



# Why People Give

Some Insights from the Science of Motivation

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Reunion >>

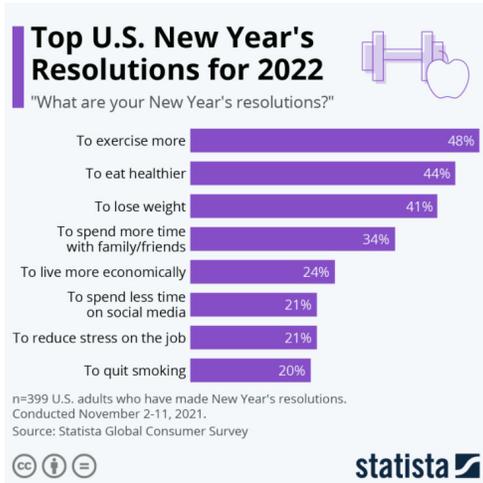
# Why People Give

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# What Motivates You to Do What you Do?



### Other common goals

- Learn something new
- **Volunteer/Donate more often**
- Get more organized
- Buy a new home
- Do something nice for myself
- Buy a new car

# What Motivates You to Do What you Do?





## What Motivates You to Do What you Do?

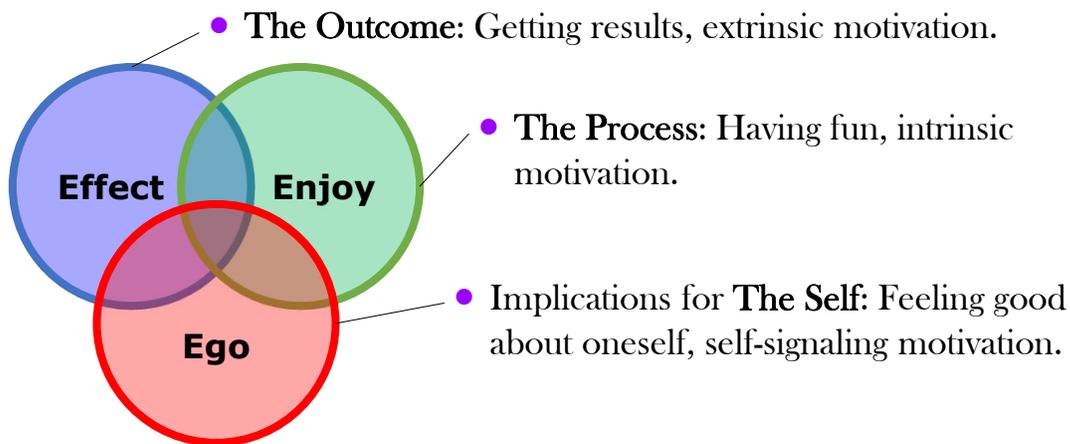
- **The Outcome** of goal pursuit
  - Value + expectancy of goal attainment (e.g., expected impact of goal actions)
- **The Process** of goal pursuit
  - Intrinsic motivation, enjoyment derived from goal actions
- Implications for **The Self**
  - Goal actions have positive implications for the self-concept

-Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2017)  
 -Kassirer & Touré-Tillery (UR)

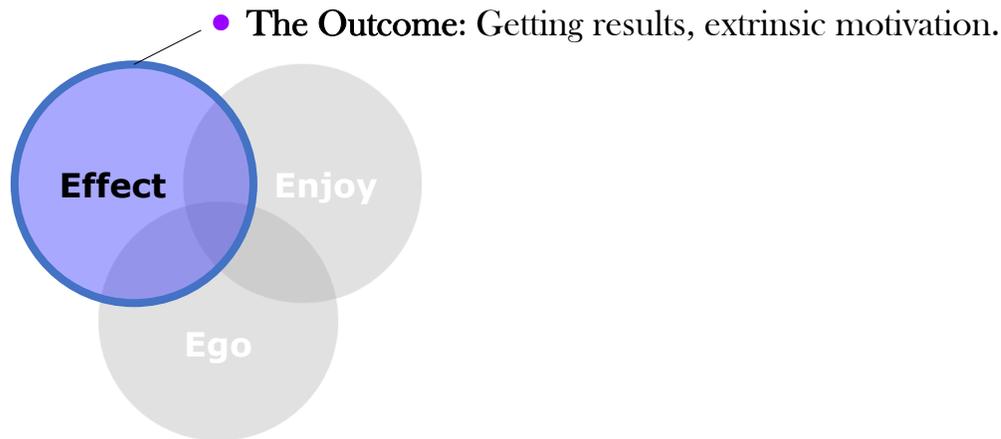
-Wang & Touré-Tillery (R&R)

-Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2012)  
 -Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2015)  
 -Touré-Tillery & Light (2018)  
 -Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki (2021)  
 -Touré-Tillery & Wang (2022)

## The Three Es of Motivation



## What Motivates People?



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## Effect | People Want to Have an Impact

- **Principle:** Motivation increases with the belief that actions will have the desired **effect**—reward, money, food, fame, friends as outcomes of goal pursuit (extrinsic motivation).
- Marketers need to convince their audiences that their products, services, and brands will help them reach their goals—e.g., by using credible spokespersons, entertainment, repetition, humor, social proof (testimonials), scientific proof (independent rating agencies).



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CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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DONATE

## Charity Ratings and Reporting

The Cancer Research Institute (CRI) is a top-rated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN 13-1827442) that upholds the highest standards of fiscal responsibility, integrity, transparency, and accountability. CRI provides open disclosure of our financial information and governance to donors in charity watchdog ratings, annual reports, audited financial statements, and IRS 990 forms. When you give to CRI, you can trust your charitable investment will be spent wisely and will make the greatest possible impact in cancer immunotherapy research to save more lives.

In fiscal year 2021, 88 cents of every dollar spent went to programs.

### CHARITY RATINGS

Before choosing to donate, it's wise to research first how your charitable contribution will be spent with the help of watchdog groups, such as Charity Navigator, CharityWatch, GuideStar, and the Better Business Bureau. It's an easy way to check a charity's financial health and how much an organization spends on its programs versus overhead expenses. CRI consistently receives exemplary marks from watchdog groups, including an A Rating from CharityWatch, Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, and Four Stars from Charity Navigator. CRI is a proud member of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, meeting all 20 standards of charity accountability.

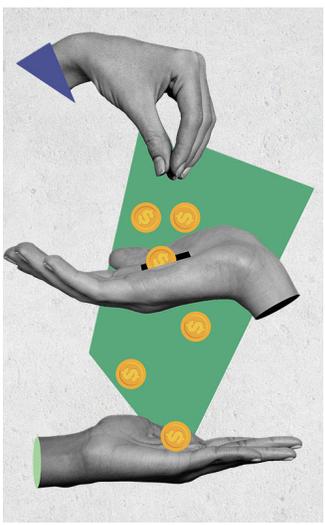
[Volunteer](#) [Donate](#) [Review](#)    [Volunteer](#) [Donate](#) [Review](#)

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DONATE

# Effect | People Want to Have an Impact

- Effectiveness and overhead aversion (Duncan 2004; Caviola et al. 2014; Gneezy 2023)



## Effect | People Want to Have an Impact

- Effectiveness and overhead aversion (Duncan 2004; Caviola et al. 2014; Gneezy 2023)
- Matching campaigns (Karlan & List 2007)



## Effect | Impact can be Real ...

- Effectiveness and overhead aversion (Duncan 2004; Caviola et al. 2014; Gneezy 2023)
- Matching campaigns (Karlan & List 2007)

## Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

- Identified victim (vs. statistical victims or groups; Schelling 1968; Kogut & Ritov 2005)



## Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

- Tangible details about a charity's interventions (Cryder, Loewenstein, & Scheines 2013)

UNITED FOOD BANK  
MEMBER OF FEEDING AMERICA

Donate

Every \$1 donated can help provide 5 nutritious meals to feed hungry children, seniors, and families in Arizona.

DONATE NOW

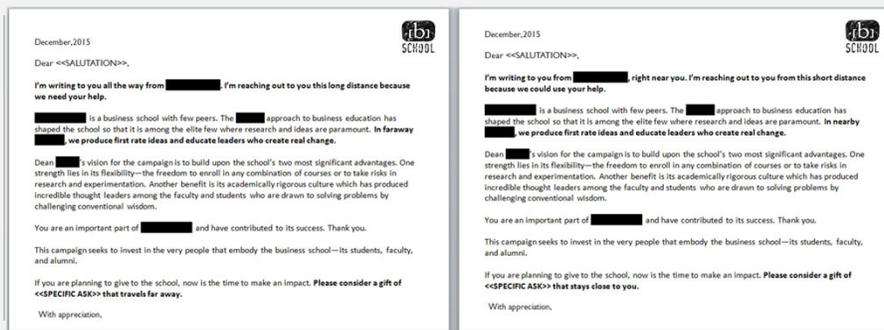
United Food Bank is a Qualifying Charitable Organization (QCO) and donations are eligible for the Arizona State Charitable Tax Credit QCO code: #20206  
United Food Bank is a 501(c)3 Organization - Tax ID: 86-0505273

MEMBER OF FEEDING AMERICA  
CHARITY NAVIGATOR  
Four Star Charity

# Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

- Perceived distance between donor and recipient(s)  
(Touré-Tillery & Fishbach 2017)

# A Field Experiment: Alumni Giving



Donate Now

Annual Fund

Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2017)

## A Field Experiment: Alumni Giving

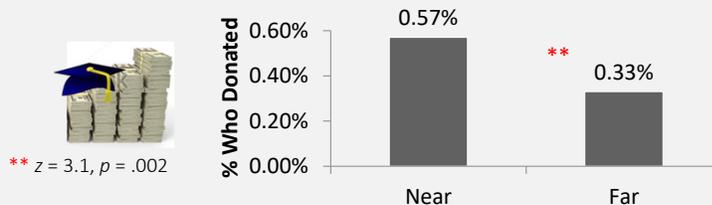
- 2 (distance: near vs. far)
- N = 19,731 Alumni of a US-based b-school received letter soliciting gift for their school
- Observed: Percent Who Donated

Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2017)

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## More Giving from “Nearby”

- 2 (distance: near vs. far)
- N = 19,731 Alumni
- Result: Percent Who Donated (note: low response rate are typical for this type of organization: 0.45%)



Touré-Tillery & Fishbach (2017)

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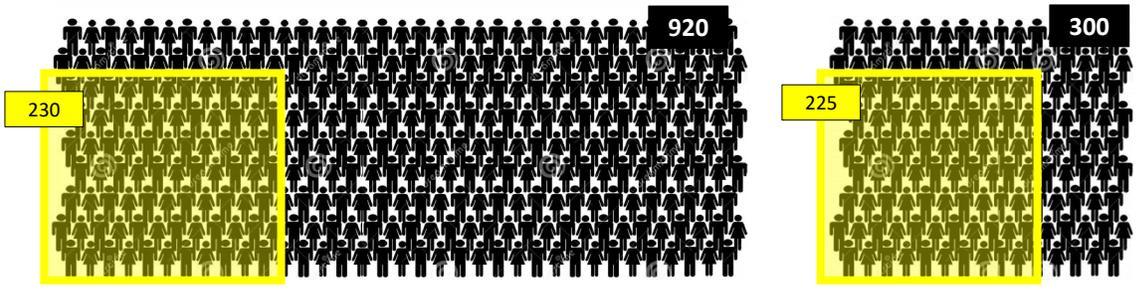
# Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

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- Perceived distance between donor and recipient(s)  
(Touré-Tillery & Fishbach 2017)

# Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

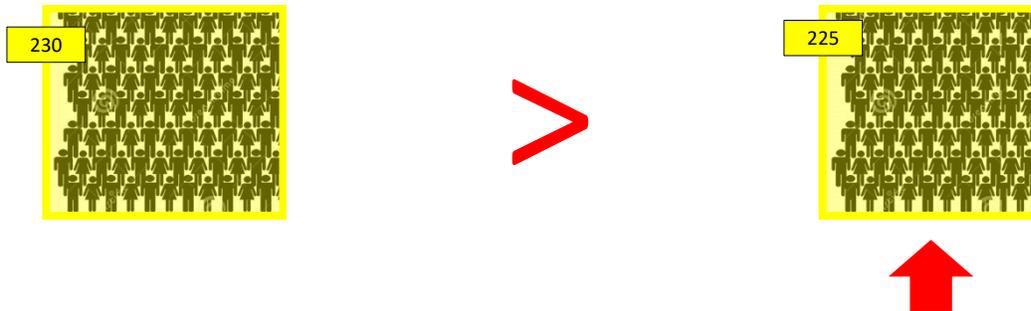
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- Proportion of victims helped (Bartels 2006; Jenni & Loewenstein 1997)

## Effect | ... Impact can be Perceived

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## Effect | Impact can be Real or Perceived

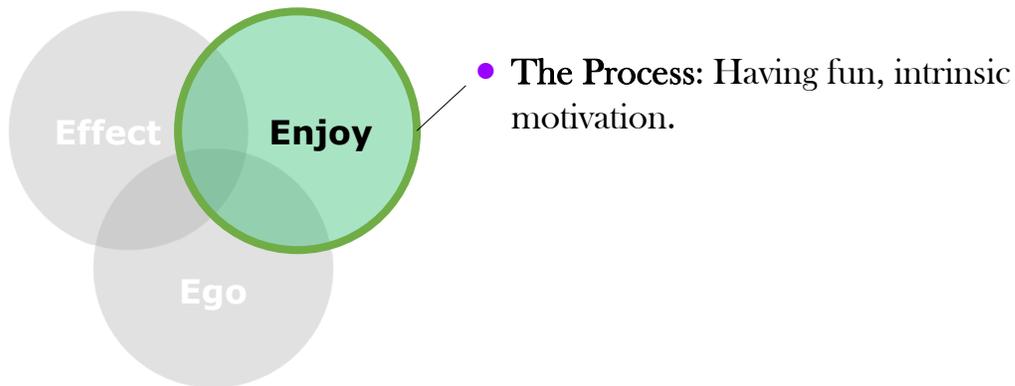
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- Effectiveness and overhead aversion (Duncan 2004; Caviola et al. 2014; Gneezy 2023)
- Matching campaigns (Karlan & List 2007)
- Identified victim (vs. statistical victims or groups; Schelling 1968; Kogut & Ritov 2005)
- Tangible details about a charity's interventions (Cryder et al. 2013)
- Perceived distance between donor and recipient(s) (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach 2017)
- Proportion of victims helped (Bartels 2006; Jenni & Loewenstein 1997)

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## What Motivates People?

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## Enjoyment | People Want to Have Fun

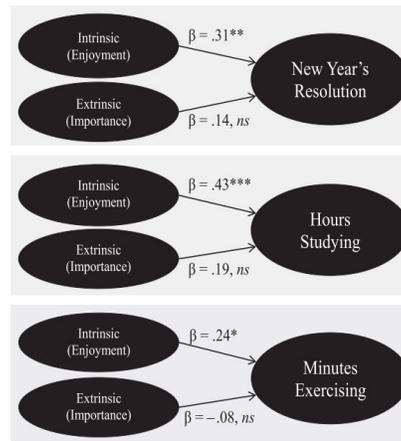
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- **Principle:** Motivation increases with the expectation of enjoyment, pleasure, or satisfaction from the **process** of goal pursuit (intrinsic motivation).
- Marketers of fun/indulgent products (e.g., chocolate, spas, games) do not have to work too hard to highlight enjoyment. This is a bit trickier for marketers of products/services aimed at inherently hard or not-fun goals (e.g., fitness, taxes, **alleviating suffering**).

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## People Work Hard at What They Enjoy

- Enjoyment increases performance and motivation in various contexts: academics, fitness, etc. (Deci et al. 1991; Pintrich & De Groot 1990).



**FIGURE** Intrinsic motivation (enjoyment) predicts persistence more than extrinsic motivation (importance) in adherence to New Year's resolution, studying and gym exercising (Woolley & Fishbach, 2017)

## The Power of Fun



In several experiments, researchers found...

- Paying attention to enjoyment (vs. effect) while eating healthy food increased consumption.
- Choosing a workout based on enjoyment (vs. effect) increased persistence.
- High-school students worked harder on geometry and statistics problems when the experience was made more enjoyable with music, snacks, and colorful pens.

Woolley & Fishbach (2016)



- Marketers need to show that their products are fun and enjoyable...



...or make (not so fun) activities more fun.

# For Charities: Make People **Laughs and Play...**

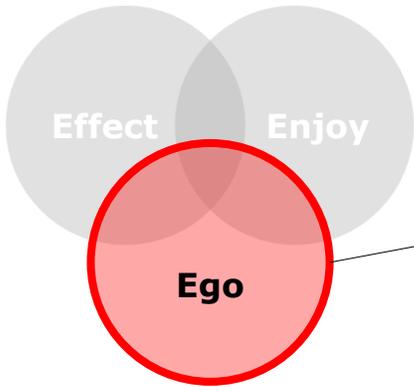
- Fundraising events, galas, concerts, picnics, special days or months



# ...Or Challenge Them



# What Motivates People?



- Implications for **The Self**: Feeling good about oneself, self-signaling motivation.

## Ego | People Want to See Themselves as “Good”

- **Principle:** Motivation increases with the expectation that actions will enhance or protect the self-concept—i.e., thoughts and feelings about the self as good, moral, competent, eco-friendly, tough, etc.
- Brands strive to be seen as the X\* brand to make consumer feel X by association.
- Some brands build connections to social causes or movements that matter to consumers.



\*Where X = some trait or characteristic the customer values: cool, not cool, smart, silly, rugged, sophisticated, excited, blasé, sincere, cynical, etc.

## Implicating the Self Increases “Virtuousness”

- People are more likely to engage in behavior diagnostic of a desired identity: How important is it for you to “be a voter” (vs. “vote?” Bryan et al. 2011)
- ... and less likely to engage in behavior diagnostic of an undesirable identity: It will be impossible for us to know whether you are a cheater (vs. cheating?; Bryan et al. 2013)

## For Charities...

- Provide positive labels or identities (Bryan et al. 2011; 2013; 2014): be a helper, a hero, a sponsor, a mentor, a big sister/brother



## For Charities...

- Provide reminder that giving to charity is a sign of kindness, generosity, selflessness... (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach 2012; 2018)



## For Charities...

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- Make giving feel memorable: people want to remember their good deeds (and forget their bad deeds; Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki 2021)

## An Online Experiment: Supporting Cancer Research

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- **Participants:** N= 207 undergraduate students at a large American university recruited online; compensated \$1.00 and a 50-cent bonus; one exclusion
- **Design:** 2 (memory efficacy: low vs. control)
- **Procedure:** Write about what they did (A) a specific morning one month ago or (B) the previous morning (meta-cognitive difficulty) + manipulation checks

Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki (2021)

# The Experimental Manipulation

$t(146) = -3.80, p < .001$

Memory Efficacy Questions ( $\alpha = .91$ ):

- (a) "How inaccurate or accurate does your memory tend to be?" (1 = Very inaccurate, 7 = Very accurate);
- (b) "To what extent do you believe your memory is generally unreliable or reliable?" (1 = Very unreliable; 7 = Very reliable)
- (c) "To what extent to you expect to forget or remember most of what you do?" (1 = Definitely forget; 7 = Definitely remember)
- (d) "In general, how would you rate your own memory?" (1 = Very bad, 7 = Very good).

- In pretests and in main study

Hard to remember:  $M = 4.52, SD = 1.41$

Without referring to your calendar, please take a moment to recall and write about the morning of Wednesday, April 25th (one month ago). What did you do from the time you woke up to lunchtime? Please be as specific as possible, to the best of your memory ability. Do not refer to your calendar.

Easy to remember:  $M = 5.34, SD = 1.20,$

Without referring to your calendar, please take a moment to recall and write about yesterday morning (Wednesday, May 30th). What did you do from the time you woke up to lunchtime? Please be as specific as possible, to the best of your memory ability. Do not refer to your calendar.

Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki (2021)

# The Experimental Measure

- Dependent measure: Donate 50-cent bonus (donation rate)

Please read the following information carefully:

As an additional token of appreciation, we are providing a bonus amount of \$0.50 for every participant who completes this survey.

Participants can choose to donate their bonus to the Cancer Research Institute OR to keep their bonus to receive it as extra compensation at the end of the study.

What would you like to do?

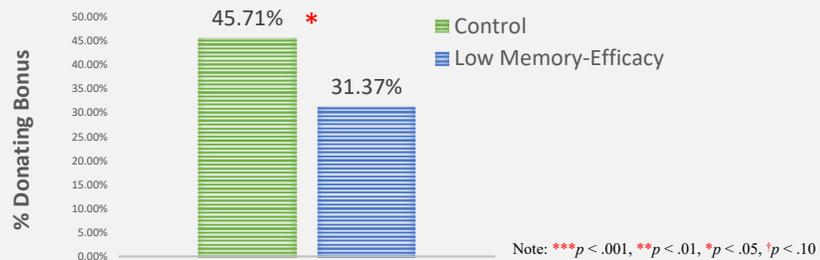
- Donate my bonus to the Cancer Research Institute
- Keep my bonus to receive it as extra compensation



Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki (2021)

## The Results

- Participants in the low memory-efficacy condition were less likely to donate their bonus than participants in the control condition



## For Charities...

- Make giving feel memorable: people want to remember their good deeds (and forget their bad deeds; Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki 2021)

## For Charities...

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- Use a mix of paper/mail and digital/email solicitations to make giving feel more “real” (Touré-Tillery & Wang 2022)

## Another Field Experiment: Granting Wishes\*

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- **Participants:** N=431 potential donors recruited on a large campus in China during 3-day charity event; no exclusions
- **Design:** 2-level (decision context: paper vs. digital device) between-subjects design
- **Procedure:** Complete a (filler) consumer survey on paper or on a tablet (iPad), and then read a charitable appeal help a child in need by purchasing items from his or her wish list

\*Preregistered at [aspredicted.org](https://aspredicted.org)

Touré-Tillery & Wang (2022)

### Paper

### Tablet

Touré-Tillery & Wang (2022)

## The Experimental Measures

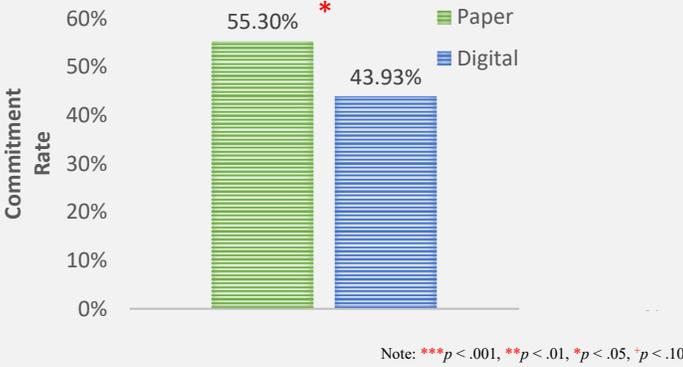
### Dependent Measures:

- Committing to help by selecting at least one wish list to fulfill (commitment rate)
- Following through by making a monetary or in-kind gift (donation rate)

Touré-Tillery & Wang (2022)

# The Results

- Higher commitment rate



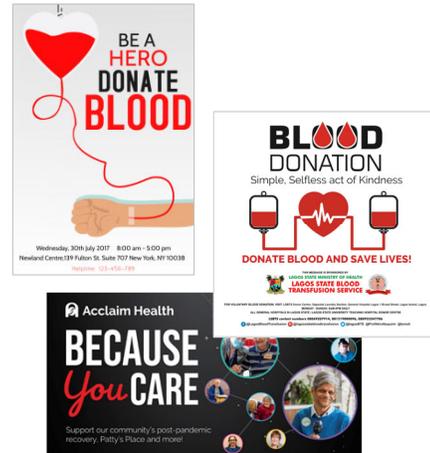
Touré-Tillery & Wang (2022)

# For Charities...

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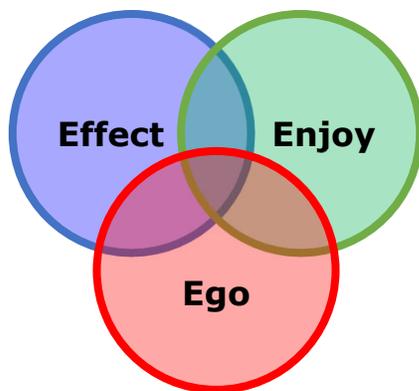
## For Charities: Implicating the Self

- Provide positive labels or identities (Bryan et al. 2011; 2013; 2014): be a helper, a hero, a sponsor, a mentor, a big sister/brother
- Provide reminder that giving to charity is a sign of kindness, generosity, selflessness... (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach 2012; 2018)
- Make giving feel memorable: people want to remember their good deeds (and forget their bad deeds; Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki 2021)
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## In Sum...

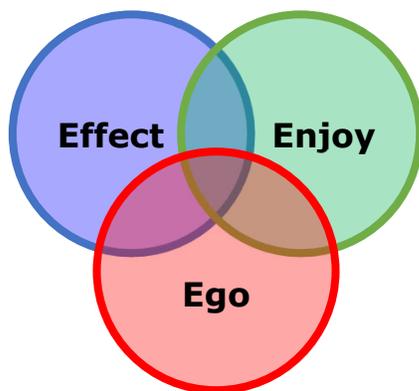
People are more motivated to act when they believe they will...



- Obtain the outcomes they desire
- Enjoy the process
- Feel good about themselves

## In Sum...

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- One or more of the Three Es has the potential to increase people's motivation to act toward a goal (e.g., donate to charity)
- The most effective Es for your organization will depend on your **target segment**/audience
- Start with **Segmentation** and **Targeting**, then **Position (STP)** yourself to attract the right donors or volunteers for your organization

# Thank You!

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