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Investigating online recognition for blood donor retention: An experiential donor value approach

Short Title: Online recognition for blood donor retention

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Abstract

Recognising that charitable behaviour can be motivated by public recognition and emotional satisfaction, not-for-profit organisations have developed strategies that leverage self-interest over altruism by facilitating individuals to donate conspicuously. Initially developed as novel marketing programs to increase donation income, such conspicuous tokens of recognition are being recognised as important value propositions to nurture donor relationships. Despite this, there is little empirical evidence that identifies when donations can be increased through conspicuous recognition. Furthermore, social media's growing popularity for self-expression, as well as the increasing use of technology in donor relationship management strategies, makes an examination of virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition in relation to what value donors seek particularly insightful. Therefore, this research examined the impact of experiential donor value and virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition on blood donor intentions. Using online survey data from 186 Australian blood donors, results show that in fact emotional value is a stronger predictor of intentions to donate blood than altruistic value, while social value is the strongest predictor of intentions if provided with recognition. Clear linkages between dimensions of donor value (altruistic, emotional and social) and conspicuous donation behaviour (CDB) were identified. The findings provide valuable insights into the use of conspicuous donation tokens of recognition on social media, and contribute to our understanding into the under-researched areas of donor value and CDB.

Keywords: Recognition, conspicuous donation behaviour, donor value, social media, blood donation, donor retention

Introduction

Understanding the motivations behind individuals' adoption, involvement and continued participation in charitable behaviour is important and has been of great interest among researchers (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2007; Bednall and Bove, 2011). Despite substantive research in this area, donation rates remain below societal needs for many charitable activities. This is clearly evident in blood donation, where only 3% of the eligible Australian population donate blood, when one in three people will need blood or blood products in their lifetime (ARCBS, 2012a). Donor retention is of particular importance as repeat donors present an opportunity to save on costs associated with recruitment strategies (Masser *et al.*, 2009; ARCBS, 2011).

Previous research has acknowledged that decisions to donate can arise from both selfless and self-interested concerns. One view portrays blood donation as an archetypal altruistic behaviour, where selfless motives are driven by an ultimate desire to help others, without expecting any personal benefit (Alessandrini, 2007; Boenigk *et al.*, 2011; Ferguson *et al.*, 2012). This is reflected in the heavy tendency for blood organisations worldwide to use promotions that appeal to an individual's altruistic nature. As blood donation rates have failed to increase, appeals to altruism are seemingly insufficient.

The opposing view accepts that altruism cannot be the sole motivation for charitable giving, and assert that such behaviour is motivated by some form of self-interest, such as recognition or emotional gratification (Harbaugh, 1998; Bennett, 2003; Ariely *et al.*, 2009; Nelson and Grenne, 2010). Donor value, as defined by McGrath (1997), refers to the exchange benefits (i.e. benefits to the donor) that create donor satisfaction and motivates continued giving. Extending beyond the actual donation where a direct benefit to the donor is often unclear, donor value pertains directly to the donation experience derived thereafter (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; McGrath, 1997); appropriately termed experiential donor value. The multi-dimensionality of experiential donor value (Sheth *et al.*, 1991) aptly reflects individual donor behaviour as likely influenced by multiple motives simultaneously (Zillmer *et al.*, 1989; Bennett, 2003; Bekkers and Wiepking, 2007). For instance, Bekkers and Wiepking (2007) propose altruism, recognition and psychological benefits are all key drivers of charitable giving. In response to this, not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) have developed strategies that leverage self-interest by facilitating individuals to donate conspicuously. This phenomenon has been conceptualised as conspicuous donation behaviour (CDB); overt

charitable behaviour through displaying a token of recognition or being publicly recognised for the donation (Grace and Griffin, 2009).

NFPs worldwide have made ample use of donors' desire to be recognised for their generosity and selflessness; offering donors a variety of branded tokens such as stickers, pens and key rings (Glynn *et al.*, 2003). With the rise in Web 2.0 technology, the opportunity for NFPs to affordably leverage these tools to provide recognition is increasing. Furthermore, social media's growing popularity for self-expression (Schau and Gilly, 2003; Lefebvre, 2007), as well as the increasing use of technology in donor relationship strategies (Polonsky and Sargeant, 2007), makes an examination of virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition in relation to donor value particularly important. This research took an innovative approach to blood donor retention by examining conspicuous tokens of recognition in an online, virtual context.

Initially developed as novel marketing programs to increase donation income, conspicuous tokens of recognition are being recognised as important value propositions to nurture donor relationships (Grace and Griffin, 2006; Moore, 2008). Donors, like consumers, want value in return their donation (Gipp *et al.*, 2008). Unlike the first donation, more often sparked by altruism, social influence or charity appeal, subsequent donations take into consideration the outcome in response to the first – did they receive value in exchange for their donation? To this end, the purpose of this paper is to address the following three research questions: How strong is the overall relationship between, and relative importance of, the dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood? What is the relationship between dimensions of experiential donor value and conspicuous donation behaviour? Does receiving a virtual token of recognition impact the relationships between dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood?

It is important for blood donor organisations to understand with greater depth what constitutes value for donors and the relative importance of different motivational drivers. Hence, our study makes four distinct contributions, providing new insights into the otherwise under-researched areas of donor value and conspicuous donation behaviour (CDB). First, we have extended McGrath's (1997) donor value framework, by demonstrating the applicability of three new dimensions of donor value (altruistic, emotional and social) within the donor exchange process. Secondly, our research provides support for blood donor organisations to use conspicuous tokens of recognition on social networking sites as a means to provide donor value. Thirdly, where CDB was originally conceptualised within a monetary donation context (Grace and Griffin, 2006), our study has extended the theoretical

development by demonstrating CDB is both relevant within a non-monetary, blood donation context, and is not restricted to receiving only tangible tokens of recognition. Finally, our research establishes a relationship between donor value and CDB; providing preliminary support that these two bodies of literature can be drawn together to examine and understand donation behaviour and the role of conspicuous tokens to serve donors' self-interest. Whilst the scope of this study is limited to implications for blood organisations, there is potential for a broader application, where the provision of virtual tokens of recognition could provide cost effective ways for NFPs to encourage other pro-social behaviour.

Literature Review

NFPs are recognising the importance of a value proposition to encourage individuals to donate. This is demonstrated by a shift in the sector from the traditional 'organisation-centred' mindset to a 'customer-centred' approach to marketing (Dolnicar and Lazarevski, 2009). Individuals donate in order to receive something in return, such as status, recognition or simply emotional fulfilment. Exchange theory posits that in order for an exchange to take place, an individual must perceive value (benefits e.g. recognition) equal to or greater than the perceived costs; a blood donation (Bagozzi, 1978; French *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, Holbrook (1994) argues that because exchange is necessary to marketing activity and exchange depends on the value offered, exchange value is the fundamental basis for all marketing activity. Bagozzi (1975) critiqued traditional economic views of marketing exchange, proposing that the meaning of exchange can be utilitarian (involving direct transfers of tangible entities), symbolic (involving direct or indirect transfers of intangible, psychological or social entities), or a combination of the two. Donation behaviour is a unique form of exchange where benefits are often times delayed, inexplicit or go unnoticed (Drollinger, 2010). However, preserving a relationship between an NFP and a donor requires an appropriate value exchange (Sargeant, 2001). Providing value to donors gives them a reason to donate again. What may seem to be an altruistically motivated act, such as blood donation, may actually be a self-orientated decision depending on what value donors seek, and ultimately receive, from the act of donating blood.

In consideration of this, it should be acknowledged that there are two dominant perspectives on donor value; the organisation's (value of the donor) and the donor's (value for the donor). The former is conceptually similar to customer lifetime value, which refers to the projected revenue generated from customer acquisition and retention over time less the

costs associated with maintaining the customer relationship (Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Marshall, 2010). Similarly, Sargeant (1998) presents donor lifetime value as the total worth of a relationship with a particular donor to an organisation over time. Relationship management is a key tenet of customer lifetime value (Marshall, 2010). Thus, whilst a NFP organisation should be interested in maximising donor lifetime value (i.e. increasing frequency and duration of blood donation behaviour), this is accomplished only through maximising the second perspective of donor value, that is, what constitutes value for the donor; the focus of this paper.

Experiential Donor Value

Drawing a parallel to Sheth *et al.*'s (1991) theory of consumption value, or more commonly termed customer value (Holbrook, 1994, 2006), which posits that consumer choice is a function of the perceived benefits a consumer receives from a monetary exchange, donor value refers to the perceived benefits a donor receives in exchange for a donation (e.g. donation of blood). Thus, customer value (donor value) can help understand what consumers (donors) want out of an exchange to encourage behaviour (McDougall and Levesque, 2000; French *et al.*, 2010). In a blood donation context, the traditional economic approach of customer value provides a limited view; value is simply a cognitive perception of a reciprocal exchange where only the functional utilities of the product are considered (Zeithaml, 1988; Woodruff, 1997). Consequently, this study adopts an experiential approach to donor value; whereby value extends beyond the service exchange and simple economic benefits, drawing from the entire donation experience encountered thereafter (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; McGrath, 1997).

Whilst exact terminology differs between authors, multiple conceptualisations exist that outline dimensions of customer value (*see* Sheth *et al.*, 1991; Holbrook, 1994; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2009). Yet, customer value is a context and situation specific concept, in that, no one conceptualisation fits all (Chahal and Kumari, 2012). Although the term ‘value’ is rarely used, the literature is replete with reference to the importance of altruism for encouraging charitable behaviour and particularly blood donation (Glynn *et al.*, 2006; Alessandrini, 2007; Boenigk *et al.*, 2011). Further, (Harbaugh, 1998) proposed that the two primary reasons for charitable behaviour are internal (emotional) gratification and social prestige (Ferguson *et al.*, 2008; Lacetara and Macis, 2010). Similarly, Bénabou and Tirole (2006) present a model of charitable behaviour proposing donors receive a positive emotional utility and reputation effects from donating. Therefore the three

dimensions of donor value of importance in this paper, which have been repeatedly identified in commercial and donation literature, are:

- (1) Altruistic value which is the utility derived from performing an ethically desirable practice in which virtue (helping others) is its own reward;
- (2) Emotional value, which is the utility derived from the positive feelings or affective states that a behaviour generates, such as personal fulfilment of doing a good deed; and
- (3) Social value, which is the utility derived from the product's ability to acquire prestige, or enhance social status.

Of particular importance to this paper is the framework proposed by McGrath (1997), which describes donor value as consisting of two dimensions; cause value and service value. Providing cause value is dependent on the extent to which the charity carries out their mission (e.g. provide a safe supply of blood products to patients), whilst service value covers the actions a charity performs specifically for the donor, such as providing donor recognition and feedback (McGrath, 1997). Building on this framework, this paper presents altruistic, emotional and social value as sub-dimensions of cause and service value.

There is evidence to support customer value as a major antecedent of behavioural intentions in contexts such as healthcare (Chahal and Kumari, 2012), green product consumption (Chen and Chang, 2012) and corporate donation (Gipp *et al.*, 2008). Using the five dimensional conceptualisation of customer value by Sheth *et al.* (1991), Gipp *et al.* (2008) found a direct overall positive relationship between customer value and intentions to donate within a monetary donation context. However, the relationships between individual dimensions of value and intentions to donate were not examined. Despite the common conceptualisation of altruistic, emotional and social value as important motivations to encourage donation behaviour, there is little research conducted on donor value in a blood donation context, particularly examining the predictive capacity of each dimension collectively. This leads to the first research question; (RQ1): *How strong is the overall relationship between, and relative importance of, the dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood?*

Conspicuous Consumption and Donation Behaviour

Exchange in donation activities is often non-monetary and typically involves a benefit that is most often personal and psychological in nature (Kotler and Lee, 2008; French *et al.*, 2010), such as a feeling of self-esteem, social recognition from their immediate environment,

emotional well-being, or a sense of belonging. The role of the NFP organisation, then, is to continually align their exchange offering with the donor's end state requirements (Woodruff and Gardial, 1996), and use conspicuous branded tokens as a key strategy. Indeed, a growing body of research indicates that public donation behaviour is growing (Euromonitor International, 2010a) where when given the option, the majority of people do not wish to remain anonymous and prefer to have their donation made public (Andreoni and Petrie, 2004). To encapsulate this trend, the term 'conspicuous donation behaviour' (CDB) was coined and defined as "*the act of donating to charitable causes via the visible display of charitable merchandise or the public recognition of the donation*" (Grace & Griffin, 2009, p.16). This is parallel to the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, coined to encapsulate the idea that consumption contributes to the maintenance or improvement of social standing as it promotes the visible consumption of goods as a mechanism to improve one's social positioning and identity (Mason, 1984; Belk, 1988). Instead, CDB promotes the visible display of charitable donation to achieve the same end.

In addition to definitional similarities, the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption and CDB are both conceptualised as consisting of two motivational dimensions; where (1) self-orientated motivations reflect a desire to obtain personal 'inner satisfactions' from the overt nature of the donation, and (2) other-orientated individuals are partly motivated by external status gains from an overt act of charity (Grace and Griffin, 2009; Patsiaouras and Fitchett, 2012). According to Holbrook (2006) an activity that is self-orientated is performed because of the effect it has on the individual, whereas other-orientated activities are performed because of the effect it will have on other people.

Given this, it could be assumed that conspicuous consumers interested in communicating and enhancing their social status and identity, might equally be preoccupied with their inner self-concept and so perform particular behaviours to communicate with themselves as much as with other people. Thus CDB is appealing to individuals seeking both personal fulfilment (emotional value) and social recognition (social value) from donating. Donors are more likely to repeat actions that evoke positive emotions (such as a sense of fulfilment and self-esteem) in order to re-experience the positive feelings. Given that a token of recognition from a NFP has been shown to carry the capacity to enhance a donor's emotional and social utility gained from donating (Merchant *et al.*, 2010), we assert that a relationship exists between donor value and CDB. This leads to the second research question; (RQ2): *What is the relationship between dimensions of experiential donor value and conspicuous donation behaviour?*

Virtual Conspicuous Donation Behaviour

At present the majority of conspicuous donation behaviour takes place offline in the form of receiving displayable charitable merchandise, such as empathy ribbons (Grace and Griffin, 2006). With the proliferation of online social media platforms (Euromonitor International, 2010b; Hoffman and Novak, 2012) an online focus was deemed necessary to address donor concerns regarding costs associated with tangible tokens (Chmielewski *et al.*, 2012) and a need for innovative uses of social media, such as virtual tokens, to engage and build relationships with their target audience (Winterich *et al.*, 2013). Online communication platforms create the perception of close interaction, between an individual and an organisation, and are therefore beneficial to strengthen relationships with donors cost-efficiently (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013). Thus, NFP organisations are now at an embryonic stage of using online channels for donor recognition (Davis, 2012).

For instance a new Facebook feature allows users to link to organ donor registries and share their donor status, with a substantial increase in registries demonstrated in the US since the launch (Henderson, 2012). The Australian Red Cross Blood Service has created a set of ‘badges’ that donors can share or embed on social media pages (ARCBS, 2012b). With a similar function to that of empathy ribbons, the twibbon application has been used to promote various charities and causes by enabling supporters to customise their social network profile picture with a virtual badge (Guildford, 2010). This demonstrates that interest in social networking sites as a platform for providing donor recognition is growing.

Given that conspicuousness is characterised by visibility, and that social media can be used to provide visibility in terms of donation-related behaviour, it is proposed that CDB can be manifested through the use of social networking platforms; in the form of virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition. Indeed, because such virtual tokens transform a seemingly private act (i.e. blood donation) into a publicly recognised behaviour, it may increase the probabilities of a donor continuing to donate blood, particularly if the donor seeks social value. Whilst monetary incentives are argued to be motivationally counterproductive for blood donation due to the crowding-out effect of intrinsic motivation (Titmuss, 1997; Glynn *et al.*, 2003; Lacetara and Macis, 2010), a non-monetary exchange provides a suitable middle ground to cut across the dichotomy of altruistic versus paid donation. However, the impact of non-monetary tokens on blood donation behaviour remains empirically unsettled (Buyx, 2009). Thus, the final research question is; (RQ3): *Does receiving a virtual token of recognition impact the relationship between dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood?*

A summary of the research questions and associated hypotheses are presented in **Table 1**. The following sections will delineate the justification for the development of each hypothesis.

Hypothesis Development

As stated earlier, this paper positions altruistic, emotional and social value as an extension of McGrath's (1997) hierarchical framework of donor value; consisting of cause and service value (see **Figure 1**). A NFP organisation delivers cause value through its work and is dependent on how well the organisation achieves their mission, such as saving lives, protecting children from abuse, or providing a safe blood supply to patients in need. Altruistic value is the utility derived from performing an ethically desirable practice; driven by an ultimate desire to help others and society, at a personal cost and without any personal benefit to the donor (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2009). It is strongly reported in donor motivation literature that charitable behaviour, particularly blood donation, is distinctively altruistic and that altruism is the primary reason for donating (Glynn *et al.*, 2002; Alessandrini, 2007; Steele *et al.*, 2008).

Conditional to a NFP organisation using individual donations towards addressing their specific cause (cause value), altruistic value is provided through the nature of donation behaviour; helping others. Thus, actions by NFPs, such as providing a conspicuous token of recognition, will have no impact on individuals seeking altruistic value. In line with motivation crowding-out theory (Titmuss, 1997), altruistic donors' intentions to donate blood may in fact decrease as a result of receiving a conspicuous token of recognition, given that the donation is performed without expecting or wanting any personal benefit or praise. We therefore posit:

H1a: Altruistic value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate blood

H1b: There will be a negative relationship between altruistic value and dimensions of CDB

H1c: Altruistic value seeking donors' intentions to donate blood will decline when a virtual token of recognition is offered.

In addition to altruism, evidence indicates that blood donor behaviour is performed for the personal emotional experience; donors feel rewarded for donating blood by feelings of increased self-worth (Ferguson *et al.*, 2008). Emotional value is intrinsically motivated (Holbrook, 2006; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2009) and centres on the idea of a 'warm glow' (Andreoni, 1990; Mayo and Tinsley, 2009), a positive utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product, or in this case a behaviour, generates or arouses (Sweeney and

Soutar, 2001; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2009; Ferguson *et al.*, 2012). Alternatively, the term ‘helper’s high’ has also been used to describe the surge of self-gratifying positive emotion that individuals may experience subsequent to making a charitable donation (Bennett, 2007). Thus, emotional value may result from doing a good deed due to increased feelings of personal fulfilment for helping society; once again dependent on the organisation’s ability to deliver cause value.

Furthermore, emotional value can be enhanced by receiving something that serves as a reminder of a good deed so to extend the positive affective state (Mason, 1984). Research has indicated that donors who exhibit a preference for emotional value felt that the receipt of a conspicuous token from a charitable organisation bolstered the ‘warm glow’ following the act of donating (Bennett, 2007). Given that service value covers the actions taken by a NFP organisation specifically for donors, such as providing a conspicuous token of recognition, and that self-orientated CDB reflects a desire to obtain personal fulfilment through donating conspicuously (Grace and Griffin, 2009), we posit that a relationship exists between emotional value and self-orientated CDB. Further, it is argued that donors’ intentions to donate blood will increase as a result of receiving a conspicuous token of recognition when emotional value is sought. We therefore hypothesise:

H2a: Emotional value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate

H2b: There will be a positive relationship between emotional value and self-orientated CDB

H2c: Emotional value seeking donors’ intentions to donate blood will increase when a virtual token of recognition is offered.

Donors may also experience psychological benefits from socially visible charitable behaviour. Social value is extrinsically motivated; where the offering is not valued in itself but rather for its ability to achieve some further end goal (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Holbrook, 2006). For instance, individuals choose to donate blood in order to fulfil social belonging needs or shape the response of other people as a means to achieving a desired goal such as status, recognition or influence (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2009). The model presented by Bénabou and Tirole (2006) predicts that as charitable behaviour becomes more socially visible (such as through public recognition tokens on social media), individuals would be more likely to continue to donate as contribution yields greater social image benefits. Receiving social value is therefore dependent on the extent to which the behaviour can be made publicly visible. Other-orientated CDB is motivated by public recognition gained from donating conspicuously (Mason, 1984; Patsiaouras and Fitchett,

2012), whereby NFP organisations' service strategies (e.g. branded token) are used as a means to sustain an individual's social image. As virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition provide a means for such desired public prestige, it is argued that receiving a token on social media platforms will positively impact intentions to donate blood when social value is sought. We therefore posit:

H3a: Social value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate

H3b: There will be a positive relationship between social value and other-orientated CDB

H3c: Social value seeking donors' intentions to donate blood will increase when a virtual token of recognition is offered.

Methodology

Data Collection and Sample

This research employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design using an online questionnaire survey. Whole blood donors, aged 18-70 years of age, were randomly recruited from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service database to achieve a representative sample of the Australian blood donor population ($n=186$). The Blood Service administered 3025 emails, with 293 blood donors attempting to complete the survey, achieving a response rate of 9.7%. To avoid uninformed responses regarding social media recognition, a screening question was used; *do you use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) for your own personal use?* Consequently, 107 respondents were not eligible, resulting in an overall response rate of 6.1%. Although resulting to a low response rate, Hair *et al.* (2010) contends that a ratio of 15 to 20 respondents to each independent variable is the desired sample size for regression analysis. Given that there were three or fewer independent variables to each regression test, the sample size is appropriate to infer statistical power of significance and generalisability of the results. Further, the sample characteristics (shown in **Table 2**) as compared with the current Australian blood donor panel depict only a slight skew in the sample towards a younger distribution of age and a higher proportion of females. As a result of the screening criteria, it was found that 63.5% of blood donors use social networking sites for personal use; consistent with usage rates in Australia which is currently 62% of the population (Sensis, 2011).

Measurement

In order to measure the constructs of interest, all items were adapted from previous studies and measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (anchored at 1-*strongly disagree* and 5-*strongly agree*). As identified previously, donor value is conceptualised as consisting of altruistic, emotional and social value dimensions. Four items were used to measure *altruistic value* adapted from Glynn *et al.* (2006) and Boenigk *et al.* (2011). Items used to measure *emotional* and *social value* were adapted from the perceived value (PERVAL) scale developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Operationalised within a monetary donation context, Grace and Griffin's (2009) eight-item scale of *Conspicuous Donation Behaviour (CDB)* was adapted to the non-monetary donation context of blood donation. Prior to responding to CDB items, respondents were asked to select their most preferred virtual token of recognition to receive from the Blood Service (see **Figure 2**). Giving respondents options reduced the potential bias caused by offering a disliked virtual token. The majority of respondents (61.8%) indicated they would prefer to receive a 'Wall Post' followed by a 'Twibbon' (34.9%). Finally, *behavioural intentions* was measured using a three-item scale previously validated in a blood donation context (Robinson *et al.*, 2008). Intentions to donate blood were measured twice, to determine the extent of change in intention as a result of hypothetically receiving a virtual token of recognition (Welman and Kruger, 2001); for example "*If I was provided with a (chosen token of recognition), I would like to donate blood in the next three (3) months*". The operationalisation of measures used in this study is outlined in **Table 3**.

Data Analysis

As all questionnaire items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, common method bias was assessed using the single-factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986) and found not to have impacted the results of this study. Factor analysis was further performed to examine the validity of the multi-dimensional and multi-item constructs of donor value and CDB within a blood donation context. Analysis of the factor loadings and fit indices supported a three-factor solution for donor value (χ^2/df 1.81, CFI 0.95, RMSEA 0.07, SRMR 0.05) and two-factor solution for CDB with minor changes to scale items (χ^2/df 2.21, CFI 0.99, RMSEA 0.08, SRMR 0.03). Despite having to omit one item from the original CDB scale, it can be concluded that the scale is valid in a blood donation context. Reliability tests demonstrated internal consistency of the measurement instrument with all constructs' Cronbach alpha (α) scores above the lower threshold of 0.70 (see **Table 4**), as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). As the transformation of items did not result in a substantial difference in normality

and the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were satisfied (Pallant, 2007; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) all items remained unaltered. Pearson correlation and regression analysis techniques were used to address the research hypotheses.

Results

Analysis of the correlation matrix (**Table 4**) provides preliminary support for hypotheses, indicating that ‘intentions to donate’ (INT) is significantly and positively correlated with all dimensions of donor value with the exception of social value (SV); unless given a token of recognition (INTR) ($r=0.23, p<0.01$). Age is significantly negatively correlated with SV ($r=-0.19, p<0.01$) and other-orientated CDB (OCDB) ($r=-0.21, p<0.01$), indicating as age increases, scores for both SV and OCDB decrease. Female blood donors are slightly more likely to report altruistic reasons (AV) for donating ($r=0.20, p<0.01$) and higher self-orientated CDB (SCDB) ($r=0.16, p<0.05$) than male donors. A further interesting aspect of the findings is the nature of the relationship between the three dimensions of donor value. AV and emotional value (EV; $r=0.41, p<0.001$), and SV and EV ($r=0.15, p<0.05$), were found to be positively correlated suggesting that donors motivated by one would tend to be motivated by the other. Yet, although insignificant, AV and SV were found to have a negative correlation ($r=-0.13, ns$), suggesting donors motivated by one would tend not to be motivated by the other. Multicollinearity did not pose a threat to the analyses as inter-correlations between the constructs did not exceed the threshold of ± 0.85 and higher (Allen and Bennett, 2010).

Multiple regression results are outlined in **Table 5 and Table 6**. Overall, the donor value dimensions successfully explained 24.1% of the variance in intentions to donate blood (INT; Adj. $R^2=0.241, p(3, 182) <0.001$). Emotional value (EV; $\beta=0.414, p<0.01$), altruistic value (AV; $\beta=0.146, p<0.05$) and social value (SV; $\beta=-0.151, p<0.05$) were found to each significantly contribute to the prediction INT; with EV having the highest predictability. SV became a significant positive predictor of intentions to donate blood only when a token of recognition is offered (INTR; $\beta=0.212, p<0.01$). EV remained a significant predictor of INTR but decreased in predictive power ($\beta=0.188, p<0.05$), whilst AV declines to the point of insignificance ($\beta=0.086, ns$) when recognition is provided. As a result hypotheses H1a, H1c, H2a, H3a, and H3c were supported. Dividing the sample into three age groups, post hoc multiple regression analyses revealed differences between the generational cohorts. For Generation Y, only EV was found to significantly impact INT ($\beta=0.471, p<0.01$), while SV was found to be the sole predictor of INTR ($\beta=0.249, p<0.05$). Generation X had similar

results to the main regression model with EV ($\beta=0.373$, $p<0.01$) and AV ($\beta=0.241$, $p<0.05$) both demonstrating significant relationships with INT, while SV is significantly related to INTR ($\beta=0.268$, $p<0.05$). On the other hand, EV was found to be the only significant predictor for both INT ($\beta=0.507$, $p<0.01$) and INTR ($\beta=0.620$, $p<0.001$) for Baby Boomers.

Table 7 presents the results from a series of linear regressions, performed to determine the relationships between the dimensions of experiential donor value (altruistic, emotional and social value) and CDB (self-orientated and other-orientated). Significant positive relationships were found between altruistic value ($\beta= 0.21$, $p=0.004$), emotional value ($\beta= 0.24$, $p=0.001$) and social value ($\beta= 0.31$, $p<0.001$), and self-orientated CDB. However, as indicated by the R Square (R^2) and Adjusted R Square (Adj. R^2), the proportion of variance explained between each relationship is quite low. Only social value was positively related to other-orientated CDB ($\beta= 0.61$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, results support H2b and H3b. Overall; seven out of nine hypotheses were supported.

Discussion

Consistent with previous research, this study demonstrated that individual donors are likely motivated by multiple factors simultaneously. In response to RQ1, altruistic, emotional and social value explained an aggregate variance of 24.1% in intentions to donate blood. Strong support is presented for emotional and altruistic value as key positive drivers of intentions to donate blood. Similar to the notion of impure altruism (i.e. helping others because it is personally rewarding) proposed by Andreoni (1990), the findings of this research challenge the idea that blood donation is an act of pure altruism and demonstrates that, in fact, emotional value, over altruistic value, can be a stronger predictor of blood donor intentions. This is consistent with research by Ferguson *et al.* (2008) who found that beliefs of benevolence, where both the recipient (receiving health benefits) and donor (receiving a positive emotional utility) benefit from donating blood, was a stronger predictor of intentions to donate blood than altruistic beliefs, where only the recipient benefits at a cost to the donor. Although a positive emotional feeling is, somewhat, outside the control of a blood donation organisation, these positive affective states can be used as part of a value proposition to encourage people to donate.

In response to RQ2, the results support the theoretical assertion that a relationship exists between donor value and CDB within a blood donation context. A moderate positive relationship was identified between emotional value and self-orientated CDB, demonstrating

that donors who exhibit a preference for emotional value are motivated by the desire to seek intrinsic benefits through overt donation behaviour. Ferguson *et al.* (2012) proposed that such a positive emotional experience from donating blood can be sustained by reinforcement from significant others. This research supports the proposition: as virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition provide a means for significant others to recognise an individuals' charitable contribution, the feelings of personal fulfilment and self-respect can be prolonged and reinforced. Surprisingly altruistic value was also found to have a significant positive relationship with self-orientated CDB, which further supports the concept of 'impure altruism' in blood donation. Whilst these blood donors may initially be motivated by altruistic reasons, actual behaviour may be sustained by both wanting to help others and intrinsic (emotional) benefits, which can be achieved through conspicuous donation activities. Social value was found to have a strong positive relationship with other-orientated CDB, and surprisingly self-orientated CDB. Social value is centred on making a good impression on significant others through receiving public recognition for behaviour, and virtual conspicuous donation strategies provide a means for such desired public recognition and prestige. Individuals desire to be perceived in a positive way, both in their own eyes and by others (Leary and Kowalsky, 1990), thus donors who exhibit a preference for social value are favourable towards any conspicuous donation activity.

Finally, research question three (RQ3) examined whether the relationships between altruistic, emotional and social value, and intentions to donate blood would change if donors were offered a virtual token of recognition. As anticipated, altruistic value declined to the point of insignificance when offered a virtual token of recognition for donating blood. Emotional value remained a significant predictor of intentions to donate blood with a virtual token of recognition, but did decrease slightly in predictive power. Furthermore, a decrease in mean was observed between 'intentions to donate blood' and 'intentions to donate blood given a token'. This may reflect a possible crowding-out effect of intrinsic motivations. Following the work of Titmuss (1970, 1997), subsequent research on motivation crowding-out theory has emphasised the negative role of monetary incentives on blood donation behaviour (Mellström and Johannesson, 2008; Ariely *et al.*, 2009). The results of this research suggest that crowding-out of intrinsic motivations is not restricted to monetary incentives, but may also be caused by non-monetary tokens of recognition dependent on the value sought by the donor.

Although the data supported a significant relationship between social value and intentions to donate, it was identified as being negative. Social value only became a

significant positive predictor of intentions to donate blood when a token of recognition was offered. Individuals driven by social value tend to choose products or perform behaviours that convey an image congruent with the social image they want to project (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Given that social value is only acquired when the behaviour can be publicly displayed, or the organisation provides a means to publicly recognise their contribution (Harbaugh, 1998), it is possible that those individuals who donate blood to receive social value were not provided with a means to be publicly recognised for their donation and as a result reported lower intentions to donate. Both of these plausible explanations highlight the need to further investigate the role of social value in individuals' decision to donate blood.

We examined further the relationships between donor value and intentions to donate across generational cohorts. By establishing which value type is most salient to particular groups of blood donors, and the effect virtual tokens of recognition have on these groups, separate appeals may be developed to target such groups. Both Generation Y and Generation X blood donors seeking social value, reported higher intentions to donate when a virtual token of recognition was offered. Incongruent to younger cohorts, emotional value was the strongest predictor of intentions to donate when offered a virtual token of recognition for Baby Boomers. This group therefore finds that receiving such a token from a blood donation organisation bolsters the 'warm glow' feeling received from donating blood (Bennett, 2007).

Contributions, Implications, limitations and future research

Contributions

This study provides new insights into the otherwise under-researched areas of donor value and conspicuous donation behaviour (CDB). We have extended the work of McGrath (1997), by proposing a hierarchical framework of donor value, with altruistic, emotional and social value as sub-dimensions of cause and service value. Our results demonstrate that when an organisation delivers cause value (fulfils their mission), it provides donors with altruistic and emotional value through the 'helping nature' of a donation. Service value, it is argued, provides an emotional and social utility to the donor, which in turn plays an important role in encouraging blood donor behaviour (Sargeant and Jay, 2004; Sargeant *et al.*, 2006; Sargeant and Woodliffe, 2007; Gipp *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, we contribute to existing literature by demonstrating the applicability of donor value for blood donation organisations, assisting them to understand what donors want from future exchanges. Further, where CDB was originally conceptualised within a monetary donation context (Grace and Griffin, 2006), this

study extends the theoretical development by demonstrating CDB is (1) relevant within a non-monetary, blood donation context, and (2) is not restricted to receiving tangible rewards but also virtual tokens of recognition. Finally, our research establishes a relationship between donor value and CDB; demonstrating that individuals motivated by certain dimensions of value are receptive to conspicuous donation strategies as a means to communicate their charitable behaviour with themselves and with others.

Implications

Virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition are being recognised as important tools in nurturing donor relationships, leading to important managerial implications for NFPs. This research encourages blood donor organisations to use conspicuous tokens of recognition on social networking sites as a means to provide donor value. As a virtual token of recognition represents a reward for performing a specific behaviour, blood donation organisations should provide such devices to ensure a continuation of donation behaviour is realised. However, this is shown only to be effective when emotional and social value is sought by the donor. Given the high motivational power of emotional value in our findings, virtual tokens that not only provide recognition but also reflect sincere appreciation by the blood donation organisation should be considered as they may provide greater encouragement of charitable behaviour. Finally, while NFPs continue to deal with increasing operational, administrative and marketing costs, virtual conspicuous rewards may present significant economic savings to those currently employing tangible conspicuous donation strategies.

Limitations

As with most research inherent limitations exist that should be duly noted. Despite attempts to mitigate social influences (i.e. using a low personal contact data collection tool and assuring anonymity of responses), social desirability is so deeply ingrained through the process of acculturation that this bias is likely to some degree contributed to the results, given the self-report nature (Crowne and Marlowe, 1964) and charitable context (Obermiller *et al.*, 1992; Louie and Obermiller, 2000) of this study. Respondents may have responded to questions in a manner to create a favourable, or more altruistic, impression and therefore responded negatively to questions that suggest egoistic motivations (Bardwell and Dimsdale, 2001; Chung and Monroe, 2003). This is particularly evident regarding the negative relationship between social value and blood donor intentions, as well as the mean difference between intentions to donate blood and intentions to donate blood given a token (see Table

4). Nancarrow *et al.* (2001) suggest that there is no certain way to eliminate or circumvent socially desirable responses and researchers may recognise the possibility of social desirability bias but choose to live with the problem. As a cross-sectional data collection design was adopted, the research limited the extent of detecting change in respondents' intentions to donate after receiving a virtual token of recognition, as only a hypothetical token was offered. While behavioural intentions are the most proximal determinant of actual behaviour, reported intentions to perform a charitable behaviour do not always correspond to subsequent behaviour and can often be overestimated (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2007). These research objectives would be conducive to a longitudinal design.

Future Research

In closing, all previous research investigating tokens of recognition have only examined tangible rewards, such as empathy ribbons, pins of appreciation, certificates and merchandise (Glynn *et al.*, 2003; Bennett, 2007; Grace and Griffin, 2009). This research has provided preliminary support for the use of virtual tokens on social networking platforms. Thus, there are opportunities for future research to conduct comparative analyses between receipt of tangible and intangible (virtual) conspicuous tokens, and to identify which type is most appealing to donors. Further research is needed on how blood donation organisations can strategically create and manage value delivery systems. Also, to what extent are extrinsic factors, such as the type of organisation supported and audience reaction determinative of effectiveness? Several authors contend that social influence is more effective when a donor's behaviour is appreciated by those with whom the donor shares a strong social bond (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2007; Bekkers, 2010; Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2011). Thus, although this research demonstrates that blood donors seeking social value are positively inclined towards conspicuous donation activities, what remains unclear is how dependent this effect is on the audience recognising the charitable behaviour and their reaction.

The use of virtual conspicuous tokens of recognition was only examined in a post-donation context; respondents had made at least one blood donation prior to participating. Whilst this is not a limitation, gaining a commitment or pledge to perform a socially desirable behaviour has been found to increase the likelihood that the individual will follow-through and perform the behaviour (Kotler and Lee, 2008). It would be interesting moving forward to examine the use of virtual tokens of recognition at each stage of making a blood donation; before (virtual pledge or commitment to donate), during (check-in features on social networking platforms) and after (virtual conspicuous tokens). Blood donor behaviour has also

been shown to increase in frequency prior to reaching thresholds for which a reward is offered, but only if the recognition was public (Lacetara and Macis, 2010). Therefore, there is also a need to determine the desired frequency for receipt of virtual tokens of recognition, and when private acknowledgement is more appropriate.

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Table 1. Summary of research questions and hypotheses

Research Question	Hypotheses
RQ1 How strong is the overall relationship between, and relative importance of, the dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood?	H1a Altruistic value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate H2a Emotional value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate H3a Social value will have a positive relationship with intentions to donate
RQ2 What is the relationship between dimensions of experiential donor value and conspicuous donation behaviour?	H1b There will be a negative relationship between altruistic value and dimensions of CDB H2b There will be a positive relationship between emotional value and self-orientated CDB H3b There will be a positive relationship between social value and other-orientated CDB
RQ3 Does receiving a virtual token of recognition impact the relationships between dimensions of experiential donor value and intentions to donate blood?	H1c Altruistic value seeking donors' intentions to donate blood will decline when a virtual token of recognition is offered. H2c Emotional value seeking donors' intentions to donate blood will increase when a virtual token of recognition is offered. H3c Social value seeking donors' intentions to donate blood will increase when a virtual token of recognition is offered.

Table 2. Sample characteristics

		Current study (N = 186) %	Australian blood donor population %
Gender	Male	40.9	47.3
	Female	59.1	52.7
Age	18-29	36.6	32.6
	30-39	19.9	16.0
	40-49	19.9	17.8
	50-59	14.5	19.7
	60-70	9.1	13.8

Table 3. Operationalisation of constructs

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adapted Measurement Item
Altruistic Value	<p><i>Glynn et al., 2006</i></p> <p>I believe that I have a responsibility to help others</p> <p>I enjoy helping others</p> <p>I wanted to help in a community or national crisis</p> <p><i>Boenigk, Leipnitz & Scherhag, 2011</i></p> <p>I donate blood because I want to help others</p>	<p>I donate blood because I have a responsibility to help others</p> <p>I donate blood because I enjoy helping others</p> <p>I donate blood because I want to help in a community or national crisis</p> <p>I donate blood because I want to help others</p>
Emotional Value	<p><i>Sweeney & Soutar, 2001</i></p> <p>... is one that I would enjoy</p> <p>... would make me want to use it</p> <p>... is one that I would feel relaxed about using</p> <p>... would give me pleasure</p>	<p>I donate blood because I enjoy it</p> <p>The thought of donating blood makes me want to donate</p> <p>I feel relaxed about donating blood</p> <p>I donate blood because it gives me pleasure</p>
Social Value	<p><i>Sweeney & Soutar, 2001</i></p> <p>... would help me to feel acceptable</p> <p>... would improve the way I am perceived</p> <p>... would make a good impression on other people</p> <p>... would give its owner social approval</p>	<p>I donate blood to help me feel acceptable</p> <p>I donate blood to improve the way I am perceived</p> <p>I donate blood to make a good impression on other people</p> <p>I donate blood to get social approval</p>
Self-Orientated CDB	<p><i>Grace & Griffin, 2009</i></p> <p>If I wear empathy ribbons it makes me feel like I have made a difference</p> <p>It increase my self-respect when I wear merchandise that benefits charities</p> <p>Wearing empathy ribbons makes me feel good</p> <p>I like to remind myself of the charities I support through buying merchandise that benefits charities</p>	<p>If I display a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post), it makes me feel like I have made a difference</p> <p>It increases my self-respect when I display a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p> <p>Displaying a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post) makes me feel good</p> <p>I would like to remind myself of the charities I support through displaying a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p>
Other-Orientated CDB	<p>I like to buy empathy ribbons because I get to show something for my donation</p> <p>I like to wear/ display merchandise that benefits charities so that people know I am a good person</p> <p>I like to show people I donate</p> <p>I wear merchandise that benefits charities because it makes me look cool</p>	<p>I would like to display a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post) because I get to show something for my donation</p> <p>I like to display a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post) so that people know I am a good person</p> <p>I like to show people I donate by displaying a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p> <p>I would like to display a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post) because it enhances my social status</p>
Intentions to donate blood	<p>(Robinson et al., 2008) – 7 point Likert scale</p> <p>I would like to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I intend to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I will donate blood in the next 3 months</p>	<p>I would like to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I intend to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I will donate blood in the next 3 months</p>
Intentions to donate blood (if given recognition)	<p>(Robinson et al., 2008) – 7 point Likert scale</p> <p>I would like to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I intend to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>I will donate blood in the next 3 months</p>	<p>If I was provided with a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p> <p>I would like to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>If I was provided with a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p> <p>I would intend to donate blood in the next 3 months</p> <p>If I was provided with a (twibbon/ overlay/ wall post)</p> <p>I would donate blood in the next 3 months</p>

Table 4. Construct means, standard deviation, Cronbach alpha and Pearson correlations

	Mean	Std. Deviation	α	Correlation								
				G	Age	AV	EV	SV	SCDB	OCDB	INT	INTR
Gender (G)	1.59	0.49	-	1								
Age	3.20	1.59	-	-0.07	1							
Altruistic Value (AV)	4.31	0.61	0.79	0.20**	0.05	1						
Emotional Value (EV)	3.54	0.81	0.73	0.08	-0.07	0.41***	1					
Social Value (SV)	2.10	0.82	0.89	-0.13	-0.19**	-0.13	0.15*	1				
Self-Orientated CDB (SCDB)	2.84	1.02	0.90	0.16*	-0.10	0.21**	0.24**	0.31***	1			
Other-Orientated CDB (OCDB)	2.23	0.94	0.87	0.03	-0.21**	-0.10	0.12	0.61***	0.74***	1		
Intentions to Donate Blood (INT)	4.06	0.96	0.90	0.07	-0.07	0.34***	0.45***	-0.11	0.10	-0.03	1	
Intentions to Donate Blood if given token of recognition (INTR)	2.63	1.04	0.94	0.04	-0.01	0.14	0.26***	0.23**	0.73***	0.56***	0.25**	1

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5. Model summary results of the multiple regression analyses

Model	Sample	R value	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	df (Residual)	Sig. (p)
Donor Value → INT	ALL (n = 186)	0.503	0.253	0.241	20.594	182	0.000
<i>df(Regression) = 3</i>	Gen Y (n = 68)	0.520	0.270	0.236	7.896	64	0.000
	Gen X (n = 74)	0.557	0.311	0.281	10.516	70	0.000
	Baby Boomers (n = 44)	0.489	0.239	0.182	4.180	40	0.012
Donor Value → INTR	ALL (n = 186)	0.329	0.108	0.093	7.357	182	0.000
<i>df(Regression) = 3</i>	Gen Y (n = 68)	0.272	0.074	0.031	1.708	64	<i>ns</i>
	Gen X (n = 74)	0.329	0.108	0.070	2.836	70	0.044
	Baby Boomers (n = 44)	0.580	0.336	0.286	6.744	40	0.001

Note: IV = Donor value; DV = Intentions to donate (INT) and intentions to donate with a token of recognition (INTR)

Table 6. Standardised coefficients (β) and t-values of the multiple regression analyses

Sample segment	Donor Value Dimension	INT		INTR	
		β	t-value	β	t-value
ALL	Altruistic Value	0.146*	2.032	0.086	1.086
	Emotional Value	0.414***	5.737	0.188*	2.389
	Social Value	-0.151*	-2.282	0.212**	2.930
Gen Y 18-29 yrs (n = 68)	Altruistic Value	0.085	0.724	0.053	0.405
	Emotional Value	0.471***	4.022	0.065	0.490
	Social Value	-0.129	-1.207	0.249*	2.069
Gen X 30-49 yrs (n = 74)	Altruistic Value	0.241*	2.036	0.238	1.762
	Emotional Value	0.373**	3.325	0.073	0.574
	Social Value	-0.158	-1.452	0.268*	2.165
Baby Boomers 50-69 yrs (n = 44)	Altruistic Value	0.038	0.246	-0.157	-1.087
	Emotional Value	0.507**	3.053	0.620***	3.998
	Social Value	-0.232	-1.552	0.030	0.212

Note: IV = Donor value; DV = Intentions to donate (INT) and intentions to donate with a token of recognition (INTR)

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7. Results of linear regression analysis

Linear Relationship	R ²	Adj. R ²	β	t-value	Sig (p)
Altruistic value - Self-orientated CDB	0.045	0.040	0.213	2.953	0.004
Emotional value - Self-orientated CDB	0.058	0.053	0.241	3.372	0.001
Social value - Self-orientated CDB	0.097	0.092	0.311	4.439	0.000
Altruistic value - Other-orientated CDB	0.011	0.005	-0.103	-1.400	0.163
Emotional value - Other-orientated CDB	0.014	0.009	0.119	1.623	0.106
Social value - Other-orientated CDB	0.371	0.368	0.609	10.417	0.000