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The Donors Supporting Charity Sport Event (CSE) Participants: An Exploration of the  
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### **Abstract**

Fundraising for a charity sport event (CSE) is a critical and challenging aspect of the event experience. CSE participants (i.e., CSE fundraisers) must engage with their network of friends, family and colleagues (i.e., CSE donors) to solicit donations. A better understanding of CSE donor motives can translate to more effective fundraising among participants, which could be applicable to other peer-to-peer and sport-based fundraising initiatives. The researchers explored the factors driving CSE donors to contribute on behalf of CSE participants. Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms driving charitable giving provided the theoretical framework. Semi-structured interviews ( $N=24$ ) were conducted with individuals who had donated to a CSE participant within the previous 12 months. Four themes emerged: feel good factor, perceived efficacy of donations, inspired by youth, and affinity for the participant. With these themes in mind, CSE managers may implement school outreach programs and testimonials from donors to achieve positive fundraising outcomes.

*Keywords:* charitable giving, sport events, donor motivation

### The Donors Supporting Charity Sport Event (CSE) Participants: An Exploration of the Factors Driving Donations

The decision to make a donation to charity is a complex choice impacted by a variety of factors (Dawson, 1988). This decision can be further complicated in the context of charity sport event (CSE) participants soliciting donations from their network of friends, family and colleagues as part of their event participation. CSEs represent participatory sport events wherein a portion of event registration fees benefit specific charities, while participants are also encouraged (or required) to further fundraise on behalf of said charities (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008). Examples include the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, a fundraising event involving teams of walkers dedicated to helping communities attack cancer, and the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society's Bike MS, a cycling event engaging fundraisers to help the organization reach its goal of a world without MS; these events raised \$184.8 million and \$65.5 million respectively in 2018 (Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum, 2019). CSE participants represent individuals who are fundraising as part of their participation by soliciting donations from their network. In the current research, the terms CSE participants and CSE fundraisers are used interchangeably. Meanwhile, CSE donors refers to individuals within a CSE participant's network who make a donation on his/her behalf. Within the current research, we collected data from CSE donors.

While all donations to charity have some degree of social pressure inherent to them (Bryant, Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003), donations on behalf of a CSE participant may have additional pressures on the donor due to the prospective donor's relationship with the CSE participant, the donor's attitude towards the sport, and the donor's knowledge (or lack thereof) of the benefitting charity, among other factors. In addition, the increasing number of CSEs (Hamilton, 2013) can mean more participants and more causes to support, which may, in turn, translate to a larger number of solicitations from participants for donors. Collectively, these factors can contribute to potential donors growing weary of requests for charitable

support and being less inclined to give (Brown & Minty, 2008). Notably, revenues for the 30 highest grossing peer-to-peer fundraising events dropped 3% from 2017 to 2018. Meanwhile, the emergence of social media and do-it-yourself fundraising have increased competition by allowing fundraisers to create their own campaigns and events (Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum, 2019). Coming to a better understanding of the motives for CSE donors when deciding to give to CSE fundraisers could be valuable in navigating these challenges.

An array of research has been conducted on the factors that drive an individual to donate to charity (e.g., Tonin & Vlassopoulos, 2013). However, there is opportunity to investigate charitable donations in less traditional settings such as CSEs. As important fundraising mechanisms for charitable causes, CSEs represent a viable context for research on donations to charity (Taylor & Shanka, 2008). CSE objectives can include donor engagement along with the pursuit of additional financial support for the charity from donors (Pent & Crowley, 2011). Event enthusiasts and cause fundraisers have been identified as a critical market segment for CSE managers to target due to their capacity to solicit donations from their network to raise funds for the charity (Wood, Snelgrove, & Danylchuk, 2010). Meanwhile, government funding for charitable organizations has been decreasing in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom (Kidd, 2015; Soskis, 2017; UK Civil Society Almanac, 2015), which can place greater emphasis on alternative fundraising vehicles such as CSEs that solicit funds from CSE donors.

The purpose of the current research is to explore the factors that drive a CSE donor to make a donation on behalf of an event participant. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a panel of individuals in Australia who had donated to CSE participants within the previous 12 months. Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving provided the framework for this examination.

Australia is the context for this exploration. There are approximately 56,000 registered charities in Australia, 63% of which are classified as small with annual revenue of \$250,000 or less. This relatively high proportion of small charities reflects an increased emphasis on fundraising at the local level and reliance upon local volunteers (Australian Charities and Nonprofits Commission, n.d.). As described above, CSE participation involves voluntary fundraising at the local level. In addition, there has been increased focus from the Australian federal government on positioning sport as philanthropic with the capacity to address large-scale health and social issues (Michael, 2018). Research conducted by McGregor-Lowndes et al. (2017) also reveals that among Australians who made a donation as part of an event (e.g., peer-to-peer fundraising events such as CSEs), over 60% indicated they would not have made the donation without the event. Furthermore, while overall donations to charity has increased in Australia, the number of donors has decreased (Raabus, 2017). Collectively, these factors illustrate the role of CSEs in the Australian charity landscape as well as the importance of understanding CSE donors in Australia. This positions Australia as a worthy context for the current investigation.

Donations to non-profit organizations in sport have been examined in the community sport (Feiler, Wicker, & Breuer, 2015) and intercollegiate athletics contexts (Shapiro, Giannoulakis, Drayer, & Wang, 2010) revealing organizational characteristics such as the delivery of public goods and services, as well as individual benefits such as obtaining priority seating, as factors that drive contributions from donors. The findings of the current research can contribute to this body of knowledge through investigation in a similar, but distinct context.

A key distinguishing characteristic of CSEs is that donors are approached for donations by friends, family members, and work colleagues. This peer-to-peer fundraising involves CSE participants soliciting donations from CSE donors who exist within their social

network (Miller, 2009). Being asked to donate by someone you care about has been cited as a driving force in donating to charity (Castillo, Petrie, & Wardell, 2014). Meanwhile, peer pressure effects can have a strong influence on donation decisions (Meer, 2011). Our focused investigation of CSE donors can reveal mechanisms for charitable giving beyond Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework yielding new insights. The findings derived from the current research can add to the body of knowledge on charitable giving, donations to non-profit organizations in sport, and peer-to-peer fundraising through the perspective of CSE donors, while addressing calls for more innovative approaches to fundraising (Hendriks & Peelan, 2013).

### **Charity Sport Events**

An assortment of research on the CSE experience has been undertaken across disciplines such as sport management, event management, and marketing. The initial research focused on the antecedents of CSE participation. This included investigations of the factors driving participation (e.g., Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin, & Ali-Choudhury, 2007), as well as profiling of the CSE participant (Wood et al., 2010). Collectively, previous researchers demonstrated that participation in CSEs was driven by a combination of the philanthropic (e.g., supporting a charity) and athletic (e.g., challenging yourself physically) aspects of the event embodied in a variety of different factors (e.g., social, physical, self-esteem).

From there, specific outcomes of the CSE experience have been explored. Coghlan (2012) revealed that CSE participation allowed for creative expression through fundraising as well as overcoming fears through training and completing the activity. Developing empathy for the cause has been highlighted as a critical factor for enhancing the social impact of charity-affiliated events on local communities (Inoue, Heffernan, Yamaguchi, & Filo, 2018). In addition, a feeling and celebration of sense of community is an outcome derived from the CSE experience (Filo, Spence, & Sparvero, 2013). Meanwhile, Woolf, Heere, and Walker

(2013) questioned whether the sense of community cultivated through participation translated to increased identity with the charity due to the one-off nature of event participation (i.e., occurring once per year for most charities) combined with limited supplementary activities on offer within events. However, Hyde, Dunn, West, Bax, and Chambers (2016) revealed that factors such as social support and a willingness to fundraise were predictors of continued organizational commitment to a CSE's benefitting cause.

The fundraising and charitable component of the CSE has been demonstrated to be an important aspect of event impacts; however, challenges inherent to fundraising due to expectations and the time required have been noted (Hendriks & Peelan, 2013). As stated above, in this research, data were collected from CSE donors with a specific focus on the factors that drive donations on behalf of a CSE participant. Uncovering these factors can assist CSE participants in navigating the challenges inherent to fundraising. The context of peer-to-peer fundraising, within which CSEs exist, is introduced next.

### **Peer-to-Peer Fundraising**

Peer-to-peer fundraising involves individuals raising funds from their friends, family, and co-workers for a variety of causes, and through a collection of activities (Saxton & Wang, 2014). CSEs represent an important component of peer-to-peer fundraising (Filo, Lock, Sherry, & Quang Huynh, 2017). Peer-to-peer fundraising has increased in popularity over the years due to the increase in the number of causes, events, and activities, as well as due to the influence of technological advancements such as social media (Adler & Carpenter, 2015).

While peer-to-peer fundraising initiatives have increased, and the influence of social ties on fundraising and donations has been noted (Meer, 2011), Chapman, Masser, and Louis (2019) indicate that "little research has evaluated how our increasingly networked world influences charitable giving" (p. 573). This underscores the limited academic inquiry to date



in this realm. Nonetheless, Scharf and Smith (2016) have revealed that peer-to-peer fundraisers with a larger network of friends were able to solicit more in donations. This influence of social connections evident through the impact of network size suggests that peer-to-peer fundraising may differ from traditional fundraising mechanisms, and it has accordingly been referred to as novel context for charitable giving (Chapman et al., 2019). Hence, further research on peer-to-peer fundraising contexts such as CSEs is warranted. Furthermore, research on donor motives in the context of sport suggests another distinction that may be relevant to CSEs.

### **Non-profit Sport Donor Motivation**

Donor motives have been explored in the context of non-profit sport in areas such as intercollegiate and community sport. Within intercollegiate sport, Gladden, Mahony, and Apostolopoulou (2005) uncovered a collection of donor motives including: supporting and improving the athletic program, receiving tickets, helping student-athletes, deriving entertainment and enjoyment, supporting and promoting the university (non-athletic programs), receiving membership benefits, repaying past benefits received, helping and enhancing the community, and psychological commitment. This collection of motives ranges from the more tangible and transactional (i.e., receiving tickets) to the more philanthropic (i.e., helping student athletes), underscoring the diversity of factors that can incite donations. Stinson and Howard (2010) reinforced these findings and the diversity of motives in revealing that early donors to intercollegiate athletics are primarily motivated by commercial interests such as securing tickets, but this can be effectively cultivated towards more philanthropic motives driven by providing welfare to others in future donations. In addition to the diversity of motives uncovered, research on intercollegiate athletics donors demonstrates the importance of emotion in driving donations (Ko, Rhee, Walker, & Lee, 2014).

The factors influencing donations in the context of community sport clubs have been found to be similarly diverse with club characteristics such as the provision of elite sport and the promotion of youth sport, alignment with social values such as companionship, and the employment of paid staff, all being found to increase donations (Feiler et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the influence of emotion and social connections within donations to non-profit sport clubs is reinforced by Behrens, Meyer, Pierdzioch, and Emrich's (2018) finding that match quality within a football club can impact social capital among club members, and in turn, increase donations from members. The array of motives uncovered in non-profit sport—and the influence of emotion on donors—position non-profit sport donors to be complex, and suggests that coming to an understanding of donor motives in more specific non-profit sport contexts such as CSEs could be valuable. To obtain this understanding, Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework is used as a theoretical basis for guiding the investigation of CSE donors.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving serve as the theoretical framework for this research. This framework was developed based upon a systematic review of the literature (i.e., over 500 articles) to allow academics and practitioners to better understand the predictors of philanthropy. Eight predictors were uncovered.

First, awareness of need is highlighted as a requirement for philanthropy to occur that encompasses an individual's understanding of the need for support. It relies on factors external to the donor (i.e., having been asked to donate), and is instead based upon charities seeking assistance and communicating their need for help and donations. This awareness of need can be impacted by those individuals and entities soliciting donations drawing more attention to the cause and the need for support (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). In the CSE

context, this factor of awareness of need aligns with motives such as the desire to improve the lives of others (Filo et al., 2008) and help people who are suffering (Won, Park, & Turner, 2010).

Second, solicitation refers to simply being asked to donate (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Researchers have demonstrated that most donations occur as a result of solicitation (Bryant et al., 2003). This factor is important to the CSE context, as it is highly unlikely that a CSE participant would receive any donations without asking, while a number of events provide participants with tools (e.g., personalized websites) to assist with their fundraising solicitations. Nonetheless, apprehension towards direct solicitation of donors has been discussed by CSE participants (Filo et al., 2018), suggesting that further inquiry into this factor as it relates to donors is warranted.

Next, the factor of costs and benefits examines donations from an economic perspective wherein donors contribute based upon weighing the relative costs (i.e., money) with the benefits (e.g., access and/or material benefits such as prizes; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). This factor aligns with the notion of reciprocity wherein CSE participants may get involved with an event because they have benefitted from, or anticipate benefitting from, the cause (Filo et al., 2008). Notably, among CSE participants, motives surrounding benefits such as tax incentives and gifts afforded to participants were found to be the least influential (Won et al., 2010). Nonetheless, tax incentives may be more impactful among CSE donors, as this may represent one of the few tangible benefits that donors can receive in this context.

Fourth, altruism reflects donations as a means to achieve outcomes and positive impact for the charitable organization (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Altruism has been cited as a factor driving CSE participation (Won et al., 2010). This factor also aligns with the duty to participate that has been revealed among CSE participants (Bennett et al., 2007). Both altruism and awareness of need align with factors associated with helping others. However,

the two factors differ in that awareness of need is based upon the communication of a need by a charitable organization, while altruism is based upon a donor's desire to make an impact.

Fifth, reputation refers to the social consequences that stem from an individual's decision to donate to charity such as recognition and approval from others (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). This factor also aligns with factors such as exhibitionism and status of the event which can drive CSE participation (Bennett et al., 2007), along with the benefit of being recognized through supporting the charity and event (Hyde et al., 2016). As donations to CSE participants are often made public through fundraising pages and social media posts, reputation may influence CSE donors.

Sixth, psychological benefits underscore the intangible benefits a donor experiences from giving such as increased sense of self-worth and joy from helping others (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). This factor aligns with the self-esteem motive for CSE participants wherein an individual experiences enhanced self-worth as a result of their participation (Filo et al., 2008). In addition, helper's high, defined as the uplifting feeling that individuals experience when they do a good deed, has been cited as a factor driving CSE participation (Bennett et al., 2007). These same psychological benefits may induce CSE donors to give.

Next, values embody intangible characteristics of individuals to support a charity. This can include prosocial values as well as non-materialist values expressed through the donation (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). This suggestion runs parallel with the notion of fundraising as part of CSE participation as an expression of self-identity (Wood et al., 2010). In addition, the value laden construct of cause has been found to contribute to CSE participation (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2009). Just as values may drive an individual to participate in a CSE, values may also lead a CSE donor to make a contribution to a CSE participant's fundraising campaign. Specifically, prosocial values underscoring a desire to

make the world a better place have been demonstrated to increase donations to groups in need (Van Lange, Van Vugt, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2007).

Finally, efficacy refers to an individual's decision to donate because they believe that their contribution will make an impact (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). In the CSE context, belief in making a difference has been demonstrated to be an important factor for participants (Filo, Groza, & Fairley, 2012). Both values and efficacy may drive CSE donors to support an event participant through expressing the donor's values and making an impact.

Each of the eight mechanisms identified by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) aligns with aspects of the CSE experience, and may reflect factors driving CSE participants to put forth the effort to fundraise for, and complete, the event. Similarly, these eight mechanisms may represent factors leading CSE donors to contribute on behalf of CSE participants. To date, research on fundraising and the CSE experience has been primarily focused on the event participant perspective (Daigo & Filo, 2020). CSE donors encompass an important stakeholder in the CSE experience, as they put forward a financial contribution on behalf of a participant and their donation could represent a pathway towards further engagement with the charity and event. With the relative importance of fundraising to the CSE experience in mind (Taylor & Shanka, 2008), along with the challenges with fundraising that CSE participants have acknowledged (Hendriks & Peelan, 2013), opportunity exists to examine donations in the CSE context from the donor perspective. Based upon the alignment of Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving to the CSE experience, two research questions are advanced:

Research Question 1: Which of Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms are applicable to explaining CSE donor reasons for donating on behalf of a CSE participant?

Research Question 2: What other factors beyond Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms drive CSE donors to donate on behalf of a CSE participant?

## **Method**

### **Empirical Approach**

The current research followed a phenomenological approach (Eichberg, 2013) to gain insights on the experiences of CSE donors through interactions with those individuals who had lived that experience: charity sport event donors. The phenomenological approach taken within the current research responds to calls for the application of this approach to understand event experiences, with a specific focus on how specific event experiences (i.e., donating on behalf of a CSE participant) render meanings to people and stakeholders (i.e., CSE donors) (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). In taking this approach, the current research represents empirical phenomenology to understand through talking to a number of individuals (i.e., CSE donors) who had experiences of a phenomenon (i.e., donating on behalf of a CSE participants) (Creswell, 2007).

The phenomenological approach requires following a procedure involving steps such as: bracketing, intuiting and analyzing and describing. Bracketing involves the research team attempting to mitigate effects from existing biases and beliefs. Methods employed for bracketing can include ongoing reflection throughout the data collection process allowing the researcher to acknowledge potential biases and permit the individuals from which data is being collected to guide the discourse (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This is particularly important when the researcher is familiar with the research context, as was the case with the current research. Intuiting requires focused concentration on the phenomenon and the data collected within the phenomenon (Gray, 1997). Analyzing and describing involves examining the data collected for emergent themes, and then identifying meanings of these themes allowing the research team to describe the phenomenon (Green, 1995). Additional detail on

how bracketing, intuiting and analyzing and describing were followed within the current research is provided below.

### **Participants**

Semi-structured interviews ( $N = 24$ ) were conducted with individuals who had donated on behalf of a CSE participant in the previous twelve months. The exploratory nature of the current research reinforces the appropriateness of interviews (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). This method of data collection has been previously applied in sport research undertaking a phenomenological approach (e.g., Brymer & Schweitzer, 2017).

All interviews were conducted via the telephone. The interviewees were 37.5% male and 62.5% female, ranging in age between 28-78, with an average age of 44. Fourteen of the twenty-four interviewees (58.3%) had completed at least a Bachelor's Degree. Donors had contributed between \$10 and \$2,500 with the highest proportion (62.5%) having donated between \$11-\$50. All interviewees resided in Australia. Table 1 provides an overview of interviewee demographics including age, gender, and education level along with the donor's connection to the CSE participant, their donation amount, and the CSE to which s/he donated.

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Insert Table 1  
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### **Procedures**

A Qualtrics Panel was utilized to recruit participants for the current research. To be included within the panel, an individual had to have donated on behalf of at least one CSE participant in the previous twelve months, be over the age of 18, and reside in Australia. This geographic requirement was selected for pragmatic reasons to address time zone difference issues, as well as ensuring that Qualtrics could access these individuals. From there, a brief online questionnaire was administered to the Qualtrics Panel to invite members to take part in the semi-structured interviews. This questionnaire consisted of a brief explanation of the purpose of the research; five questions concerning the individual's donation to the CSE

participant; and an option to participate in a follow-up semi-structured interview. Those respondents who opted to participate in the interview were taken to a landing page wherein s/he could provide their email address to be contacted to schedule the interview.

One member of the research team conducted all interviews. The interviews lasted between 12 and 50 minutes in length, and each interview was audio recorded with the interviewee's permission. Upon completion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> interview, the research team discussed that new themes were no longer emerging from the interviews. One more interview was conducted to confirm this, and once again new themes did not emerge within this 24<sup>th</sup> interview, hence data saturation was deemed to have been reached.

### **Materials**

The interview guide consisted of four sections. First, an overview of the research purpose and an outline of the interview structure were provided. This included a description of key terms that would be used within the interview (e.g., CSE, donor, participant). Second, biographical information was collected such as age, gender, and education level. Third, interviewees were asked a set of eleven questions in an attempt to assess the factors that drove their donation. These questions were based upon Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework for charitable giving, and adapted to the CSE context. Specifically, one to four interview questions were developed to correspond to each of Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) mechanisms. These questions were derived from the conceptual definition of each mechanism, as well as Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) description of each factor. Table 2 provides a listing of each mechanism, its conceptual definition, and an example interview question developed for each mechanism. Finally, four questions about the overall donation experience were asked to conclude the interview. To assist with interviewee recollection, as well as to ensure that there was no ambiguity or lack of clarity, potential probing questions were built into the interview guide (Barriball & While, 1994). Examples of probing questions



include: “How did the ask impact you overall?” and “Did I understand that correctly?” The employment of an interview guide featuring open-ended questions, along with probing questions to allow for elaboration and clarification, enabled the interviewer to follow the cues of the interviewee as a means of bracketing in data collection within the phenomenological approach taken (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). Please contact the authors to access the complete interview guide.

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Insert Table 2  
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### **Data Analysis**

Once the transcribing was complete for all interviews, the data were analyzed by the lead researcher in consultation with the additional members of the research team. The data analysis process consisted of six steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, getting familiar with the data (step 1) involved the lead researcher repeatedly reading through each transcript and reviewing through Bekker and Wiepking’s (2011) framework. This repeated reading allowed for intuiting within the phenomenological approach taken wherein the lead researcher critically reflected on the transcripts (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). This first step produced initial codes (step 2) aligning with the mechanisms outlined within the framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994), as well as factors beyond this framework. Third, themes were generated (step 3) based upon the initial codes that were uncovered. These themes include: feel good factor, perceived efficacy of donations, inspired by youth, and affinity for the participant.

Once these themes were identified, the lead researcher provided the initial theme labels and representative quotations within each theme to the other members of the research team (step 4). After some discussion on the themes, labels, and definitions, the research team was in agreement on each theme, revealing intercoder agreement (Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996). Fifth, the lead author created operational definitions for the agreed upon themes, while identifying additional representative quotations (step 5). All themes and representative

quotations were then reviewed by the research team for overlap. The results of this analysis process are reported below (step 6). The representative quotations identified within the data analysis process are utilized to convey the results narratively. The themes uncovered via this six-step process of analysis, as well as the written description of the findings provided below, reflect the analyzing and describing steps of the phenomenological approach taken (Linton & Farrell, 2009).

To achieve data trustworthiness, the lead researcher regularly consulted with the research team and the interviewees during the data collection and data analysis processes (e.g., Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, reflexivity was established through exchanges among the research team members while conducting the interviews, after reading through the transcripts (step 1 above), and after generating the initial themes and representative quotations (step 4 above). These exchanges continued throughout steps 5 and 6 as the themes, definitions, and quotations were finalized. Second, a summary of key points was collated during each interview and provided to interviewees. This member checking was employed to solicit feedback from individual interviewees concerning the main points discussed within the interviews (Creswell, 2009). Establishing data trustworthiness through these mechanisms has been previously employed in sport management utilizing semi-structured interviews (e.g., Filo, Cuskelly, & Wicker, 2015). In addition, these steps taken to ensure data trustworthiness reflect effort to bracket within data analysis as part of the phenomenological approach informing the current research (Chan et al., 2013).

### **Results**

Four themes were revealed through analysis of the interview transcripts: feel good factor, perceived efficacy of donations, inspired by youth, and affinity for the participant. An operational definition is provided for each theme, along with a collection of representative quotations. With regard to the research questions advanced, the first two themes address

research question 1. Feel good factor aligns with psychological benefits within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework, while perceived efficacy reflects both efficacy and altruism. Meanwhile, the latter two themes address research question 2 as inspired by youth and affinity for the participant represent themes beyond this framework. In presenting these results, pseudonyms are used in place of the real names of interviewees to protect anonymity.

### **Research Question 1**

**Feel good factor.** The first factor highlighted by CSE donors encompassed the positive feelings donors experienced because of their contribution. A feel good factor is defined as CSE donors feeling positive and happy about their lives as a result of their donation on behalf of a CSE participant. Leah spoke to the happiness experienced as the result of her donation, "I was very happy because what we had done was appreciated very well, so one of the happiest feelings." Karina summarized this factor simply in relaying how she benefitted from the donation: "I think that to me it made me feel good about myself because I am helping people that need to be helped." Amelia placed the psychological benefits she received in return for her donation in the context of the lack of tangible benefits received and expected. She explained that her donation provided her with "only the feeling that I was helping someone and supporting family as well as supporting research.... It always makes me feel good when I help out somebody who really is in need."

The feel good factor described by CSE donors was frequently portrayed in succinct terms by interviewees. To wit, Ceri noted that she experienced, "Just a little warm fuzzy feeling and then yeah, you're like, cool" as a result of her donation. Kirsten spoke broadly about "just a general, good feeling of being part of something" that drove her donation.

The feel good factor was also placed in the context of those entities who would potentially benefit from the donation (e.g., the constituents of the designated charity) with CSE donors communicating that it felt good to help others in need, and to help others that

they knew. Bryant stated that donating on behalf of a CSE participant is “a feel good type of thing. You do it because you believe in the charity and you want to do some good for hopefully not just your own relatives, but for people overall.” Margaret described how the donation on behalf of the CSE participant was similar to other donations in that she felt:

Really positive. I think with any kind of donation you want what you give to kind of make a difference. I guess it's kind of the same as if you give to any other, you know, if you give to the animal welfare or domestic violence, it's kind of you get that good feeling and hope that what you donate, hopefully will make a difference.

The psychological benefit that CSE donors obtained from their donation was a feel good factor that made them feel happy. This factor drove donations and aligns closely with the psychological benefits mechanism posited by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011).

**Perceived efficacy of donations.** CSE donors revealed that the anticipated positive impact of their contribution for the cause drove their support for a participant. Perceived efficacy of donations is defined as a CSE donor’s belief that their donation makes a difference for a charity and that a donation of any amount represents a contribution. The notion that a donation of any size helped the charity was referenced repeatedly by interviewees. Garrison stated “I guess every little bit helps, yes. I didn't feel like it was a significant amount, but every little bit helps.” This sentiment was shared by Hamilton “Every little bit helps, so you know whether you donate \$1000 or \$20, all of that put together makes a big difference.” Darren described the impact of his donation in terms of the charity’s appreciation:

I think all donations impact the charity. I mean we can only donate so much depending on how much we have in our wealth bag. But I think every little bit helps. I am sure the charity appreciates \$5 as much as \$10,000.

Bryant also contextualized his donation's impact in terms of the charity's appreciation, as well as his donation representing one of many:

It's a small contribution. Assisted in raising a significant amount of money. I think it did impact it. It's an interesting question you ask. I suppose I'd like to think it and I think pretty positive. I think the charity involved would get a lot of benefit from a lot of the smaller donations....They're all contributions, be it small or bigger.

Beyond depicting their donation as something that helped broadly, interviewees also spoke of their donations as a mechanism to allow the charity to achieve more specific outcomes. Ceri portrayed her donation to a cancer-based CSE as a contribution towards finding a cure: "Honestly every little bit counts so I just wanna do my part and contribute hopefully to finding a cure." Karina described her donation as a means to help those in need:

I think that a \$50 donation ... I know that any donation towards a charity is a good thing. And I think that \$50 will be able to give them the opportunity, like on top of everyone else's donation, to fund whatever they need to do to help people in that type of need.

An additional component of the perceived efficacy of donations was the donor's belief that the charity would use the donated funds effectively. Ernest simply said "I can't see them going out and wasting it. I'll put it that way." CSE donors believed that all donations matter, and that all donations led to a positive impact on the charitable cause. This belief and desire to make an impact through donations share similarities with efficacy as well as altruism within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework. The themes uncovered in addressing research question 2 are described next.

## **Research Question 2**

**Inspired by youth.** A number of interviewees detailed how their specific donation was on behalf of a charity sport participant who was younger than they were, often a minor.

This factor, inspired by youth, is defined as a CSE donor making a donation to recognize a young person's efforts in support of a cause. As noted in Table 1, the donors interviewed made donations to a diverse collection of CSEs, and these events were not targeted solely to young people. Interviewees who described being inspired by youth were donating to a young person who represented one of many market segments targeted by CSE managers. Amelia described how her donation was on behalf of a young adult who lived in her same community:

But it made me feel good to be able to help him do something worthwhile. That's part of a thing isn't it? Feeling that a young person is doing something worthwhile to help somebody else. So many young people don't care about anyone else, you know.

Garrison also wanted to use his donation to acknowledge the efforts of a young person in his neighborhood, "And it felt good to give to him, because he was donating his time." Similarly, Carolyn believed that her donation allowed her to convey a message to a younger member of her family:

It felt good because I felt, well he's doing something worthwhile and he's trying to give something back instead of just like some people just take, take, take and never give anything back. We always try and support wherever we can. I mean, things are tough, but we still try and support in some way and I just want him to learn that even though you can't sometimes give money as a donation or something there's other ways you can support charities or sporting events or whatever.

This theme demonstrates that CSE donations are informed by not just the cause, but also the fundraiser. In this case, CSE donors contributed to expressing their appreciation and support for a younger participant. This represents distinction from Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework in showing that CSE donors are supporting both the cause and the fundraiser. A

similar factor that speaks to both of these stakeholders does not exist within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework.

**Affinity for the participant.** CSE donors highlighted how their relationship with the CSE participant informed their donation. Affinity for the participant is defined as individuals considering their donation as a reflection of their connection with the CSE participant. The notion of the donation strengthening the relationship was touched upon by Monica, "I certainly feel a lot closer to her [the CSE participant]. At least because we've got something in common."

Ceri indicated that the donation was a reflection of her friendship with the participant, "I think it's the specific value that mateship and just being there for each other. Having this is something that we both value as friends." Madison suggested that her friend's participation in the event heightened her awareness of the cause, which led to her donation "If my friend believes in it, like if she participated in it and she feels that it's a worthy cause, well I suppose I kind of go on the bandwagon here." Margaret revealed that not only did she donate because it was for her friend, but she also increased her donation "I think we sort of donate more than I guess than I normally would have if it wasn't for a close friend doing it."

Interviewees also noted that their donation was a way to express their support of their friend (i.e., the CSE participant). Camila stated "I obviously want to be able to make a difference to these people, but at the same time I want to show my friends that I support the causes that they support as well." CSE donors made their donation on behalf of a participant with whom they shared a friendship or familial bond. They believed their donation was a mechanism to express this bond, and this expression contributed to their donation. Again, CSE donors supporting in appreciation of the participant reveals a theme beyond Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework.

The demographic information collected from each interviewee revealed a few differences across select characteristics. There was a higher representation of females within the feel good factor and affinity for the participant themes. Also, among interviewees included in the affinity for participant theme, there were far more individuals who had donated to a friend than to a family member. There were no notable differences across age, education level, and donation amount.

### **Discussion**

The researchers explored the factors driving a CSE donor to contribute on behalf of a CSE participant. Specifically, research question 1 asked: which of Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms are applicable to explaining CSE donor reasons for donating on behalf of a CSE participant? Two relevant factors were uncovered: feel good factor and perceived efficacy of donations.

These factors align with mechanisms within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework for charitable giving. Feel good factor is a reflection of psychological benefits from Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework with a specific focus on the positive feelings derived from making a contribution. The positive emotions and feelings that come from supporting a charitable cause through CSE participation are well established (Bennett et al., 2007). One implication from the current research is that these benefits may be shared across multiple stakeholders, including both participants and donors.

Perceived efficacy of donations runs parallel with efficacy and altruism (Bekker & Wiepking, 2011), wherein donations are driven by the desire and belief in making an impact, and donors want to assist the benefitting charity in achieving its mission. Belief in making a difference has been revealed as a factor that contributes to a meaningful CSE experience (Filo et al., 2012). This factor also aligns with empathy for the cause, a critical factor that enhances the social benefits of CSEs (Inoue et al., 2018).



Research question 2 posed: What other factors beyond Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms drive CSE donors to donate on behalf of a CSE participant? Inspired by youth and affinity for the participant represent two factors not accounted for within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework. While inspired by youth does share similarities with altruism within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework based upon the donor's desire to make a positive impact, the focus on young participants represents a distinctive aspect. This could be attributed to the particular event experience appealing to a younger demographic. These more personal factors reflecting the donor's affinity for, and inspiration derived from the fundraiser, could be most applicable to donation situations in which the donor knows the fundraisers such as CSEs.

Inspired by youth and affinity for the participant speak to the peer effects inherent to donations to CSE participants (Meer, 2011). These factors demonstrate the influence of being asked to donate by someone you care about on donors (Castillo et al., 2014). The donation as an expression of a connection to the CSE participant is common to both themes, but the focus on donating to young people makes inspired by youth a distinctive theme. These two themes extend beyond the mechanisms highlighted within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework, portraying donations from the CSE donors interviewed as an expression of their appreciation for, and connection with, the CSE participant.

In addition, the factors uncovered within the current research demonstrate distinction from the motives driving donations to other non-profit sport contexts. Donations to non-profit community sport organizations have been found to be driven by public goods focused motives such as developing elite sport talent and promoting inclusion (Feiler et al., 2015), while a similar influence from public goods was not uncovered in the current findings. Nonetheless, the feel good factor aligns with the emotion that can inform donations in the intercollegiate athletics context (Ko et al., 2014). In addition, perceived efficacy of donations

can reflect philanthropic motives such as enhancing and helping the community (Gladden et al., 2005) and providing welfare for others (Stinson & Howard, 2010). Furthermore, affinity for the participant reinforces the importance of social ties that has been found in community sport donations (Behrens et al., 2018) and peer-to-peer fundraising (Scharf & Smith, 2016).

Notably, five of the mechanisms outlined in Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework were not uncovered within the current research. Conjecture on why these factors did not emerge is speculative, however, the influence of the relationship between the donor and participant as well as the focus on the event may have overshadowed factors such as reputation and awareness of need. While reputation was not explicitly discussed by interviewees, this factor may still be relevant to the CSE context as the social consequences of the donation may be embedded in the relationship between the donor and the participant. To this end, reputation may be a component of the affinity for participant factor wherein the connection with the participant expressed through the donation may reflect the recognition from others sought. Solicitation may not have been spoken to due to the fact that the act of asking was inherent to the interaction between the CSE participant and donor. Meanwhile, the CSE donors interviewed broadly referenced alignment of values with CSE participants, but did not articulate specific values that were shared. Collectively, the four themes uncovered within the current research can enhance understanding of CSE donor needs and motives to ease the fundraising process (Hendriks & Peelan, 2013). The contribution to theory derived from the current research is described next.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings of the current research contribute to theory in the following ways. First, two additional themes were uncovered to extend Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework. Inspired by youth and affinity for participant are factors that were not accounted for within the authors' work. Both of these factors relate to the CSE participant and the donor's

relationship with the participant. The mechanisms highlighted within Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework are more focused on the individual donor (i.e., values, awareness of need, altruism) or the benefitting charity (i.e., solicitation, reputation). This may reflect an existing emphasis on more traditional charity-to-donor fundraising appeals. The current research applied this framework to the peer-to-peer fundraising environment. The emergence of themes that overlap with Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) framework as well as additional factors not accounted for within their work demonstrates extension of the framework.

The current research also extends the literature on CSEs and donations to sport-based non-profit organizations. Specifically, CSE research has been heavily focused on the participant perspective, with calls for research examining additional stakeholders (e.g., Daigo & Filo, 2020). Through collecting data from CSE donors, the current research responds to this call and provides insights on additional factors that can be leveraged to optimize the CSE experience (Filo et al., 2008). In addition, engaging the motives uncovered within the current research could assist in confronting some of the constraints for donors to non-profit sport organizations (Shapiro et al., 2010). Leveraging the factors uncovered within the current research can inform CSE management practice.

### **Managerial Implications**

CSE managers can assist participants in devising strategies for engaging with donors. The emergence of affinity for the participant suggests that individuals donate as a reflection of their connection to the CSE participant. Meanwhile, existing research on charitable giving has demonstrated that peer effects, wherein individuals are more likely to donate if they see that other individuals within their network have also donated, can stimulate donations (Smith, Windmeijer, & Wright, 2014). Hence, it would be worthwhile for CSE participants to publicize the donations they have received, including the names of donors. This suggestion is

seen in practice through the personalized fundraising pages that many CSEs employ (Jones, 2016). Opportunity exists for CSE managers to encourage participants to solicit testimonials from CSE donors. This can allow CSE donors to communicate why they donated, speaking directly to the psychological benefits obtained through the donation. These testimonials can then be used in fundraising appeals to other individuals.

Next, to leverage the affinity for participant factor, CSE managers must reinforce to participants their individual importance in securing donations. Existing research on peer-to-peer fundraising has highlighted the champion effect whereby the fundraiser is more important than the cause (Chapman et al., 2018). Hence, CSE participants can place emphasis on their personal investment in event participation when seeking donations. This can involve communicating their motivation behind participation, their personal connection to the cause, and the time and effort they are putting forth through participating. To facilitate this, CSE managers can create a template for soliciting donations that is then provided to participants and highlights these points.

Third, activating the inspired by youth factor can involve increased proactivity in recruiting young participants on the part of CSE managers. Research has suggested that young people are more inclined to get involved in social action (i.e., fundraising, volunteering) when supported by institutions such as schools (Tallon, Milligan, & Wood, 2017). Consequently, CSE managers should develop partnerships with local schools to encourage participation among students. This partnership could entail discounted registration, and in-school seminars discussing the event and cause. In turn, increased involvement from younger people and schoolchildren may translate to increased donations from community members drawing inspiration from the younger generation.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of the current research are acknowledged. First, the panel of respondents who comprised the sample donated to CSE participants who were involved with a diverse array of events. These events placed different demands on participants in terms of the physical activity and fundraising expectations. These variables may represent additional factors that could impact donations. These factors were not controlled for within the current research. However, the exploratory nature of this research underscores that this was a preliminary investigation.

Second, the population boundaries drawn around Australia impact the generalizability of the findings. Nonetheless, the qualitative, exploratory nature of this study aligns with the more narrow scope of our population and method. The generalizability of the findings can be further questioned due to the phenomenological approach taken and the sole reliance on insights provided by the sample of interviewees (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). Related to the phenomenological approach taken, a limitation exists in the efforts made to bracket in collecting and analyzing the data. The research team has previously investigated the CSE experience and has been directly involved in CSEs as both a donor and participant. These experiences and perspectives can create preconceptions of the research direction, however the research team worked to practice self-awareness throughout (Hemme, Morais, Bowers, & Todd, 2017).

### **Future Research**

Building upon the current findings, and addressing the limitations outlined above, a number of future studies can be initiated. First, data on the physical and fundraising demands inherent to a CSE can be collected to determine if this impacts an individual's willingness to donate on behalf of a participant, as well as the donation amount.

Furthermore, broadening the scope of the study to extend the population beyond Australia, as well as taking a multimethod approach to the research design would address

concerns regarding generalizability. While some differences were found across demographic characteristics within the interview sample, further exploration through a larger sample and mixed methods is recommended. The relative influence of feel good factor and affinity for the participant among female interviewees aligns with previous findings that gender differences exist across factors such as empathy and care in donations to charity (Mesch, Brown, Moore, & Hayat, 2011) and that such gender differences can be observed in donations to non-profit sport organizations such as intercollegiate athletics (Shapiro & Ridinger, 2011). However, given the exploratory nature of the current research and the relatively small sample, further research on these demographic differences is needed.

Donor income status represents an additional variable that could impact donor behavior, hence examination of the relationship between income status and donor behavior is worth investigation. The data collected via this approach could allow qualitative data to inform the development of a quantitative questionnaire to assess how donors experience the donation process differently based upon factors such as event context, donation amount, and relationship to participant, among others. Furthermore, additional data could be collected through scraping data from fundraising platforms employed by CSE participants, such as [www.everydayhero.com](http://www.everydayhero.com). This data can be used to explore network effects and feedback from donors (Lenczner & Phillips, 2012)..

Future research can also investigate the outcomes of the donation on behalf of a CSE participant. Potential outcomes can include enhanced wellbeing and quality of life, as well as sustained strengthening of the relationship with the CSE participant. In addition, the likelihood of the donor in getting involved with the benefitting charity, either as a future event participant or more traditional volunteer can be examined. Quantitative data on the outcomes of the donation can be collected, along with longitudinal data to track involvement (or lack thereof) with the benefitting charity.

Lastly, data can be collected from CSE participants as well as CSE managers. The data collected from fundraisers can provide insights on the approach these individuals take in soliciting donations. The examination of strategies employed by fundraisers can include investigation of social media's role in fundraiser outreach and potential impacts of social network effects (e.g., Saxton & Wang, 2014). The data collected from CSE managers can explore their expectations for CSE fundraisers. Collectively, these data can be triangulated to deliver a more holistic perspective of the donor transaction within the CSE context.

### **Conclusion**

The CSE market continues to expand with a diverse array of events and an increasing number of causes to support. This expansion has provided further opportunities to get involved, while also introducing additional challenges for fundraising (e.g., increased competition, increased expectations). The current research strives to address these challenges through improving understanding of CSE donors. It is hoped that the current research inspires further examination of additional CSE stakeholders and the fundraising process.

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Table 1

*Interviewee demographic profile, connection to CSE participant, donation amount, and CSE donated to*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Highest Education Level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Connection to Participant</b>	<b>Donation Amount</b>	<b>CSE Donated To</b>
Amelia	Bachelors	78	F	Family	\$100	Ride to Conquer Cancer
Bryant	High School	68	M	Friend	\$50	Fun Run
Camila	Bachelors	31	F	Friend	\$11-\$50	City2Surf
Carolyn	TAFE	60	F	Family	\$11-\$50	Fun Run
Ceri	Bachelors	35	F	Friend	\$11-\$50	Relay for Life
Dianne	TAFE	35	F	Friend	\$11-\$50	Running Festival
Darren	Postgrad	53	M	Friend	\$50	Ride to Conquer Cancer
Ernest	TAFE	38	M	Family	\$76-\$150	Melbourne Marathon
Franklin	Bachelors	39	M	Work colleague	\$150+	Beyond Blue Fundraiser
Garrison	Bachelors	57	M	Friend	\$11-\$50	Great Cycle Challenge
Hamilton	Bachelors	41	M	Work colleague	\$60	Great Cycle Challenge
Kirsten	High School	54	F	Friend	\$20	Breast Cancer Triathlon
Kate	TAFE	40	F	Family	\$20	Relay for Life
Karina	Bachelors	31	F	Friend	\$25	5km Fun Run
Leah	Bachelors	35	F	Friend	\$50	Big Walk
Luciana	PhD	38	F	Friend	\$10	Fun Run
Laura	Bachelors	33	F	Family	\$10	Angel Care Bike Ride
Madison	Bachelors	33	F	Friend	\$60	Relay for Life
Margaret	Postgrad	33	F	Friend	\$10	SA Fun Run
Monica	TAFE	43	F	Family	\$200	Melbourne Marathon
Nicholas	Postgrad	43	M	Family	\$11-\$50	School Fun Run
Patrick	Postgrad	51	M	Family	\$11-\$50	Mater Chicks in Pink
Sebastian	Postgrad	28	M	Friend	\$76-\$150	Walk
Simon	Postgrad	53	M	Family	\$250	Fun Run



Table 2

*Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving, conceptual definitions, and example interview question(s) derived from each mechanism*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Conceptual Definition</b>	<b>Example Interview Question(s)</b>
Awareness of Need	An individual's understanding of the need for support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you describe how the charity sport event participant you supported communicated the need for you to donate?</li> </ul>
Solicitation	Simply being asked to donate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you describe how the charity sport event fundraiser's ask impacted your decision to donate?</li> </ul>
Costs and Benefits	Contributions by donors based upon weighing the relative costs (i.e., money) with the benefits (e.g., access and/or material benefits such as prizes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beyond the monetary amount of this donation, were there any costs to you associated with your donation?</li> </ul>
Altruism	Donations as a means to achieve outcomes and positive impact for the charitable organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were you trying to achieve good through making your donation?</li> </ul>
Reputation	The social consequences that stem from an individual's decision to donate to charity such as recognition and approval from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were you recognized and acknowledged for your donation and how did this impact you?</li> </ul>
Psychological Benefits	The intangible benefits a donor experiences from giving such as increased sense of self-worth and joy from helping others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe the intangible benefits you obtained from making this donation (e.g., positive emotions, empowerment, etc.).</li> </ul>
Values	Intangible characteristics of individuals to support a charity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel that your own values align with the charity sport event participant's values?</li> </ul>
Efficacy	An individual's decision to donate because they believe that their contribution will make an impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think that your donation impacted the charity sport event participants' event experience? How so?</li> </ul>