investigate how and in what way different types of rational judgment lead to charitable giving by individuals in a very general context.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. The first section reviews theory and literature on expectancy and reciprocity, and discusses the focal constructs of the study. The second section first proposes an expectation-based psychological model of charitable giving and then derives testable hypotheses. The next Method section details the data and operationalization of the interested variables and the subsequent Results section reports the findings. In the final section, the conclusions, contributions, and implications for theory and practice are drawn.

Theoretical and Literature Review

Expectancy as the Start of Rational Judgment of One's Action

People generally perform actions based on what they believe the outcome to be (Roberson 2015). According to expectancy value theories (Feather 1992; Vroom 1964), a person's motivation to strive for action is influenced by his or her expectations of a particular, usually successful, outcome and his or her evaluation of that particular outcome. Specifically, individuals who strongly expect the occurrence of outcomes and who evaluate these expected outcomes positively would have even stronger motives to act (Westaby 2002). Evidence suggests that such an outcome expectation highly influences behavioral instigation, direction, effort, and persistence (Locke and Latham 1990; Weiner 1985). Individuals are sensitive to subjective, expectation-dependent beliefs, and use these beliefs to guide their decisions on whether to donate (Kvaran 2012). In this aspect, the expected gain of individuals would influence their decision on whether or not to donate.

Evidence suggests that the outcome expectation can be motivated by both altruistic (or at least less obviously self-serving) considerations and self-fulfillment and individual gain (Deb et al. 2014; Goldfarb 2011; Robert 2013). This dichotomous classification for prosocial motivations appears in the social exchange literature. For instance, Sherry (1983) distinguished between two types of motives for the giving of gifts: an altruistic and an agonistic. In the first, the donor attempts to maximize the pleasure felt by

the recipient, while in the second, the goal of the donor is maximizing personal satisfaction. Similarly, Pitt et al. (2002) have explained charitable giving in terms of two distinctly different logics: the exchange paradigm and unselfish action. Accordingly, two types of expectation can be identified: altruistic expectation and egoistic expectation. Altruistic expectation refers to an individual's expectations of donations for the benefit of others and society, whereas egoistic expectation represents an individual's anticipations that donations will satisfy his or her own interest only. Both types of expectation can be rewarding. Altruistic expectation is intrinsically motivated by a care for a broad humanism, whereas egoistic expectation is mainly motivated by the wish to maintain self-development of personal resources.

Motivational analyses of charitable giving have assessed factors like the relevance and value for good deeds. Alternatively, evidence indicates that a higher social status can motivate individuals to behave in a more altruistic way (Korndörfer et al. 2015; Leslie et al. 2013; Simpson et al. 2012). This motivational process is mainly functional in the sense that people exhibit altruistic and other regarding preferences to climb higher on the social ladder. However, there is a debate regarding the effect of social status on charitable giving (Piff et al. 2010). A recent study demonstrates that belief in reciprocity shapes the social cooperation of high-status individuals more compared to that of low-status individuals, whereas the social behavior of low-status individuals rather than high-status individuals is more likely to be influenced by gratitude that has been experienced during past social interactions (Liu and Hao 2017). It seems that individuals with high and low status are both inclined to contribute to public welfare. However, the psychological mechanisms and conditions of their altruism may differ quite strongly. Research has demonstrated that people with different social status differ in their cognitive approach, and consequently, they behave for different purposes (Kraus et al. 2012). Charitable giving of individuals with high and low status may thus be conditional on their value on their egoistic or altruistic considerations. A further exploration on the cognitive process is needed.

The Reciprocity Mechanism Behind Charitable Giving

Reciprocity is considered to be one of the basic mechanisms behind charitable giving (Khadjavi 2016). The reciprocity mechanism states that people ought to repay, in kind, what another person has provided for them. More specifically, indirect reciprocity is a key reciprocity for explaining prosocial behavior occurring in society at a large-scale (Nowak and Sigmund 2005). Under indirect

reciprocity, an individual who helps others believes that he or she will receive indirect returns from others who are unrelated with the direct receiver of the help. For instance, people expect that if they donate, they will increase their social reputation and thus, be held in high regard by their peers. However, people expect that if they do not donate, their reputation could be damaged.

Empirical research has distinguished two types of indirect reciprocity (Nowak and Sigmund 2005): The first type is called reputation-based reciprocity (which is also called downstream reciprocity). In reputation-based reciprocity, people donate to gain a good reputation, high status, or even wealth. Evidence shows that people donate to charitable causes to signal their generosity and trustworthiness (Bénabou and Tirole 2006; Fehrler and Przepiorka 2013). The second type of indirect reciprocity is called generalized reciprocity (which is also called upstream reciprocity). In generalized reciprocity, those who have gained the experience of receiving help tend to pass on the help to others. Generalized reciprocity requires individuals to be aware of their experience of getting help, and it is different with “unconditional reciprocity” (Bruni 2008; Poledrini 2015) in which individuals donate to unrelated others without knowing in advance whether they will obtain anything in return, and even if they have not gained the experience of being helped. Research shows that a personal positive emotional experience in the past (such as gratitude or compassion) can stimulate generalized reciprocity (Nowak and Roch 2007). Since charity is typically deemed a moral virtue, generalized reciprocity closely correlates with social responsibility. Consequently, those who receive benefits from others and from society have an obligation to give back.

Trust, Commitment, and Giving

Trust and commitment to charities are essential to establish reciprocal relationships (Guh et al. 2013). Two main types of trust have widely been investigated in the literature on charitable giving. Social (or generalized) trust refers to the confidence of individuals toward personally unknown members of society, while institutional trust represents confidence in specific existing public institutions. Both types of trust are prerequisites in inducing people to donate (Taniguchi and Marshall 2014). Research shows that institutional trust creates generalized trust (Kääriäinen 2007; Sønderskov and Dinesen 2016); however, it exerts less influence on charitable giving compared to generalized social trust (Evers and Gesthuizen 2011). For the purpose of this study, a specific institutional trust was used, namely trust in charities. While institutional trust is simply measured via asking participants to rate the extent with which they trust in various types of institutions, a measure of trust

in charities typically involves confidence in both the effectiveness and the prosocial orientation of these charitable organizations (Hager and Hedberg 2016).

Similarly, commitment is also formed in different ways. In the framework of a social relationship based on exchange, commitment has been defined as receiving returns in future by investing in a relationship effort in the present (Tan and Tambyah 2011). Following Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) definition, this study conceptualized commitment as an enduring desire or intention to both develop and maintain stable relationships. Commitment to charities has been reported to be positively linked to donor giving behavior (Sargeant and Lee 2004). When individuals take participation in institutions and organizations, they develop organizational commitment, experience a sense of identification and involvement with the organization, and finally engage in charitable giving (Allen and Meyer 1996; Schervish and Havens 1997; Sokolowski 1996).

A large body of evidence shows that trust is considered to precede commitment to a relationship (e.g., Dwivedi and Johnson 2013; Park et al. 2016). Trust has been found to be an important factor to foster both commitment and loyalty (Powers and Yaros 2013). Naskrent and her colleague have provided an exception (Naskrent 2014; Naskrent and Siebelt 2011). In their studies, trust was measured via the donor’s perception of the ability and willingness of the nonprofit organization, which can be assumed as a distal factor of commitment. The authors therefore found no relationship between trust and commitment; however, both independently influenced the giving behavior.

A further and robust finding about the relationship between trust and giving is that commitment has been identified as a significant mediator (and a most proximal factor) of giving (Sargeant and Lee 2004). Increased trust manifests in a strengthened donor engagement, which in turn generates an increased amount of donations. The mechanism maintains that people who are trusting are more inclined to feel that their donations make a difference as well as they are effective. This will also lead to an increased willingness to commit and subsequently donate more and more frequently (Janssen 2016).

Research Model and Hypotheses

The question remains how outcome expectation leads to charitable giving based on the reciprocity mechanism? Research identifies trust as the first and key step to achieve reciprocity. Trust is built on the fulfillment of a person’s expectations of a specific future outcome. Trust in a relationship represents value, which provides enhanced benefits to both parties (Andaleeb 1996). Consequently, the expectation of valued outcomes manifests in strengthened

donor engagement, either directly or through trust. This psychological process in turn generates an increased amount of donations. Research about the charitable donation of the rich also adds social standing as an important motivating force for donors (Silber 2012). Moreover, outcome expectation is suggested to interact with individual difference in social status to influence both donors' commitment and loyalty. Figure 1 presents the proposed model, and the arguments for specific hypotheses are presented in the following.

Outcome Expectation as an Antecedent of Trust and Commitment

Characters of the charities (such as reputation, accountability, and transparency) usually form the base of the outcome anticipated by donors (Connolly and Hyndman 2013). Donors may expect that effective and trustworthy charities that receive their donations will not act opportunistically, and finally, that they will be reciprocated (Kanagaretnam et al. 2010). This outcome expectation then strengthens the belief that the charities will have a positive effect for donors themselves. In addition, the charities have missions for providing public benefits (Hyndman 2017). Due to the grand responsibility of charities, potential donors have relatively high outcome expectations, and independent of the types of expectation, will entrust reliable third parties to guarantee the achievement of their expectations. The following hypothesis has thus been proposed:

H1 Outcome expectation has a positive effect on trust in charities.

Evidence supports that the expectancy of goal attainment predicts a commitment to that goal. For instance, Sargeant and Woodliffe (2007a) have found that the extent to which an individual shares the beliefs of a nonprofit, identifies with its goals, and feels a strong personal connection are primary determinants of that individual's degree of commitment. To achieve a philanthropic goal

(and thus reciprocity in the end), donors can actively choose to interact with charities. For instance, they can maintain a good relationship with the charities, develop engagement in connection with their giving (money and/or time), and a continued loyalty for the charitable cause (O'Reilly et al. 2012; Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007a). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that outcome expectation of individuals can lead to further commitment toward maintaining the formed relationship with charities, and finally to donate. The following hypothesis has thus been proposed:

H2 Outcome expectation has a positive effect on relationship commitment.

The provided analysis indicates that outcome expectation plays a key role in the motivational process of behavior since the way it affects commitment is not only directly, but also through its indirect impact on the formed trust in charities. Given that trust in charities leads to commitment to giving, it is reasonable to assume that trust mediates the relationship between expectation and commitment. Consequently, a high level of expectation stimulates a high level of trust, ultimately leading to a high level of committing to maintain a relationship with charities. It has therefore been hypothesized that:

H3 Trust in charities mediates the relationship between outcome expectation and relationship commitment.

Social Status as Moderator

If people expect that the entire society will benefit from their contributions, their social status may well lead to altruistic tendencies as well as actions. According to the social cognitive perspective of social status (Kraus et al. 2012), with high altruistic expectation for those of low social status, their contextualized social cognitive tendencies will be strengthened. However, the solipsistic social cognitive tendencies of those with high social status will be weakened. Therefore, a collectivist mindset of those of low social status may increase the degree of connection

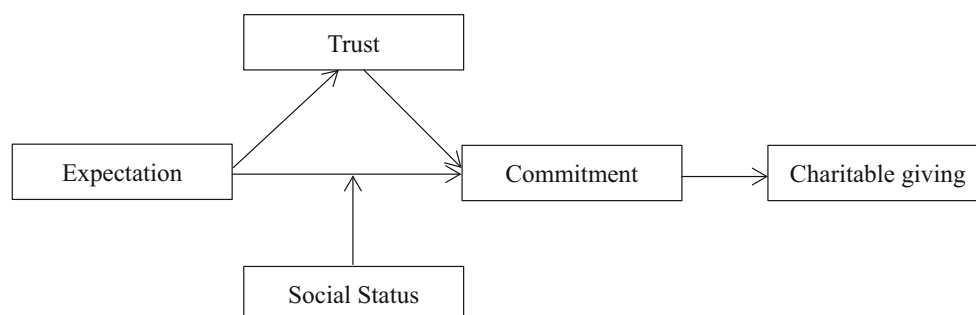


Fig. 1 Full assumed and tested model

between them and others, which leads to strong altruistic feelings (such as gratitude, sympathy, and compassion) (Nadler and Chernyak-Hai 2014). These types of feelings then motivate those of low social status to commit to give (McCullough et al. 2002). However, those of high social status may experience social responsibility toward the disadvantaged and feel obligated to behave ethically (Fiddick et al. 2013). Those of high social status can then engage in self-sacrificing behaviors and thus commit to give. Therefore, with high altruistic expectation, those of low and high social status are both likely to commit to give, and to actually give. It has therefore been hypothesized that:

H4a Those of low social status and those of high social status will be equally inclined to commit to give if they have an altruistic expectation about the benefits to others.

When people anticipate that their contributions will be beneficial for themselves, their altruistic tendencies and actions may be conditioning their social status. According to the perspective of social cognitive on social status (Kraus et al. 2012), with high egoistic expectation, individuals of high social status are more likely to be concerned with their own (vs. others') interests, whereas individuals of low social status may still strive to seek to improve their connection to others. For instance, compared to individuals of high social status, individuals of low social status are more likely to engage in social cognitive processes that aid to understand how others think, feel, and behave (Muscatell et al. 2012). Moreover, due to their capacity, those of high social status have a comparative power advantage over those of low status (Thye and Harrell 2017). Furthermore, those of low social status expect to receive a specific degree of protection and care from those of high status (Fiske 1992). Thus, individuals of high social status are confident that their investments can be reciprocated. However, it is often not easy for individuals of low social status to achieve such a compensation of their investment. Therefore, those of high social status have been suggested to be more willing to commit to give, and to finally give. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H4b Compared to individuals of low social status, individuals of high social status are more inclined to commit to give if their egoistic expectation is high.

Method

Data Collection and Samples

Data were collected using a professional online survey platform, which is widely used by researchers in China for

online survey. The platform provided data collection services on a contracted and paid-for basis. Data were collected randomly from a large sample of more than 2.6 million online users. Moreover, the service maintained a strict quality control regarding the sampling procedure to ensure data accuracy. Specifically, two items were used to identify those who do not respond to the survey carefully. The first item was a simple arithmetic problem with six options and the second one was a commonsense problem with five options. Those who made correct choices on both questions were regarded as valid cases. In addition, respondents who spent less than 390 s to fill out the whole survey were excluded. In such a way, a sample of 530 respondents was collected within 7 days of survey launch. The IP address of each participant's computer indicated the spanned geographical regions of China. Among the available data, 259 (48.9%) participants were male, and 271 (51.1%) were female. Their age ranged from 15 to 69 years, with a mean of 33.46 years (SD 8.70).

Measures

Charitable Giving

To avoid potential contamination, charitable giving by individuals was measured first. Participants were requested to report the monetary amount of their donations to any type of charity during the course of a calendar year. To familiarize participants with charities, both background and details of the charities were introduced at the beginning of the survey. It was explained to participants that donations could include money, assets, property, or goods, whether these have been directly made to charities, through payroll deduction, or in response to online solicitation by charities.

Social Status

The indicators of annual household income and personal education level have traditionally been used to measure objective social status (Adler et al. 2000). Considering the characteristics of Chinese culture (e.g., rapid change of social stratification structure, Lu 2002; sustained and close familial relationships, Hwang 2012; assortative marriage, Han 2010), social status was measured at family level. In this way, the measure of social status included four objective indicators: annual household income and the three highest levels of completed education (by the participants themselves as well as by each of their parents) (see also Wang 2013; Xiao 2014). Annual household income was assessed with eight categories: (1) < ¥35,000, (2) ¥35,001–¥50,000, (3) ¥50,001–¥75,000, (4) ¥75,001–¥100,000, (5) ¥100,001–¥125,000, (6) ¥125,001–¥150,000, (7) ¥150,001–¥180,000, or (8) > ¥180,000. Education was

assessed with six categories: (1) did not finish primary school, (2) middle school graduate, (3) high school graduate or equivalent education completed, (4) junior college graduate, (5) college graduate, or (6) postgraduate degree. The median annual household income of participants ranged between ¥125,001 and ¥150,000, and the median educational attainment was college graduation. The median educational attainment of each parent was high school graduation. To compute an overall measure of the resulting social status, these four indicators were standardized and then averaged (see also Piff et al. 2010).

Outcome Expectation

Altruistic outcome expectation was measured with four items which were adapted from Winterich and Zhang (2014). Four additional items were developed by the author to capture the concept of *egoistic outcome expectation*. The eight items are presented in Table 1. Participants indicated the extent with which each item described their expectations from donations to charities on a seven-point scale. Cronbach's coefficients for altruistic and egoistic expectations were 0.844 and 0.807, respectively.

Trust in Charities

Trust was measured with a five-item trust scale that was specifically developed for the fundraising context (Sargeant et al. 2006, Table 1). Participants responded to each item on a seven-point Likert scale. The scale had a Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.892.

Relationship Commitment

The measure of relationship commitment has originally been developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994) in an organizational context. Sargeant and Lee (2004) adapted the resulting scale to measure the enduring desire of donors to maintain a valued relationship with charities. The commitment scale that was utilized in this study included three items (Table 1). Participants indicated the extent with which each item described themselves on a seven-point scale. Cronbach's coefficient for these three items was 0.886.

Covariates

Two demographic characteristics were included as covariates. *Gender* was controlled for because females

Table 1 Scale items, factor loadings, and construct validity of the measures in confirmatory factor analysis

Constructs	Scale items	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
Altruistic expectation	Donating to charities can...		0.850	0.59	0.62	0.39
	1. Improve equality in society	0.683				
	2. Improve the social condition of the charity recipients	0.807				
	3. Offer the charity recipients hope for a better future	0.794				
	4. Help the charity recipients have a better life	0.770				
Egoistic expectation	Donating to charities can...		0.809	0.52	0.20	0.14
	1. Improve my reputation	0.807				
	2. Relieve my guilt	0.626				
	3. Inform others that I am an altruist	0.683				
	4. Bring me glory	0.748				
Trust in charities	I would trust charities ...		0.895	0.63	0.62	0.45
	1. To always act in the best interest of the cause	0.712				
	2. To conduct their operations ethically	0.770				
	3. To use donated funds appropriately	0.820				
	4. Not to exploit their donors	0.815				
	5. To use fundraising techniques that are appropriate and sensitive	0.844				
Relationship commitment	The relationship I have with charities...		0.886	0.72	0.61	0.42
	1. Is something I am very committed to	0.841				
	2. Is something I intend to maintain indefinitely	0.848				
	3. Deserves maximum effort to maintain	0.861				

CR composite reliability, AVE average variance extracted, MSV maximum shared variance, ASV average shared variance

generally tend to be more generous and altruistic than males (Brown et al. 2016; Piper and Schnepf 2008). Gender was encoded 0 for males and 1 for females. Age was included because as individuals grow older, they are generally able to better manage their life and thus have an increased capacity to display higher levels of prosocial behavior (Choi and Kim 2011).

Data Analysis

The main dependent variable was the total amount of money that participants reported to have donated during the past year. The median total donation was ¥300, and five outlier cases reported to have donated equal to or exceeding ¥10,000. The distribution of the total donation variable demonstrated a positive skew (skewness = 6.399) and was leptokurtic (kurtosis = 58.106). To correct for non-normality, the total amount of charitable donations was transformed to its natural logarithm. The moderator variable was social status, which had already been standardized. As recommended by Frazier et al. (2004), all other predictor variables, including altruistic expectation, egoistic expectation, trust in charities, and relationship commitment, were also standardized.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate the efficiency of the measurement model, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the conceptual framework and assumptions. Both analyses were conducted by using Mplus version 7. Maximum likelihood was used as the method for estimation when building models, and the overall model fit was evaluated with multiple indicators, including the Chi-square test statistic, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). Since the Chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size, the ratio of Chi-square to the degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) was also considered, and values of 2.0 or below were considered satisfactory (Newcomb 1990). Model fit statistics were considered good fit if $CFI \geq 0.95$, $SRMR \leq 0.08$, and $RMSEA \leq 0.06$ (Hu and Bentler 1999).

The measurement model that combined four latent factors (i.e., altruistic expectation, egoistic expectation, trust, and commitment) was first tested. Construct validity of the model was analyzed by focusing on convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2014). The relative amount of convergent validity among item measures was assessed in three ways. It was tested by checking the values of factor loading, composite or construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Convergent validity was confirmed if factor loading ≥ 0.50 , $CR \geq 0.70$, and $AVE \geq 0.50$ (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 2014). Discriminant validity was evaluated with reference to the

values of AVE, maximum shared variance (MSV), and average shared variance (ASV). Ideally, both MSV and ASV should be less than the AVE to establish the discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2014).

To test the defined hypotheses, structural equation modeling was then employed. Both mediation and moderated mediation analysis were conducted based on guidelines by Stride et al. (2015). Bootstrapping with 10,000 replications was used to obtain standard errors, estimates, and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals according to previously published procedures.

Results

Validity of the Measurement Model

The four-construct measurement model showed a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(98) = 234.460$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.392$, $CFI = 0.972$, $RMSEA = 0.051$ [90% CI 0.043–0.060], $SRMR = 0.036$. Table 1 shows factor loadings and construct validity of the measures in confirmatory factor analysis. First, all factor loadings were above 0.60 on their appropriate factors and statistically significant. Second, the AVE values were recorded greater than 0.50. Third, the CR values varied from 0.809 (Egoistic expectation) to 0.895 (Trust in charities), higher than 0.70. Moreover, the CRs were recorded greater than the AVE values. Taken together, the convergent validity of the model was confirmed.

Results showed that the AVE value of every construct was greater than its MSV value with one exception: the MSV for altruistic expectation (0.62) was slightly higher than its AVE (0.59). However, the AVE was greater than the respective ASV for each construct as requested. Thus, the discriminant validity was acceptable.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation of Variables

Descriptive statistics and correlations of all variables that were included in this study are given in Table 2. Charitable giving was independent from gender, but it demonstrated a negative relationship with age. Notably, charitable giving was positively related to all other tested predictors. Among these correlations, charitable giving had the highest correlation with commitment, followed by trust and altruistic expectation, while charitable giving had the lowest correlation with egoistic expectation. Moreover, charitable giving was positively related to the moderator social status. In particular, a high level of social status was related to a high level of giving. All predictors and the moderator were significantly positively intercorrelated. However, correlations among altruistic expectation, trust,

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for the study variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	0.49	0.50							
2. Age	33.46	8.70	0.22***						
3. Status	0.00	0.73	− 0.10*	− 0.18***					
4. AE	5.58	0.96	0.00	− 0.02	0.10*				
5. EE	4.26	1.28	0.11**	0.06	0.09*	0.29***			
6. Trust	5.29	1.01	− 0.03	− 0.07	0.15***	0.71***	0.27***		
7. Commitment	5.03	1.21	0.05	− 0.10*	0.16***	0.59***	0.38***	0.70***	
8. Giving	5.04	2.65	− 0.01	− 0.12**	0.30***	0.31***	0.15***	0.37***	0.49***

AE altruistic expectation, *EE* egoistic expectation

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ two-tailed tests

and commitment were very high, ranging between 0.59 and 0.71.

Mediation Analyses

A model that examined the mediating effects of trust and commitment on the relationship between outcome expectation and charitable giving was tested next. This model was just-identified, $CFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA = 0$. Charitable giving could be significantly predicted by relationship commitment, $\beta = 0.460$, $p < .001$. All other predictors (outcome expectation and trust) did not significantly predict giving. Relationship commitment could be significantly predicted by altruistic expectation ($\beta = 0.148$, $p < .001$), egoistic expectation ($\beta = 0.188$, $p < .001$), and trust ($\beta = 0.545$, $p < .001$). Trust could be significantly predicted by altruistic expectation, $\beta = 0.687$, $p < .001$, and by egoistic expectation, $\beta = 0.070$, $p < .05$. Thus, both H1 and H2 were supported.

Table 3 reports the indirect effects with unstandardized estimates, corresponding standard errors, and corresponding bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. The indirect effects of both outcome expectations on giving through commitment were significant. In other words, commitment mediated the relationship between outcome expectation and giving positively and significantly. Moreover, the indirect effects of both expectations on giving through trust and commitment were also significant. That is to say, trust and commitment mediated the relationship between outcome expectation and giving positively and significantly in series. Thus, H3 was also supported.

Moderation Analyses

It was predicted that the commitment of individuals to giving was conditional on their social status when they had an altruistic rather than an egoistic expectation. Two

interaction terms (i.e., status \times altruistic expectation and status \times egoistic expectation) were first calculated. Subsequently, the main effect of status and two interaction effects on commitment were added to the described mediation model. The results showed an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(9) = 47.109$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 5.234$, $CFI = 0.961$, $RMSEA = 0.089$ [90% CI 0.065–0.115], $SRMR = 0.040$. Results showed that the verified relationships of the previous model continued to be significant in the current model. Among both interaction effects, only the egoistic expectation \times status interaction effect on commitment reached statistical significance, $\beta = -0.102$, $p = .001$.

To detect their interaction, simple slope analyses were performed. The results indicated that for a low social status (1 SD below the mean), the slope effect was very significant, $B = 0.271$, $p < .001$, and for a high social status (1 SD above the mean), the effect decreased considerably but still remained significant, $B = 0.104$, $p < .05$. This indicated a stronger positive relationship between egoistic expectation and commitment for individuals of low social status than for those of high social status. Overall, H4a could be supported; however, H4b had to be rejected.

Integrated Model

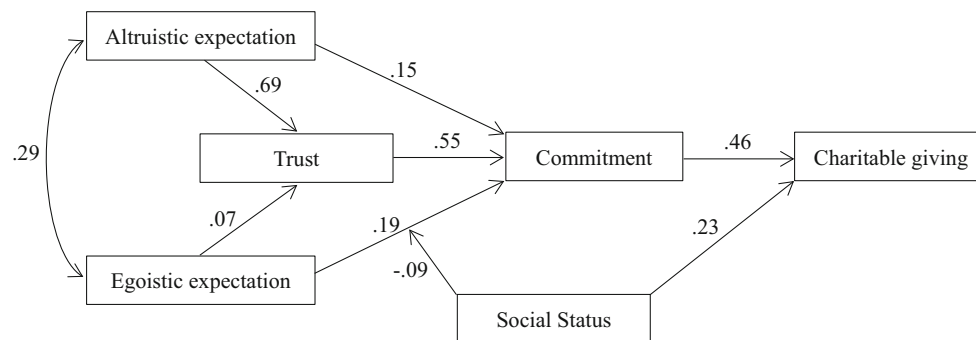
Finally, a structural equation model was used to integrate the mediation and moderate effect. Modification indices suggested that social status was significantly correlated with charitable giving. Moreover, age was also included in the prediction of giving since age was negatively related to giving (see Table 1). The obtained results indicated that a good fit could be obtained with the integrated model, $\chi^2(17) = 51.231$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.01$, $CFI = 0.965$, $RMSEA = 0.062$ [90% CI 0.043–0.081], $SRMR = 0.059$. All the predictors significantly accounted for 26.3% of the variance in charitable giving. However, age was unrelated to giving, $\beta = -0.029$, ns. After removing the path of age

Table 3 Results of mediation tests predicting charitable giving: indirect effects of expectation through trust and commitment

Indirect and direct effects	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Indirect effects				
AE → trust → giving	0.092	0.113	− 0.097	0.276
AE → commitment → giving	0.180*	0.072	0.069	0.307
AE → trust → commitment → giving	0.457***	0.074	0.349	0.593
EE → trust → giving	0.009	0.013	− 0.006	0.039
EE → commitment → giving	0.229***	0.064	0.138	0.354
EE → trust → commitment → giving	0.047*	0.023	0.014	0.089
Direct effects				
Trust → giving	0.134	0.165	− 0.139	0.400
Commitment → giving	1.220***	0.163	0.946	1.480
AE → giving	0.041	0.140	− 0.191	0.276
EE → giving	− 0.109	0.100	− 0.271	0.055
Trust → commitment	0.545***	0.054	0.459	0.636
AE → commitment	0.148**	0.053	0.057	0.231
EE → commitment	0.188***	0.046	0.118	0.271
AE → trust	0.687***	0.038	0.623	0.749
EE → trust	0.070*	0.033	0.017	0.125

95% CI refers to the bias-corrected 95% confidence interval; estimate refers to the effect estimate using 1000 bootstrap samples; estimates with CIs that do not include zero are statistically significant

AE altruistic expectation, EE egoistic expectation

**Fig. 2** Final integrated model. Note: Only significant effects are shown

to giving, structural equation modeling analysis showed an improved fit, $\chi^2(12) = 21.662$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df = 1.81$, CFI = 0.990, RMSEA = 0.039 [90% CI 0.008–0.065], SRMR = 0.050. Therefore, an integrated model (without the inclusion of age) was used as the final model (see Fig. 2). 26.6% of the variance in charitable giving was accounted for.

Discussion

The motivational determinants of charitable giving have not been neglected in the philanthropic literatures; however, no definite conclusion could be drawn so far. Based

on the reciprocity mechanism and expectancy value theories, the current study verifies the expectation–giving relationship, further demonstrating that both trust and commitment mediate the expectation–giving relationship in such a way that the expectation to obtain a certain outcome can induce donors to trust the respective charities and, thus committing to maintain a relationship with these charities. Subsequently, this results in a contribution to charitable causes. In sum, all hypotheses except H4b are supported by the data.

A major finding of the current study is that outcome expectation, regardless of altruistic or egoistic, can lead to charitable giving via both trust and commitment. Specifically speaking, starting with the expectation of a personally

valued outcome, individuals choose to trust a third sector, and then engage in maintaining a close relationship with these sectors. Moreover, the current study offers four different paths for outcome expectation that lead to charitable giving. If people anticipate that their contribution to the society will benefit others, they can either directly commit to giving (Path 1.1), or do so via trust in a third party (Path 1.2). Similarly, if people anticipate that their contribution to the society will benefit only themselves, they will directly commit to charities (Path 2.1); however, they can also choose to trust in a third party (Path 2.2).

A further finding is that social status only moderates the relationship between egoistic expectation and commitment. It has been verified that those of high social status are more likely to commit to donate when they have a higher expectation to benefit themselves. However, this is also true for individuals of low social status. Given that the action of donating transfers social information (such as power and reputation), this finding may indicate that compared to those of high social status, those of low social status are more willing to commit to behave altruistically if they realize that their behavior will benefit themselves long term.

Moreover, the current study also demonstrated that social status has a strong direct effect on charitable giving. Compared to individuals of low status, those of high status reported a higher level of charitable giving. In the psychological literature, the reported perspective on social status on prosocial behavior is rather negative, whereas research outside the field of psychology has demonstrated a U-shaped or even a positive relation (see also Korndörfer et al. 2015). The particular finding in the current study seems to support the idea of noblesse oblige, a social norm that obligates those of comparatively high status to be honorable and generous in their dealings with those of low status (Fiddick et al. 2013). Individuals of high status tend to accumulate abundant economic resources and therefore, have access to higher quality education. It seems that individuals of high status are obliged to give back to the society.

Contributions and Implications

This study provides three central contributions to the literature. First, this study identifies reciprocity as the core of altruistic actions. Reciprocity has been described as the evolutionary basis for altruism and cooperation within a society (Molm 2010) and has been named the social glue that interconnects single individuals (Zhang and Epley 2009). According to expectancy value theories (Feather 1992; Vroom 1964), individuals will rationally evaluate a particular outcome of an action, and in turn expect their action to lead to a particular outcome. In this way, to

achieve reciprocal altruism, individuals will view their charitable giving as a benefit to themselves (Fehrler and Przepiorka 2016). In this way, they expect that their altruistic action will lead to an outcome in line with their self-interest or that maximizes their personal well-being.

To better understand the effect of such an outcome expectation, this study also offers a dichotomous classification of the conceptual definition of outcome expectation (i.e., altruistic vs. egoistic expectation). This dichotomy is not only based on reciprocity research, but also on theoretical arguments in economics and other social disciplines regarding the nature of human beings (Deb et al. 2014; Goldfarb 2011; Robert 2013; Sherry 1983). Indeed, the current study shows that altruistic and egoistic expectations exert a different influence although both can lead to outcomes that maximize expected personal welfare.

Second, the study provides further support for the positive function of social status. Social status in itself creates both psychological and behavioral differences (Tiedens et al. 2000). For instance, higher social status leads to stronger in-group favoritism and in-group identification (Ellemers et al. 1999). According to the social identity theory (Tajfel 1982), individuals strive to achieve a positively valued social identity. Consequently, individuals aspire to membership of groups that compare favorably to other groups. Individuals of high status can therefore use strategies such as in-group favoritism to maintain their positive social identity, while members of negatively distinctive in-groups can seek strategies such as individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition to achieve a positive social identity (Turner and Brown 1978). By signaling their generosity and trustworthiness in charitable activities, donors of high status win social reputation, whereas those of low status can be acknowledged by others. In summary, social status can be considered as a valued and generalized resource, motivating people to form status-based expectations for rewards.

Third, the study attempted to integrate motivational processes into a social cognitive perspective to further understand the determinants of charitable giving. Previous research has broadly identified a number of essential social cognitive factors that link to the intention to donate (e.g., Mayo and Tinsley 2009; Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007b). This study indicates that, based on the judgment on their altruistic action, individuals form an expectation about what the outcome will be. The outcome expectation then guides individuals to trust in charities and/or even to commit to donate. It also demonstrates that trust and commitment serves as a necessary psychological process in charitable giving (Sargeant and Lee 2004; Taniguchi and Marshall 2014). Motivational psychological processes further explain why individuals in identical situations pursue different outcomes (or goals). In such a way, even if

all men were assumed to be rational and self-interest by nature, diversity of motivations would cause individuals to deviate from their original intention. In other words, those of high social status can maximize their own interest by winning social recognition, while those of low social status can maximize their own interest by seeking chances to improve their positive identity. Thus, people can act altruistically although they are motivated toward egotism and form different cognitive tendencies.

A practical implication for charitable giving is therefore that motivations should be acknowledged. That is to say, during fundraising activities, the motivations of different individuals should be satisfied. For example, one of the possible strategies to solicit donations from individuals of low status would be to induce their belief that donation can indeed result in happiness. Individuals can then derive benefits from their generosity (Aknin et al. 2013). Therefore, those of low status can be induced to spend a small amount of money in exchange of long-lasting happiness and well-being.

A further implication is that it is important for charitable organizations to effectively manage their respective images. Images of charitable organizations can be easily tarnished by public scandals (Gibelman and Gelman 2001). This would damage the expectations of potential donors that their contribution will produce a successful outcome for them. However, an outstanding image can build a sound reputation, which further stimulates trust and credibility, encourages donor loyalty and commitment, and finally promotes long-term willingness to donate to this particular charity (Michel and Rieunier 2012). One of the most important psychological strategies related to image building for charitable organizations is to establish a believable brand personality that appeals to donors (Shehu et al. 2016).

Limitations

Few limitations exist in the present study that should be noted. One limitation is that the construct of expectation has been conceptualized in a simplified way. According to Bandura (1977), expectation includes both outcome expectation and efficacy expectation. As argued above, donating to charities may not at all relate to efficacy expectation because most donors already transfer their right to dispose of their possessions to the charitable organization. However, charitable giving can take various forms. For instance, individuals can directly donate their possession to those who need help the most. In this way, efficacy expectation may be related.

A second limitation is that the utilized measure of charitable giving is based on self-report rather than on an objective measurement. However, it is very hard to obtain

data on real giving in surveys on philanthropy. Due to social desirability and memory bias (Lee and Sargeant 2011), the self-reported data of charitable giving are not particularly accurate; however, they can reveal a relative trend of prosociality or a possible relationship between interested variables.

A third limitation lies in the simplified outline of the giving mechanism. Reciprocity has been demonstrated to serve as one of the basic mechanisms behind charitable giving. However, there exist many other mechanisms that drive charitable giving (Bock et al. 2016; Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007b). For instance, people donate because they become aware of a need for support (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011). Donors may feel involved with charitable causes (Grace and Griffin 2006), or simply get a “warm glow” from their giving (Andreoni 1989). People may pursue unconditional reciprocity (Bruni 2008; Poledrini 2015), and they feel rewarded by their behavior regardless of the response they receive from the other party. More studies are needed to explore the giving mechanisms under different contexts.

Concluding Remarks

Motivational research on philanthropy will continue to flourish. Diversified motivations, including egocentric motives, can trigger altruistic behavior in people. Evidence supports that the donors’ own self-interest is related to giving (Pitts and Skelly 1985). Egoistic expectation stimulates prosocial behavior oriented to satisfy personal needs of the individual. With regard to philanthropy, a Chinese proverb seems appropriate: “Black cat, white cat, all that matters is that it gets the mice”. Therefore, even egocentric motives should be encouraged to conduct charitable fundraising. However, unlike altruistic expectation, egoistic expectation may be conditional on individually valued resources (such as status). Future research on the motivation for charitable giving should thus explore more valued resources, and seek to create such resources in practice.

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