The Role of Beneficiaries’ Group Identity in Determining Successful Appeal Strategies for Charitable Giving

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ABSTRACT

What types of message appeals in charity advertisements are most likely to convince people to donate? Using university rivalry (Studies 1 and 2), nationality (Study 3), and freely chosen groups (Study 4), this research proposes that the beneficiaries’ group identity moderates the relative effectiveness of three benefit foci of message appeals in charity advertisements. The results indicate that other-benefit appeals produce greater donation intentions than external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries, whereas external self-benefit appeals produce greater donation intentions than other-benefit appeals for rival (Studies 1–3), dissociative (Study 4), and neutral (Study 4) out-group beneficiaries. Emotional-benefit appeals are more effective than external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries, and are more effective than other-benefit appeals for neutral out-group beneficiaries, whereas they are less effective than external self-benefit appeals for dissociative out-group beneficiaries (Study 4). Empathy and belief in personal benefits mediate the interaction effect of benefit focus and beneficiary group on donation intentions (Studies 3 and 4). Theoretical and managerial implications of the current findings are discussed. © 2015 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

The literature suggests that charitable giving is driven by both altruism (e.g., Batson, 1987; Batson & Shaw, 1991; Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990; Fisher, Vandenbosch, & Antia, 2008) and egoism (e.g., Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976; Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997; Ferguson, Farrell, & Lawrence, 2008; Holmes, Miller, & Lerner, 2002; Maner et al., 2002). Researchers have distinguished between altruistic or empathetic helping and egoistic helping. The former aims to improve the welfare of others, whereas the latter aims to secure and advance the emotions or welfare of the individual.

To test which motivation more effectively predicts charitable giving, a distinction is made between several different message appeals. Other-benefit appeals (often termed altruism) that are aligned with altruistic, rather than egoistic, motivations focus on benefits for the beneficiaries, using messages such as “help poor people to have hopes and dreams” and “make your community a better place for people to live.” In contrast, external self-benefit appeals (often termed hedonism) that are aligned with egoistic, rather than altruistic, motivations emphasize external personal benefits for the givers, using messages such as “get a premium membership in a non-profit organization” and “enjoy networking opportunity by participating this campaign” (Brunel & Nelson, 2000; Fisher et al., 2008; White & Peloza, 2009).

The third category is concerned with another type of self-benefit appeals, which focus on the (internal) benefits of the emotional consequences of prosocial behavior, using messages such as “feel content and satisfied through the personally rewarding experience of donations.” Traditionally, theories in economics and psychology have considered the emotional-benefit appeals (often termed benevolence or warm glow) to represent the givers’ egoistic motivations (Andreoni, 1990; Ferguson et al., 2008). However, recent research has found that unlike external self-benefit appeals, these do not undermine the perception of the givers’ good will, as it is natural that helping others engenders emotional personal benefits to the givers (Barasch, Levine, Berman, & Small, 2014; Schwartz, 2010). This third type therefore can be related to both altruistic and egoistic motivations.

Whether appeals that focus on benefits for the beneficiaries or for the givers are more effective in enhancing donations has been a controversial issue (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2002). To effectively resolve this, individual or contextual variables have been suggested, which moderate the relative effectiveness of self- versus other-benefit...
appeals on donations (e.g., Brunel & Nelson, 2000; White & Peloza, 2009). Similarly, informed by the literature on the group-level perspective concerning intergroup helping (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2010; Stürmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005), the argument is put forward that the beneficiaries’ group identity and its (mis)alignment with that of the givers moderates the effectiveness of benefit focus on donation intentions. This is based on the assumption that the givers’ primary motivations for charitable behavior are contingent on who the beneficiaries are. Givers easily identify with in-group beneficiaries, arousing altruistic motivations predominantly. However, when the beneficiaries are deemed to be members of out-groups, the egoistic motivations of the givers may become more dominant in driving charitable giving. This rationale is investigated.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Message Appeals for Charitable Giving

Findings on the relative influence of different types of message appeals on donations are mixed. First, it has been suggested that other-benefit appeals are more effective than self-benefit appeals in facilitating charitable giving. Drawing on the empathy-altruism hypothesis (e.g., Batson, 1987) that “empathic emotions evoke truly altruistic motivation that has an ultimate goal of benefiting not the self but the person for whom empathy is felt” (Batson & Shaw, 1991, p. 107), Fisher et al. (2008) found that in an examination of viewers’ responses to a fund-raising campaign conducted by a public television station, emphasizing benefits to others rather than the self is more effective in raising donation intentions. Pessemier, Bemmaor, and Hanssens (1977) found monetary rewards for blood donation to be ineffectual. People were less willing to donate blood if monetary rewards were offered, as the rewards may have crowded out the intrinsic motivation of givers (Frey, 1997). Mellström and Johannesson (2008) found a similar result, but the crowding-out effect was limited to women donors.

A second stream of research supports the idea that charitable giving is mainly prompted by egoism (e.g., Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976; Cialdini et al., 1997). This alludes to the proposition that a desire to benefit the self materially and/or emotionally is instrumental in driving charitable giving. The willingness to help charitable organizations can increase when small products, such as candles (i.e., an external self-benefit) are offered in exchange for donations, rather than when presenting the act as purely selfless behavior (Holmes et al., 2002). Similarly, facilitating belief in emotional benefits has a positive effect on a blood donation campaign (Ferguson et al., 2008).

Interestingly, although these studies did not pay attention to the type of the beneficiaries explicitly, a close examination enables an inference to be made concerning the possible relationship between benefit focus and the beneficiaries’ group identity. For example, Mellström and Johannesson (2008) found that the negative effect of monetary reward resulting from motivation crowding occurred only for women, who have a broader boundary of moral regard than men and thus are more likely to include others as their in-groups (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). Holmes et al. (2002) manipulated the severity of need and found that offering a small gift had a stronger effect on donating to those in severer need. Their need manipulation used different beneficiaries (i.e., a softball team in a recreational organization to children with physical disabilities, and even to children with physical and emotional challenges). The severity of need appeared to be (positively) confounded with the undergraduate participants’ perception of psychological distance from the beneficiaries. With these observations in mind, the next section turns to the possible role of group membership in charitable giving.

Role of Beneficiaries’ Group Identity

The beneficiaries’ group identity influences the psychological processes and motivations to guide intergroup helping (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2010; Stürmer et al., 2005; Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, & Siem, 2006). The in-group relationship facilitates the experience of empathy and subsequent helping, as it increases the givers’ attachment to the beneficiaries, due to the self-other similarity. Attachment to others in need is an important requirement for empathy to be experienced (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckely, & Birch, 1981). Empathy-motivated helping is more pronounced for in-group beneficiaries, whether shared group identity is based on cultural background (Stürmer et al., 2006, Study 1), stereotypes (Stürmer et al., 2005), or even arbitrary assignment (Masten, Gillen-O’Neel, & Brown, 2010; Stürmer et al., 2006, Study 2).

Recent neuroscience research has identified the neural underpinnings of intergroup empathy, showing that regions of the brain that govern affect resonance and perspective taking are activated in response to the pain of in-group members, rather than that of out-group members (e.g., Mathur, Harada, Lipke, & Chiao, 2010; Xu, Zuo, Wang, & Han, 2009). Mathur et al. (2010) found that when viewing painful faces from in-group versus out-group members, the activity of the distinct neural circuit that underlies the affective component of empathy—the bilateral anterior insula and anterior cingulate cortex—was boosted in both the Caucasian- and African-American groups of participants. The activity of the medial prefrontal cortex, which is associated with the capacity to adopt the perspective of another person, also increased in the African-American participants.

Conversely, the out-group relationship inhibits the givers’ generation of empathy, rendering intergroup helping less likely (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011; Stürmer et al., 2005). The vicarious activation of the
mirror-neuron system that underlies the mental simulation of the behavior of others is blocked in response to out-group members (Gutsell & Inzlicht, 2010). Viewing (rival and competitive) out-groups experience suffering or misfortunes instead activates the brain region associated with reward (i.e., the bilateral ventral striatum), often leading to the feeling of schadenfreude, or malicious pleasure (Takahashi et al., 2009). These findings imply that people become relatively more self-focused in response to out-group versus in-group sufferers.

Emerging research in consumer behavior is also consistent with the premise of this research. Winterich and Barone (2011) examined how social identification influenced charitable behavior, on the basis of the self-construal theory (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994), which proposes that people with independent self-construal (e.g., Western people) stress the uniqueness and separateness of individuals, whereas those with interdependent self-construal (e.g., non-Western) emphasize social relationships and connectedness. They found that independent consumers whose self-image is to a lesser extent determined by a social identification process are less likely to include others as in-group members than interdependent counterparts. These consumers were shown to prefer self-benefited price discounts to other-benefited donation-based promotions in which a certain amount of price paid is donated to a charitable cause. Thus, it is hypothesized:

**H1:** For in-group beneficiaries, other-benefit appeals generate greater donation intentions than external self-benefit appeals. Conversely, for out-group beneficiaries, external self-benefit appeals produce greater donation intentions than other-benefit appeals.

### Mediation Processes

A central premise of this research is that other-benefit appeals, when targeted toward in- versus out-group beneficiaries, encourage empathetic concern more effectively, leading to altruistic helping, while external self-benefit appeals, when targeted toward out- versus in-group beneficiaries, strengthen the perception of receiving personal benefits, thereby facilitating egoistic helping. To account for these processes, two mediators are introduced: *empathy for the beneficiaries and belief in personal benefits.*

First, empathy denotes “an other-oriented emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another” (Batson, 1990, p. 339).1 When empathy or sympathy is felt for victims, or if experiences are similar, donations are more likely to be made. For example, a photo of a sad-faced (as compared to happy- or neutral-faced) child tends to evoke greater empathy or sympathy, resulting in increased donation amounts (Small & Verrochi, 2009). Those who experience the same misfortunes as the beneficiaries tend to feel more empathetic or sympathetic, also leading to greater donations (Small & Simonsohn, 2008). A greater empathy or sympathy is felt for personally identified victims than abstract statistical victims and subsequently greater generosity in donations is shown (Kogut & Ritov, 2005; Small & Loewenstein, 2003). Other-benefit appeals targeted toward in-group beneficiaries facilitate more concern from the givers for others, compared to those targeted toward out-group beneficiaries.

Second, belief in personal benefits refers to the givers’ beliefs concerning the extent to which they will receive personal benefits as a result of donating (Ferguson et al., 2008). It is particularly relevant to high-cost charitable behavior, such as blood donation. When a high personal cost is involved, self-focus is more pronounced. Similarly, attention may also be tuned to self-centered benefits from donating when the beneficiaries are perceived as part of an out-group. It is expected that this belief in personal benefits can explain why external self-benefit appeals increase donations to out-group beneficiaries. This prediction is consistent with previous studies on cooperative and prosocial behavior (e.g., de Waal & Davis, 2003). Learned reciprocity from previous cooperation can produce prosocial behavior, even when familiarity and bonding between benefactors and recipients are not part of the relationship.

**H2:** Other-benefit appeals generate greater empathy than external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries, whereas external self-benefit appeals generate greater belief in personal benefits than other-benefit appeals for out-group beneficiaries.

**H3:** Empathy mediates the superiority of other-benefit over external self-benefit appeals in generating donation intentions for in-group beneficiaries, whereas belief in personal benefits mediates the superiority of external self-over other-benefit appeals in generating donation intentions for out-group beneficiaries.

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1 Simply speaking, empathy refers to “the ability to experience the feelings experienced by other persons,” whereas sympathy refers to “an emotional concern for other persons” stemming from the emotional state or condition of others (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990, p. 132). Both represent vicarious emotions, but empathy is an affective state that is congruent with the states of others. In contrast, sympathy, often derived from empathy, consists of affective states that are not necessarily congruent with those of others (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Previous research has often made a clear distinction when measuring these. For example, Escalas and Stern (2003) developed two distinct scales (Ad Response Sympathy and Ad Response Em- pathy) in their study of advertising. However, the two constructs (and the adjectives to measure them) have often been used interchangeably in charitable giving, though conceptually distinct (e.g., Batson et al., 1981; Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987; Eisenberg et al., 1989). Note that the term empathy is used for the mediator throughout this article.
The Case of Emotional-Benefit Appeals

Emotional-benefit appeals do not purely appeal to egoistic motivations as they benefit both the givers and the beneficiaries (Ferguson et al., 2008). Furthermore, people tend to infer that the givers, who receive emotional benefits in return for their prosocial behavior, are motivated by a genuine concern for those in need (Barasch et al., 2014). Conversely, external self-benefits such as monetary incentives or gifts create people’s suspicion concerning the sincerity of the givers’ motives.

This view of emotional-benefit appeals echoes the idea of Sober and Wilson (1998), who proposed a model combining psychological and evolutionary perspectives. Unlike hedonism, which is perceived to be both psychologically and evolutionarily egoistic, and (pure) altruism, which is perceived to be both psychologically and evolutionarily altruistic, benevolence-enticed altruism focuses on emotional benefits to the givers derived from helping others is perceived to be psychologically egoistic but evolutionary altruistic (Ferguson et al., 2008, p. 329; Sober & Wilson, 1998). Although benevolence-motivated prosocial behavior is driven by a desire to achieve, or a belief in achieving, personal emotional benefits (which is psychologically egoistic), it is also beneficial to the fitness and reproduction of others, at the cost of the givers.

Therefore, emotional-benefit appeals may have similar effects to other-benefit appeals in helping in-group beneficiaries. Moreover, they may facilitate helping neutral out-group beneficiaries, as they are compatible with the egoistic motives of the givers. The altruistic aspect of emotional-benefit appeals does not discourage individuals from helping these neutral out-groups. However, the underlying mechanisms of emotional-benefit appeals are predicted to differ for in- and neutral out-group beneficiaries. Emotional-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries increase the level of empathy in the givers, whereas they increase the level of belief in personal benefits for neutral out-group beneficiaries.

Finally, givers will not be willing to incur personal cost in order to maximize the fitness and well-being of dissociative out-groups that are perceived to be threats to them and their in-groups.

H4: Emotional-benefit appeals generate greater donation intentions than external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries, and more so than other-benefit appeals for neutral out-group beneficiaries, whereas they generate lower donation intentions than external self-benefit appeals for dissociative out-group beneficiaries.

H5: The superiority of emotional- over external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries is mediated by empathy for the beneficiaries, whereas that of emotional- over other-benefit appeals for neutral out-group beneficiaries is mediated by belief in personal benefits.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The hypotheses were tested in four experiments. To manipulate the beneficiaries’ group identity, university rivalry (Studies 1 and 2), nationality (Study 3), and freely chosen groups (Study 4) were used. Studies 1–3 compared the effects of other- versus external self-benefit appeals for in-group and rival out-group beneficiaries. Study 4 extended the types of message appeals to emotional-benefit appeals and the types of out-groups to neutral out-groups. Studies 3 and 4 demonstrated the proposed mediation processes.

STUDY 1

The primary objective of Study 1 was to examine the basic moderating role of the beneficiaries’ group identity (Hypothesis 1). University affiliations were used to manipulate the beneficiaries’ group identity. Two rival universities in South Korea, Yonsei and Korea University, were selected, who compete with each other academically and in sports, similar to the North Carolina-Duke basketball rivalry in the United States. Participants were recruited from Korea University, it was predicted that other-benefit appeals would increase donation intentions for the beneficiaries from this university, whereas external self-benefit appeals would increase donation intentions for the beneficiaries from Yonsei University.

METHOD

Pretest for Benefit Focus

A pretest was conducted to determine whether the benefit focus of message appeals was effectively manipulated as intended. Two versions of an advertisement, which varied benefit focus, were created by adapting the stimuli used in White and Peloza (2009). Participants read advertisements for a campaign that was described as a part of an international charity hosted by UNICEF in 40 different nations. No particular university groups were specified as the beneficiaries in this pretest. College students with physical disabilities from the countries where the UNICEF campaign took place, according to the scenario, were designated as the general beneficiaries.

Other-benefit appeals focused on how donations could benefit the students, by including such descriptions as “help students with physical challenges to study better and enjoy their campus life,” “encourage them to have hopes and dreams,” and “contribute to developing a better campus environment for students with physical disabilities.” External self-benefit appeals emphasized the fact that the givers could gain personal benefits and privileges from participating in the campaign, by including such messages as “get a
UNICEF membership, which is big plus on your resume,” “network with international students in the campaign-affiliated conference,” and “ultimately improve your future.”

Twenty-eight participants read either the other- or external self-benefit appeals and responded to six questions on 7-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely; \( \alpha = 0.88 \); White & Peloza, 2009). The questions were as follows: “To what degree is this an altruistic appeal?” “To what degree is this focused on helping others?” “To what degree is this appeal associated with looking out for the interest of others?” “To what degree is this an egoistic appeal?” “To what degree is this focused on helping oneself?” and “To what degree is this appeal associated with looking out for one's own interests?” The first three items were reverse-coded, and all six were averaged to form a composite index; the higher the score on this index, the more egoistic the appeals. The participants rated the external self-benefit appeals (\( M = 2.59, SD = 0.62; F(1, 26) = 26.56, p < 0.0001 \)) as more egoistic than the other-benefit appeals (\( M = 2.47, SD = 1.24; F(1, 27) = 19.87, p < 0.0001 \)).

Design and Procedure

Fifty-one undergraduate students from Korea University participated in the survey, which took place on their campus, and completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (benefit focus: other vs. self) \( \times \) 2 (beneficiary: in-group vs. rival out-group) between-participants design. The advertisements used in the pretest were altered to request donations to help students either from Korea or Yonsei University before they were shown to the participants.

After being exposed to the appeals in their assigned group, the participants responded to two measures to assess donation intentions on 7-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely): “How inclined are you to participate in this donation campaign?” and “How willing are you to make a donation to this campaign?” (White & Peloza, 2009). Finally, the participants completed a five-item organizational-identification scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) to assess their level of identification with the universities with which the designated beneficiaries in the advertisements were affiliated (e.g., “When someone criticizes..., it feels like a personal insult” “When I talk about . . ., I usually say ‘we’ rather than ‘they’”; 1 = not at all, 7 = extremely).

RESULTS

Organizational Identification

As expected, a 2 (benefit focus) \( \times \) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on organizational identification (\( \alpha = 0.90 \)) revealed a significant main effect of beneficiary only. The participants reported higher levels of identification with their in-group beneficiaries (\( M = 4.15, SD = 1.41 \)) than their rival out-group beneficiaries (\( M = 2.47, SD = 1.24; F(1, 47) = 19.87, p < 0.0001 \)). No other effects were significant (\( F \text{s} < 1 \)).

Donation Intentions

A 2 (benefit focus) \( \times \) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on donation intentions (\( \alpha = 0.78 \)) revealed a significant two-way interaction (\( F(1, 47) = 15.68, p < 0.0005 \); \( p > 0.82 \) for two main effects). As predicted in Hypothesis 1, the other-benefit appeals (\( M = 4.59, SD = 0.66 \)) were more effective for the in-group beneficiaries than the external self-benefit appeals (\( M = 3.32, SD = 1.49; t(47) = 2.51, p < 0.05 \)) in generating positive donation intentions. When the beneficiaries were rival out-group members, the external self-benefit appeals (\( M = 4.58, SD = 1.24 \)) were more effective than the other-benefit appeals (\( M = 3.18, SD = 1.20; t(47) = 3.18, p < 0.005 \)) in evoking positive donation intentions (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

Study 1 confirmed that the benefit focus of message appeals did not have unidirectional influences; rather, it depended upon the beneficiaries’ group identity. However, one possible confounding factor in this study was the difference in the participants’ level of knowledge of the two beneficiaries. The participants may have known more about the difficult situations and challenges their colleagues faced. It was unclear, therefore, whether the findings of Study 1 were driven by empathic concern for the beneficiaries, or by the participants’ knowledge of the beneficiaries. To address this problem, the minimal group paradigm (e.g., Masten et al., 2010; Stürmer et al., 2006) was used in Study 2. The Korea University participants were manipulated to consider the Yonsei
beneficiaries as members of either an in-group or a rival out-group, using a fictitious news article.

**STUDY 2**

**METHOD**

**Pretest for Manipulation Stimulus**

To vary the perception of the beneficiaries’ group membership artificially, a fictitious news article reporting an international college sports competition was developed. The article stated that three East Asian nations would attend the competition, and that Korea and Yonsei Universities would comprise a single team, representing South Korea. A pretest was taken online by 33 Korea University participants, to determine whether after reading the article they perceived the Yonsei University students as in-group members. Half of the participants were assigned to read the article to induce the in-group perception, and were then asked to say which symbol they would choose as the mascot of the unified national team, and the domestic movie they would choose to promote South Korea. These questions were administered to minimize demand artifacts. The other half of the participants did not read the article.

To capture the subtle manipulation of induced group membership, two established measures were used—a perceived homogeneity measure, used along with the minimal group paradigm (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997), and a pictorial Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). All participants responded to the perceived homogeneity of Yonsei University students (“To what extent do you perceive Korea University students similar to Yonsei University students?” 1 = very much, 7 = not at all; reversed later for analysis). They also stated how similar they felt to Yonsei University students, using the pictorial representation of IOS (1 = no overlap, 7 = nearly complete overlap).

The Korea University participants who read the article perceived a higher level of homogeneity with the Yonsei students (M = 4.72, SD = 1.36) than those in the control condition (M = 3.27, SD = 1.22; F(1, 31) = 10.23, p < 0.005). Those who read the article reported more overlap on the pictorial IOS scale between themselves and Yonsei students (M = 4.67, SD = 1.37) than the control group (M = 3.60, SD = 1.24; F(1, 31) = 5.38, p < 0.05).

**Design and Procedure**

An online experiment was set up, in which 87 undergraduates from Korea University participated. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (group membership induction: in-group vs. rival out-group) × 2 (benefit focus: other vs. self) between-participants design. First, the in-group membership of Yonsei students was induced, using the article, only for participants in the in-group condition. All participants were then randomly assigned to read either the other- or external self-benefit appeals that requested donations for the Yonsei students with physical disabilities. The participants then rated their donation intentions.

**RESULTS**

**Donation Intentions**

A 2 (benefit focus) × 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on donation intentions (α = 0.88) revealed a significant interaction (F(1, 83) = 12.11, p < 0.005; Figure 2). Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the other-benefit appeals (M = 4.90, SD = 1.25) were more effective for the induced in-group beneficiaries than the external self-benefit appeals (M = 3.78, SD = 1.60; t(83) = 2.82, p < 0.05) in generating donation intentions. When the beneficiaries were perceived to belong to the rival out-group, the external self-benefit appeals (M = 4.65, SD = 1.24) were more effective than the other-benefit appeals (M = 3.78, SD = 1.36; t(83) = −2.10, p < 0.05).

**DISCUSSION**

Study 2 ruled out the knowledge-based alternative explanation by adopting the minimal group paradigm. The group identity of the beneficiaries, rather than the givers’ level of knowledge of the beneficiaries, determined donation intentions. Study 3 went beyond the findings of Studies 1 and 2, revealing the mediation processes underlying the proposed effects by investigating the influence of the two theoretical mediators.
STUDY 3

The primary aim of Study 3 was to examine the underlying processes by which the beneficiaries’ group identity moderates the effectiveness of external self- and other-benefit appeals (Hypotheses 2 and 3). This study was an attempt to confirm the prediction that empathy and belief in personal benefits would account for the observed interaction between benefit focus and the beneficiaries’ group identity. Processing fluency was also measured as a potential alternative account for the observed matching effect between benefit focus and the beneficiaries’ group identity. The alignment between these factors may facilitate the fluent processing of advertisements (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004). When a message frame is consistent with the way people naturally think, information processing becomes easier, leading to more favorable attitudes toward the message (Lee & Aaker, 2004). Additionally, the level of discomfort was measured as a related process variable, which might underlie the proposed interaction effect, as fluency is often negatively correlated with discomfort (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009). Thus, this study tested whether a mismatch (vs. a match) between benefit focus and the beneficiaries’ group identity might heighten the level of discomfort felt, thereby decreasing donation intentions.

METHOD

Design and Procedure

One hundred and twelve Korean undergraduate students took part in this study as a part of a class exercise. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (benefit focus: other vs. self) × 2 (beneficiary: in-group vs. rival out-group) between-participants design. The procedure was similar to that of Study 1, except in the advertisements Korea was designated as the in-group, and after careful consideration of historical, geographic, and economic perspectives, Japan was selected as the rival out-group. Japan and Korea have a strong rivalry in many areas, even though they have regularly exchanged culture and ideas since ancient times. Geographically close, they compete to lead the East Asian region both politically and economically. Their rivalry has recently been aggravated by political problems, such as a territorial dispute over a small Pacific island (known as Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan), and Japan’s refusal to negotiate with the Korean government over alleged war crimes committed during the Japanese occupation in World War II. The rivalry is often clearly manifested in sporting events, such as soccer World Cup.

After being exposed to the advertisements, the participants provided ratings for donation intentions, processing fluency, and two proposed mediators, discomfort and organizational identification. The same items as before were used to assess donation intentions (Studies 1 and 2) and organization identification (Study 1). To measure empathy for the beneficiaries, the participants were asked to rate the extent to which they were moved, sympathetic, compassionate, and softhearted (1 = not at all, 7 = very much; Eisenberg et al., 1989). The level of belief in personal benefits was assessed by asking the participants the extent to which they believed they would personally benefit from donating (1 = not at all, to 7 = very much; Ferguson et al., 2008). The level of processing fluency that the participants felt during exposure to the advertisements was measured using three 7-point scales, easy to understand, feels right, and easy to accept (1 = not at all, to 7 = very much; Cesario et al., 2004). Finally, the level of discomfort was assessed using three 7-point scales, uncomfortable, conflicted, and confused (1 = not at all, 7 = very much; Williams & Aaker, 2002).

RESULTS

Organizational Identification

A 2 (benefit focus) × 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on organizational identification (α = 0.93) revealed a significant main effect of beneficiary only (F(1, 106) = 346.30, p < 0.0001).2 The Korean participants identified more with Korea (M = 5.46, SD = 0.99) than with Japan (M = 2.12, SD = 0.91). The main effect of benefit focus was marginally significant (F(1, 106) = 3.03, p = 0.085), but cell means revealed consistent patterns across two levels of the benefit-focus manipulation (M_in-group = 5.17, SD = 1.11 vs. M_rival = 2.10, SD = 0.84 for the external self-benefit appeals; M_in-group = 5.75, SD = 0.77 vs. M_rival = 2.15, SD = 0.99 for the other-benefit appeals). The two-way interaction was not significant (p > 0.14).

Donation Intentions

The same 2 (benefit focus) × 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on donation intentions (α = 0.85) revealed a significant main effect of beneficiary (M_in-group = 4.63, SD = 1.01 vs. M_rival = 3.93, SD = 1.48; F(1, 108) = 8.26, p < 0.01), indicating that the participants showed greater donation intentions on average for the in-group than the rival out-group counterparts. The main effect of benefit focus was not significant (F < 1). More importantly, the two-way interaction was significant (F(1, 108) = 8.22, p < 0.01; Figure 3). When the beneficiaries were in-group members, the participants showed greater donation intentions in response to the other-benefit (M = 4.90, SD = 0.97) than the external self-benefit appeals (M = 4.35, SD = 1.00; t(49.96) = 2.04,

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2 Two degrees of freedom were lost due to missing values.
Effects of benefit focus and beneficiary on donation intentions and two mediators (Study 3).

\[ t = 1.28 \] than the other-benefit appeals \((t < 0.05)\). The second model regressed belief in personal benefits on the same three terms. Both benefit focus \((B = -0.47, SE = 0.13, t(108) = -3.62, p < 0.001)\) and beneficiary \((B = 0.34, SE = 0.13, t(108) = 2.65, p < 0.01)\) predicted belief in personal benefits significantly, but these two main effects were qualified by the significant effect of the interaction term \((B = 0.33, SE = 0.13, t(108) = 2.58, p < 0.05)\). The third model regressed donation intentions on the two mediators and the same three terms. The effects of the two mediators remained significant \((B = 0.27, SE = 0.08, t(106) = 3.48, p < 0.001)\) (benefit focus; \(B = 0.51, SE = 0.07, t(106) = 7.47, p < 0.0001)\) for beliefs in personal benefits), while all the other effects were no longer significant \((ps > 0.16)\).

The indirect effects via two mediators were both significant \((95\% CI for empathy = [0.0092, 0.1584]; 95\% CI for belief in personal benefits = [0.0448, 0.3230])\). Conditional indirect effects through the mediators at each level of beneficiary indicated that the indirect effect via empathy was significant for the in-group beneficiaries \((95\% CI = [0.0242, 0.2539])\), but not for the rival out-group beneficiaries \((95\% CI = [-0.1189, 0.0663])\), whereas the indirect effect via belief in personal benefits was significant for the rival out-group beneficiaries \((95\% CI = [-0.6331, -0.2119])\), but not for the in-group beneficiaries \((95\% CI = [-0.2581, 0.1173])\).

Alternative Explanations

A 2 (benefit focus) \(\times\) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on processing fluency \((\alpha = 0.84)\) revealed that none of the effects were significant \((P < 0.04, ps > 0.31)\). The same 2 (benefit focus) \(\times\) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on discomfort \((\alpha = 0.79)\) revealed that

Mediation Analyses

The proposed underlying processes were conceptualized as a case of moderated mediation. In this, the direct effect of benefit focus on donation intentions for

\[ p < 0.05 \] when the beneficiaries were rival out-group members, the participants showed greater donation intentions in response to the external self-benefit \((M = 4.34, SD = 1.34)\) than the other-benefit appeals \((M = 3.55, SD = 1.52; t(57.80) = 2.16, p < 0.05)\).

Mediators

Next, Hypothesis 2 was tested. First, a 2 (benefit focus) \(\times\) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on empathy \((\alpha = 0.90)\) revealed a significant two-way interaction only \((F(1, 108) = 4.35, p < 0.05; Figure 3)\). No other effects were significant \((ps > 0.14)\). When the beneficiaries were in-group members, the other-benefit \((M = 4.68, SD = 0.99)\) versus the external self-benefit appeals \((M = 3.88, SD = 1.31)\) increased empathy for the beneficiaries \((t(108) = 2.43, p < 0.05)\). For the rival out-group beneficiaries, however, there was no significant difference in empathy for the beneficiaries \((M_{\text{other}} = 3.92, SD = 1.31)\) vs. \(M_{\text{self}} = 4.06, SD = 1.14\); \(t < 1\).

Second, the same 2 (benefit focus) \(\times\) 2 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on belief in personal benefits revealed that two main effects were both significant \((F(1, 108) = 13.07, p < 0.001)\) for benefit focus; \((F(1, 108) = 7.01, p < 0.01)\) for beneficiary. More importantly, these two main effects were qualified by the significant two-way interaction \((F(1, 108) = 6.63, p < 0.05; Figure 3)\). When the beneficiaries were in-group members, there was no significant difference between the external self-benefit \((M = 4.85, SD = 1.54)\) and the other-benefit appeals \((M = 4.58, SD = 1.10; t < 1)\). For the rival out-group beneficiaries, belief in personal benefits was higher for the external self-benefit \((M = 4.83, SD = 1.28)\) than the other-benefit appeals \((M = 3.23, SD = 1.48; t(108) = 4.54, p < 0.0001)\).
the two-way interaction was significant ($F(1, 107) = 10.96, p < 0.01; ps > 0.15 for the main effects$). When the beneficiaries were in-group members, the external self-benefit appeals ($M = 3.55, SD = 1.31$) evoked more intense discomfort than did the other-benefit appeals ($M = 2.71, SD = 0.90; t(107) = 2.45, p < 0.05$). The opposite was found for the rival out-group beneficiaries; more intense discomfort was experienced in response to the other-benefit appeals ($M = 3.83, SD = 1.48$) than to the external self-benefit appeals ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.17; t(107) = 2.24, p < 0.05$). Discomfort alone mediated the observed interaction effect on donation intentions (95% CI = [0.0871, 0.3511]). However, the mediating effect of discomfort, when empathy and belief in personal benefits were entered simultaneously as competing mediators, became nonsignificant (95% CI = [−0.0098, 0.2137]).

DISCUSSION

Study 3 generalized the previous findings to national-level group identities. For in-group (Korean) beneficiaries, the other-benefit appeals were more effective, whereas the external self-benefit appeals were more effective for the rival out-group (Japanese) beneficiaries. Most importantly, the underlying processes were revealed by testing the moderated mediation model. The mediation by empathy (belief in personal benefits) for the in-group (rival out-group) beneficiaries was confirmed. The two alternative accounts based on processing fluency and perceived discomfort were ruled out, so the validity of the proposed motivation-based explanation was enhanced.

STUDY 4

Study 4 extended the manipulations of benefit focus and beneficiaries. Emotional-benefit appeals were added to the manipulation of benefit focus to test Hypotheses 4 and 5. Neutral out-groups were also differentiated from dissociative out-groups, and this addition was expected to identify a boundary condition for the proposed effects.

METHOD

Design and Procedure

An online experiment using the Qualtrics software to solicit responses was carried out, and 215 Korean undergraduate students took part. A 3 (benefit focus: other, self, or emotional) × 3 (beneficiary: in-group, dissociative out-group, or neutral out-group) between-participants design was used. Participants were first asked to read a description of one of three groups (an in-group, a neutral out-group, or a dissociative out-group), and identify a particular example (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007). After responding to this manipulation, the participants were asked to imagine that they were exposed to advertising on campus that requested a small donations to the group they had identified. As in the previous studies, other-benefit appeals emphasized how donations could benefit the development of the group and its members. External self-benefit appeals emphasized that by taking part in the donation, the givers would receive material reward for donations, in the form of a tax deduction, and would be invited to special events where they could network with celebrities. Finally, emotional-benefit appeals emphasized that the givers would have the personally rewarding experience of receiving emotional benefits such as feelings of happiness and satisfaction.

After reading one of the three advertisements, the participants rated the extent they were inclined to participate in the donation campaign (1 = not at all, 7 = very much), the extent to which they believed that they would personally benefit from taking part in the donation (1 = not at all, 7 = very much), and the extent to which they felt sympathetic, moved, compassionate, tender, warm, and softened (1 = not at all, 7 = very much; Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). To check the appropriateness of benefit focus and group selection, the participants provided ratings for the bene-fit-focus manipulation used in previous studies, and for a three-item sense of belongingness scale (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). The belongingness scale consisted of the following items (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely): “I consider myself to be this type of person,” “I belong to this group,” and “I fit in with this group of people.” The participants also rated their attitude toward the groups they selected (1 = unfavorable, dislike, and bad, 7 = favorable, like, and good; White & Dahl, 2006).

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

The results for the manipulation check ($\alpha = 0.69$) indicated that the participants perceived the external self-benefit appeals ($M = 4.69, SD = 1.32$) to be more egoistic than both the other-benefit ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.06; t(212) = 9.07, p < 0.0001$) and emotional-benefit ($M = 3.03, SD = 1.00; t(212) = 8.79, p < 0.0001$) appeals ($F(2, 212) = 53.48, p < 0.0001$). There was no significant difference between the other- and emotional-benefit appeals ($t(212) = 0.35, p = 0.73$).

The sense of belongingness ($\alpha = 0.93$) varied as a function of the type of the beneficiaries ($F(2, 212) = 54.28, p < 0.0001$). The participants reported a higher level of belongingness to their in-groups ($M = 3.96, SD = 2.11$) than to both their neutral ($M = 1.86, SD = 1.13; t(212) = 8.44, p < 0.0001$) and dissociative...
Effects of benefit focus and beneficiary on donation intentions and two mediators (Study 4).

Donation Intentions

A 3 (benefit focus) × 3 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on donation intentions indicated that two main effects were both significant ($F(2, 206) = 3.78, p < 0.05$ for benefit focus; $F(2, 206) = 37.14, p < 0.0001$ for beneficiary).

Of greater interest, these effects were qualified by the significant two-way interaction ($F(4, 206) = 13.24, p < 0.0001$; Figure 4). The interaction effect was decomposed by the type of the beneficiaries to test Hypotheses 1 and 4.

When the beneficiaries were in-group members, the participants showed greater donation intentions in response to the other-benefit ($M = 4.33, SD = 2.13; t(33.11) = 4.29, p < 0.0001$) or emotional-benefit appeals ($M = 4.60, SD = 1.87; t(45.58) = 5.59, p < 0.0001$) than to the external self-benefit appeals ($M = 2.03, SD = 1.51$). There was no significant difference between the other- and emotional-benefit appeals ($t(40.25) = 0.45, p = 0.657$). When the beneficiaries were the members of dissociative out-groups, the participants showed greater intentions in response to the external self-benefit appeals ($M = 2.43, SD = 1.63$) than to both the other-benefit ($M = 1.32, SD = 0.69; t(25.99) = 2.91, p < 0.01$) and emotional-benefit appeals ($M = 1.57, SD = 0.84; t(29.38) = 2.18, p < 0.05$). There was no significant difference between the other- and emotional-benefit appeals ($t(42.63) = 1.10, p = 0.279$). Finally, when the beneficiaries were from neutral out-groups, both the external self-benefit ($M = 2.10, SD = 1.41; t(26.90) = 2.09, p < 0.05$) and emotional-benefit ($M = 2.33, SD = 1.69; t(30.95) = 2.57, p < 0.05$) appeals were more effective than the other-benefit appeals ($M = 1.38, SD = 0.71$). There was no significant difference between the external self- and emotional-benefit appeals ($t(42.00) = 0.50, p = 0.620$).

Mediators

A 3 (benefit focus) × 3 (beneficiary) analysis of variance on empathy ($\alpha = 0.96$) indicated that all three effects were significant ($F(2, 206) = 4.30, p < 0.05$ for benefit focus; $F(2, 206) = 27.59, p < 0.0001$ for beneficiary; $F(4, 206) = 10.38, p < 0.0001$ for two-way interaction). The same analysis of variance on belief in personal benefits revealed that the main effect of beneficiary ($F(2, 206) = 15.63, p < 0.0001$) and the two-way interaction ($F(4, 206) = 5.78, p < 0.001$) were both significant. The main effect of benefit focus was marginally significant ($F(2, 206) = 2.75, p = 0.0661$). The results for the specific contrasts are presented in Figure 4.

Mediation Analyses

Four sets of mediation analyses were conducted, as both independent variables had three levels. The first two sets replicated the mediation results in Study 3 (Hypothesis 3), while the second two tested the mediation process for emotional-benefit appeals (Hypothesis 5). The first analysis focused on four conditions of a 2 (benefit focus: other vs. self) × 2 (beneficiary: in-group vs. dissociative out-group) design (conditions (1), (2), (4), and (5) in Figure 4; see also Table 1). The second analysis focused on four conditions of a 2 (benefit focus: other vs. self) × 2 (beneficiary: in-group vs. neutral out-group) design (conditions (1), (2), (7), and (8) in Figure 4; see also Table 2). The third and fourth analyses investigated what processes would underlie the

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Figure 4. Effects of benefit focus and beneficiary on donation intentions and two mediators (Study 4).

Note: **** $p < 0.0001$, *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.
effects of the emotional-benefit appeals for the in-groups and neutral out-groups, respectively. For the in-
groups, the emotional-benefit appeals were compared against external self-benefit appeals (conditions (2) and
(3) in Figure 4; see also Table 3), whereas for the neutral out-groups, the emotional-benefit appeals were com-
pared against the other-benefit appeals (conditions (7) and (9) in Figure 4; see also Table 3). The first two
analyses were conceptualized to be the cases of moderated mediation (PROCESS, model 8), as in Study 3,
while the last two sets represented simple mediation (PROCESS, model 4). Regression results for these me-
diations are presented in Tables 1–3.

For the first mediation, the indirect effects via two mediators were both significant (95% CI for empathy = [0.4874, 1.3675]; 95% CI for belief in personal benefits = [0.227, 0.4964]). The indirect effect via empathy was significant for the in-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [0.3889, 1.0977]), but not for the neutral out-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.0261, 0.3365]). For the last mediation, the superiority of the emotional- over the other-benefit appeals for the neutral out-group benefi-
ciaries was driven by empathy (95% CI = [0.4456, 0.0671]), whereas the indirect effect via belief in personal benefits was significant for the neutral out-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.4572, −0.0079]), but not for the in-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.0053, 0.2836]).

For the second mediation, the indirect effects via two mediators were both significant (95% CI for empathy = [0.4456, 0.0671]; 95% CI for belief in personal benefits = [0.227, 0.4964]). The indirect effect via empathy was significant for the in-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [0.3889, 1.0977]), but not for the neutral out-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.4456, 0.0671]), whereas the indirect effect via belief in personal benefits was significant for the neutral out-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.4572, −0.0079]), but not for the in-group beneficiaries (95% CI = [−0.0053, 0.2836]).

For the third mediation, the superiority of the emotional- over the external self-benefit appeals for the in-
group beneficiaries was driven by empathy (95% CI = [0.5226, 1.2649]) rather than by belief in personal benefi-
ciaries (95% CI = [0.0704, 0.1832]). For the last mediation, the superiority of the emotional- over the other-benefit appeals for the neutral out-group benefi-
ciaries was driven by belief in personal benefit (95% CI = [0.0447, 0.6498]) rather than by empathy (95% CI = [−0.0156, 0.3365]).

### Table 1. Mediation for 2 (Benefit Focus: Other vs. Self) × 2 (Beneficiary: In-Group vs. Dissociative Out-Group) in Study 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression 1</th>
<th>Regression 2</th>
<th>Regression 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belief in Personal Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Donation Intentions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit focus [X]</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>−0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary [W]</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X × W</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy [M1]</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in personal benefits [M2]</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regression model**

\[ F(3, 95) = 16.22, p < 0.0001 \]

\[ F(3, 95) = 7.68, p = 0.0001 \]

\[ F(5, 93) = 42.07, p < 0.0001 \]

**Benefit focus** [1 = other vs. −1 = self]; **beneficiary** [1 = in-group vs. −1 = dissociative out-group].

### Table 2. Mediation for 2 (Benefit Focus: Other vs. Self) × 2 (Beneficiary: In-Group vs. Neutral Out-Group) in Study 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression 1</th>
<th>Regression 2</th>
<th>Regression 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belief in Personal Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Donation Intentions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit focus [X]</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary [W]</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X × W</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy [M1]</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in personal benefits [M2]</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regression model**

\[ F(3, 93) = 14.19, p < 0.0001 \]

\[ F(3, 93) = 6.26, p = 0.0006 \]

\[ F(5, 91) = 47.67, p < 0.0001 \]

**Benefit focus** [1 = other vs. −1 = self]; **beneficiary** [1 = in-group vs. −1 = neutral out-group].
Table 3. Mediation for Emotional-Benefit Appeals in Study 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Regression 1</th>
<th>Regression 2</th>
<th>Regression 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Belief in Personal Benefits</td>
<td>Donation Intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>15.71</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit focus [X]</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy [M1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in personal benefits [M2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression model</td>
<td>$F(1, 55) = 27.28, p &lt; 0.0001$</td>
<td>$F(1, 55) = 4.57, p = 0.0370$</td>
<td>$F(3, 53) = 42.92, p &lt; 0.0001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.3315</td>
<td>0.0767</td>
<td>0.7084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral out-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>12.44</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit focus [X]</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.0227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy [M1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in personal benefits [M2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression model</td>
<td>$F(1, 46) = 5.56, p = 0.0227$</td>
<td>$F(1, 46) = 5.58, p = 0.0225$</td>
<td>$F(3, 44) = 35.49, p &lt; 0.0001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.1078</td>
<td>0.1081</td>
<td>0.7076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefit focus [1 = emotional vs. −1 = self] for in-group and [1 = emotional vs. −1 = other] for neutral out-group.

DISCUSSION

Study 4 extended the previous findings in several ways. First, the superiority of external self- versus other-benefit appeals for dissociative out-groups was replicated for neutral out-groups. Similar patterns were also corroborated in the mediation analyses; altruistic motivations characterized by empathy were more dominant for the in-group beneficiaries, whereas egoistic motivations characterized by belief in personal benefits worked only for the dissociative and neutral out-group beneficiaries. Second, the introduction of the emotional-benefit appeals effectively differentiated the dissociative from neutral out-groups, as these appeals increased donation intentions for the neutral out-group beneficiaries, but not for the dissociative out-group beneficiaries. Finally, the emotional-benefit appeals were aligned with both the in-group and neutral out-group beneficiaries. However, the underlying mechanisms were different, as found in the mediation analyses. The emotional-benefit appeals increased the participants’ empathy for the in-groups, but increased their belief in personal benefits when donating to the neutral out-groups.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

At the most basic level, the results from the four studies presented here support the proposition that the perception of who the beneficiaries of donations are determines which of the two motivations dominates in charitable giving. Two underlying processes are demonstrated by confirming that altruistic motivations, characterized by empathy for the beneficiaries, lead to the superiority of other-benefit appeals over external self-benefit appeals for in-group beneficiaries. The egoistic motivations, represented by belief in personal benefits, drive the superiority of external self-benefit appeals over other-benefit appeals for both rival or dissociative and neutral out-group beneficiaries. Three alternative accounts, based on the participants’ knowledge of the beneficiaries (Study 2), fluency, and discomfort (Study 3) are ruled out. The inclusion of emotional-benefit appeals extends the understanding of the proposed effect, and of the literature on charitable giving. Emotional-benefit appeals are conducive to facilitating donations to both in-group and neutral out-group beneficiaries, whereas they reduce donations to dissociative out-group beneficiaries.

The contribution of this research is substantial, but there is a caveat worth noting. Examining the results of Studies 3 and 4 suggests that the observed effects were significantly influenced by the findings from the other-benefit conditions, in which the beneficiaries’ group identity really mattered. In contrast, it appears that when external self-benefit appeals were emphasized, the group identity did not matter. The beneficiary variable was seen to have a significant main effect for donation intentions, empathy, and belief in personal benefits (Figures 3 and 4). It is argued that the results for donation intentions and empathy were mainly due to the extremity of the negative attitude toward out-groups. Presumably, the participants’ attitude toward the rival nation (Study 3) and the dissociative out-groups (Study 4) was more negative than toward the rival university (Studies 1 and 2). The participants therefore had, on average, lower donation intentions and empathy for the out-group beneficiaries than for the in-group beneficiaries.
The result that facing the same other-benefit appeals, the participants perceived higher levels of belief in personal benefits when donating to in-group members than to out-group members may be explained by the oneness perception, which means the feeling of being "at one with the other" (Cialdini et al., 1997; p. 483). Since oneness indicates that people overlap their own self with that of others, helping in-group members can to an extent be considered to be equivalent to helping the self. As Cialdini et al. (1997) noted, however, oneness is not simply an egoistic motivator, but rather can be defined as a nonaltruistic motivator since it covaries with empathic concerns about close others (Maner et al., 2002).

The findings of this research have several theoretical implications. First, the findings concerning whether other-benefit appeals are more effective than self-benefit appeals or vice versa in persuading people to donate are mixed (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2002; Pessemier et al., 1977). By identifying the beneficiaries' group identity as a moderator that is important both theoretically and managerially, this research resolves conflicting findings in the literature on the debate on altruistic (Batson, 1987; Frey, 1997) versus egoistic (Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976; Cialdini et al., 1997; Maner et al., 2002) motivations of charitable giving. This is not an either-or-not question; rather a contingent view should be taken to understand which of the two motivations is more dominant for prosocial behavior. As such, this research suggests an optimal message scheme for charity advertisements. Mixing egoistic with altruistic appeals tends to reduce donation intentions because a hidden persuasion motive is recognized and psychological reactance is experienced (Feiler, Tost, & Grant, 2012). Using either appeals alone, depending on the beneficiaries' group identity, is likely to be more effective in encouraging participation in charity campaigns.

Second, this research disentangles the effects of emotional-benefit appeals from those of external self-benefit appeals. Previous research has suggested that benevolence is inconsistent with pure altruism (Andreoni, 1990; Ferguson et al., 2008), but this study has empirically demonstrated its dual nature of being both (psychologically) egoistic and (evolutionarily) altruistic. Emotional-benefit appeals are effective both for in- and neutral out-groups, though the underlying mechanisms are different, as demonstrated in the mediation analyses in Study 4. The comparison of dissociative and neutral out-groups enhances the understanding of the nature of emotional-benefit appeals. The altruistic aspect of emotional-benefit appeals may be at odds with negative perceptions about dissociative out-groups. From the evolutionary perspective (Sober & Wilson, 1998), there is an unwillingness to help members of dissociative out-groups, as the fitness of these could pose a dangerous threat to the fitness of in-groups (Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992). The superiority of external self-benefit appeals over other-benefit appeals for both dissociative and neutral out-groups attests to the importance of group identification, but the effectiveness of emotional-benefit appeals only for neutral out-groups shows the importance of a derogatory attitude in the givers toward the dissociative versus neutral out-group beneficiaries.

Third, the empirical findings of this research enable the refinement of belief in personal benefits as a process variable. While Ferguson et al. (2008) did not characterize the construct explicitly, belief in personal benefits can effectively accommodate both emotional and material benefits. The argument is supported by the heightened level of belief in personal benefits for the emotional-benefit appeals when targeted toward the in-group beneficiaries (Figure 4, condition (3)) and also for the external self-benefit appeals when targeted toward the dissociative out-group beneficiaries (Figure 4, condition (5)). In this research, this construct accounts for the underlying process by which charitable giving for out-groups is motivated by receiving benefits. It would be interesting to investigate in future research whether the construct can explain the process by which avoiding costs (e.g., reducing distress) drives charitable giving.

Fourth, this research builds on the preexisting literature on intergroup helping (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2010; Stürmer et al., 2005) by considering benefit focus in addition to beneficiary. This research comprehensively deals with the two variables, in that it covers three categories of group identity—in-group, rival or dissociative out-group, and neutral out-group, and three types of message appeals—other-benefit, external self-benefit, and emotional-benefit appeals. This research provides particular insight into how to increase donation intentions for out-group members. An incorrect inference is often made that out-group victims feel fewer uniquely human emotions, such as grief and mourning, than in-group victims (Cuddy, Rock, & Norton, 2007), so inducing empathetic feelings for out-group beneficiaries seems very challenging. To assist both rival or dissociative and neutral out-group members, it may be better to highlight the material personal benefits they may gain from such helping. Emphasizing the emotional benefits gained from prosocial behavior can also be very effective in facilitating donations for neutral out-group members (Ferguson et al., 2008).

One notable managerial implication of this research is that the group identity of both the beneficiaries and givers should be considered by marketers in nonprofit organizations. When designing charity campaigns, marketers should consider whether the identities of givers are correctly matched with those of the beneficiaries. This consideration provides guidance concerning the emphasis of advertisements. For example, social initiatives such as Project RED, which donates to AIDS-related charities to help people in distant regions, may benefit from emphasizing self-focused benefits—either material or emotional. Investigating into whether the givers perceive the beneficiaries to be competitive or dissociative, rather than simply to be distant, is also important in determining the optimal type of message appeals.
This research has limitations, notwithstanding its important contribution to the literature. First, behavioral intentions rather than actual behavior were measured across the four studies. With a manipulation of benefit focus and the use of real behavioral measurements, a naturalistic field study using mass mailings could confirm whether the observed effects occur in a natural environment. Studies such as these are extremely important, as they can address the robustness (i.e., can it be replicated?), ecological validity (i.e., is it representative?), and relevance (i.e., does it really matter?) of research findings. It should also be noted, however, that a comparison of donation intentions and actual monetary donations often reveals nonsignificant discrepancies, at least in a laboratory setting (e.g., White & Peloza, 2009).

Second, many different groups (e.g., cultures, religious groups, sexual orientations, and ethnicities) coexist in consumers' lives on different levels. This research uses two social categories in Studies 1–3, university rivalry and nationality, to define group membership. These natural groups are important in charitable giving; nationality, for example, is a critical identity in the charity domain (Nelson, Brunel, Supphellen, & Manchanda, 2006). However, future research could enhance the robustness and generality of the current findings by using other naturally or artificially induced social identities. With this in mind, this research artificially varied the participants' perceptions of the same university members using an artificial news article (Study 2). It also used an established method (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; White & Dahl, 2007) to naturally induce participants to select their own groups to boost the external validity of the current findings (Study 4).

Third, future research could create a different meaningful classification of out-groups. The selection of out-groups can be based on factors other than group identification and attitude. For example, helping toward inferior-status out-groups is much more likely to occur than toward superior-status out-groups (Mashuri, Hasanah, & Rahmawati, 2012). The observed effects of benefit focus in the four studies would remain valid, ceteris paribus, but future research investigating boundary conditions on the proposed effects of benefit focus for donations to out-groups could be extremely fruitful.

Fourth, the effect of message framing can be examined. The appeal of receiving benefits (e.g., warm glow, social image and public recognition, pride, material gifts) versus that of avoiding costs (e.g., guilt, shame, censure, loss of opportunities) may influence the effectiveness of benefit focus (Loroz, 2007), in conjunction with the influence of certain individual characteristics, such as regulatory focus (Higgins, 1998). The framing effect is particularly interesting in exploring the effects of emotional-benefit appeals. While emotional-benefit appeals in this research are framed to include positive emotional consequences, there are two types of empathy-specific emotions—empathy-specific rewards and empathy-specific punishments (Batson et al., 1988). Avoiding negative emotional consequences by not carrying out prosocial behavior is more likely to undermine the perception of genuine altruistic motivations, as the behavior appears to be more passive. The type of frame of benevolence did not influence blood donation intentions in Ferguson et al. (2008, Study 3), but more attention should be paid to this topic.

Fifth, the effect of benefit focus on subjective happiness—that of external self-benefit appeals in particular, are worth examining. According to the self-determination theory and the motivation crowding theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Frey, 1997), providing external rewards and punishments crowd out intrinsic motivation. Lack of autonomy due to external (dis)incentives can reduce satisfaction for both the givers and the beneficiaries (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). It is therefore uncertain whether external self-benefit appeals are instrumental in boosting the givers' psychological happiness and well-being, though they can be helpful in generating donations to out-group beneficiaries. Performance is one thing and motivation is another. In the case of external self-benefit appeals, heightened donation intentions for out-groups are motivated more by external than by intrinsic factors.

Finally, the role of gender and cultural differences seems further examination, as an extension to this study. Regarding the role of gender, Winterich, Mittal, and Ross (2009) found the interaction of two identities—moral identity importance and gender identity. Specifically, they found that moral identity importance increased men's (women's) donations to in-groups (out-groups), as the circle of moral regard increased from the self to in-groups (from in-groups to out-groups). For female consumers with high moral importance, the relative superiority of self-over other-benefit appeals for out-groups may be reduced, as their moral regard extends to include out-groups. For male consumers with high moral importance, the proposed effects found in this research are likely to occur similarly because the circle of their moral regard only extends to in-groups.

In combination with the effects of gender and benefit focus, culture can also affect donations to in- and out-groups. This research was conducted in South Korea, which is considered to be a collectivistic and feminine culture (Hofstede, 1983). Whether the same effects would emerge in other cultures is an interesting question. However, the literature has produced mixed findings about the interaction of gender, culture, and benefit focus (e.g., Hornikx, Hendriks, & Thijsen, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). For example, Nelson et al. (2006) found that self-benefit (other-benefit) appeals were more effective for women (men) in feminine cultures, whereas the opposite was the case in masculine cultures. Hornikx et al. (2009) found, however, that as both men and women value a care-oriented worldview in feminine cultures (such as Denmark and Norway), other-benefit appeals were more persuasive for both genders than self-benefit appeals in these cultures. Thus, it is very difficult to make theoretically sound predictions about the role of culture. Future research
should implement systematic and comprehensive research programs to better understand the dynamics of interrelationships among various variables.

To conclude, charitable giving is propelled by both altruistic and egoistic motivations. This research extends the dual-motivation theory of charitable behavior, by identifying a group-level moderating variable that determines which of the two motivations dominates. The motivation to behave in an outwardly altruistic manner is not always altruistic, but often egoistic. The perceptions of givers regarding who the beneficiaries are matter when choosing successful appeal strategies.

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This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea Grant funded by the Korean Government (NRF-2013S1A52A03044507).

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