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**When does 'Liking' a charity lead to donation  
behaviour? Exploring Conspicuous Donation Behaviour on  
Social Media Platforms**

	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>

## When does 'Liking' a charity lead to donation behaviour?

### Exploring Conspicuous Donation Behaviour on Social Media Platforms

#### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study investigates the relationship between young people's Conspicuous Donation Behaviour (CDB) on social media platforms and their offline donation behaviour, specifically intentions to donate and volunteer time. It also explores materialism, self-esteem and self-monitoring as CDB trait antecedents, as a form of conspicuous consumption on social media. Finally, it considers the influence of altruism on these relationships.

**Design/Methodology:** A survey was conducted of regular Facebook users mentioning a charity brand on Facebook in the past year. Data from 234 participants was analysed and hypotheses tested using structural equation modeling.

**Findings:** Results confirm two forms of CDB – self and other-oriented. Materialistic consumers are more likely to engage in both forms of CDB on Facebook. High self-esteem increases self-oriented CDB; high self-monitoring increases other-oriented CDB. Self-oriented CDB is positively associated with donation intentions, but other-oriented CDB is negatively associated. Findings reveal how altruism moderates this model.

**Research Implications:** Findings show how personality traits influence CDB, and reveal the relationship between CDB, as virtual conspicuous consumption on social media platforms, and donation behaviour.

**Practical Implications:** The study provides implications for managers about enhancing charitable donations through social media.

**Originality/ Value:** This is the first study to explore donation behaviour as a form of conspicuous consumption on social media, where virtual conspicuous consumption (i) does not require any offline consumption, and (ii) may achieve the desired recognition, without any charitable act. It provides new insights into CDB, its antecedents and influence on donation behaviour.

**Classification:** Research Paper

**KEYWORDS:** Conspicuous Donation Behaviour, Self-Esteem, Materialism, Self-Monitoring, Altruism, Social Media Platforms.

## 1. Introduction

Charities and non-profit organisations recognise the value of online social media platforms influencing consumer responses, particularly among younger consumers. The 2014 ALS Ice Bucket Challenge viral campaign on Facebook achieved four times the previous years' donations (Zillman, 2014). Yet insights suggest baby boomers account for 43% of all charitable giving, cf. millennials' 11% (Blackbaud, 2011). Although younger consumers may find different donation routes, extant literature notes the proportion of 16-25 year-olds volunteering has stagnated (Ho and O'Donohoe, 2014), despite this group being key targets of charitable organisations' social media campaigns (O'Leary, 2016). To ensure organisations optimise their fundraising potential, Facebook launched a 'social good' team, supporting social causes (Fiegerman, 2015). Yet for consumers, 'self-sacrifice', such as charitable donations, or even charitable mentions on social media, might actually be 'self-presentation' (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2007). However, little is known about the relationship between such 'self-presentation' by young people, and their offline donation behaviours.

Extant literature contends recognition for charitable acts can motivate donation behaviour, and this is especially true among those wishing to display their moral character through their actions (e.g., Grace and Griffin, 2006; Skarmeas and Shabbir, 2011; Winterich *et al.*, 2013). To achieve this recognition the donor might, for example, wear a ribbon (Grace and Griffin, 2006), or display a 'twibbon' (Chell and Mortimer, 2014), showing they have already donated. Controversially, West (2004) explains that in a world of conspicuous consumption, people might engage in acts such as wearing ribbons, but argues the 'ostentatious caring' culture is about ego, where the ultimate goal is to inform others they are good people. With the growth in opportunities to display charitable acts, Grace and Griffin (2006, p. 152) caution 'it may be that a new kind of donor will emerge, one who is more likely to donate from the perspective of ostentatious caring, rather than the notion of actively wanting to help those in need'.

It is acknowledged some charitable donors may prefer anonymous giving. For example, anonymous donations of blood, organs or bone marrow to help save lives (Reid and Wood, 2008). In some scenarios, donors of large financial sums may request anonymity, concerned with personal safety (Beatty, 2008). More recently, Raihani (2014) investigated cooperative behaviour in the context of charitable donations. She found those who donated more or less than average preferred anonymity, partly due to fear of being ostracised or punished by the group, having deviated from donation 'norms'. However, charitable

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3 activities on social media platforms are, by their nature, less anonymous. In fact, it is the  
4 very public nature of the charitable mention that creates the viral effect often required by the  
5 charities.  
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8 This study investigates virtual, conspicuous 'donation' behaviour (CDB), where  
9 young people mention charities on social media platforms, and where this behaviour does not  
10 require any offline donation. It queries whether such virtual CDB leads to an intention to  
11 donate time or money offline, and investigates personality traits influencing such CDB.  
12 Blackbaud (2011) explains, when it comes to giving, younger consumers talk the talk, 'while  
13 Matures walk the walk'. Consumers mentioning charities on social media platforms may  
14 receive the desired recognition from their social network, without ever donating in the 'real'  
15 world. As Pounders *et al.* (2016, p. 1881) explain: 'many consumers now engage in self-  
16 presentation online. However, the work is lacking in understanding self-presentation in this  
17 new platform'. Moreover, self-presentation online may bear little resemblance to consumers  
18 'real', offline behaviours. Previous studies indicate consumers gain self-enhancement  
19 through a virtual conspicuous consumption on social media platforms such as Twitter or  
20 Facebook, for example by including brands on their Facebook pages, without ever owning  
21 these goods (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Although many studies have investigated reasons why  
22 people give to charity (e.g., Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010; Skarmeas and Shabbir, 2011), and  
23 why they do *not* donate (e.g., Chatzidakis *et al.*, 2016), these studies do not consider whether  
24 individuals might simply 'consume' charities on social media, without ever engaging in any  
25 offline charitable behaviour.  
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39 This is surprising, given the opportunities from the social network for charity brands,  
40 and also given the extant literature that identifies (i) the role of the social network for self-  
41 expression, and (ii) the potential disconnect between the online self and offline behaviour.  
42 Therefore, it is important to investigate: do charities' social media campaigns influence  
43 young consumers' offline behaviour intentions, or do they simply provide consumers a means  
44 to enhance their profiles, through conspicuous consumption of 'doing good'? This is  
45 investigated by exploring CDB on Facebook, its antecedents and the relationship between  
46 Facebook CDB and offline behavioural intentions.  
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53 CDB is 'the act of donating to charitable causes via the visible display of charitable  
54 merchandise or the public recognition of the donation' (Grace and Griffin, 2009, p. 16).  
55 Central to CDB are two requirements: the display is visible and recognition of the donation is  
56 public. Yet few studies have explored the nature of donation behaviour on social media  
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3 platforms (Lucas, 2017). As noted earlier, this is surprising because extant literature suggests  
4 the social network offers unique opportunity for self-presentation and the aggregation of the  
5 self (Belk, 2013). In recent research of Facebook use, Grace *et al.* (2014) found Facebook  
6 users use Facebook to portray positive images about themselves. Facebook disclosures reach  
7 a wide audience (Forest and Wood, 2012). Therefore, CDB on a social media platform such  
8 as Facebook may be more conspicuous than offline CDB. Moreover, although individuals  
9 may display rewards for previous offline donation behaviour (Chell and Mortimer, 2014), it  
10 is also recognised that in some instances, peoples' associations with products and brands on  
11 social media platforms may not reflect their material reality (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Just as a  
12 consumer may associate with a luxury brand on social media to appear sophisticated, without  
13 ever owning that brand, a consumer may also mention a charity on social media to enhance  
14 their profile, with no intention to support that charity in the 'real world'.  
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24 This study contributes to the literature in various ways. First, it examines, for the first  
25 time, consumers' CDB on social media platforms, where that CDB is independent of any  
26 offline charitable behaviour. Second, it addresses calls to explore the relationship between the  
27 offline self and online individual (Mehdizadeh, 2010), investigating the relationship between  
28 CDB on social media platforms and consumers' intention to volunteer time or donate money  
29 to the charity they mention on social media. Third, it addresses Grace and Griffin's (2009)  
30 call to investigate the influence of personality characteristics on CDB. In particular, it  
31 examines self-esteem as an antecedent of CDB on social media, because self-esteem  
32 influences the extent and the nature of self-presentation on social networks (Mehdizadeh,  
33 2010). It also examines materialism as an antecedent of CDB, as materialistic individuals  
34 may have difficulty parting with donations (Belk and Austin, 1986). Both self-esteem and  
35 materialism are associated with conspicuous consumption (Wong, 1997), thus their inclusion  
36 in a study of CDB is supported by the literature. In addition, the study examines self-  
37 monitoring as an antecedent of CDB, following Grace and Griffin's (2009) request that  
38 further research explore the relationship between these constructs. Related studies of brand  
39 symbolism indicated the important role of self-monitoring, as high self-monitors choose  
40 brands with appropriate associations with peer norms, due to susceptibility to peer influence  
41 and group identification (Souiden and M'Saad, 2011).  
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54 Fourth, the study considers the influence of altruism on the model. Altruism is a  
55 primary motivator for helping others (Clary *et al.*, 1998). Although one can consider altruism  
56 as 'other directed' ethical goals designed to help others without any need for reciprocal  
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benefit (Teichmann *et al.*, 2015), altruistic behaviour also benefits the self (Batson and Powell, 2003). Altruistic acts may be motivated by the expected recognition received engaging in those behaviours (Glazer and Konrad, 1996). Benabou and Tirole (2006, p. 1674) note ‘people’s actions reflect a mix of altruistic motivation, material self-interest and social or self-image concerns’. As CDB seeks recognition for good deeds, it is anticipated altruism may inform the relationships proposed. Therefore, this research examines the extent to which altruism moderates the hypothesised model of CDB on social media platforms.

This paper opens with a review of online donations and CDB literature. Drawing on extant studies, research hypotheses are presented (Figure 1). The methodology to test the model is then described. Data from 234 respondents using Facebook regularly and who spontaneously mention a charity brand on their Facebook pages inform the results. Finally, the implications are discussed.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

This research focuses on Conspicuous Donation Behaviour (CDB). It investigates its antecedents and outcomes, when that CDB is completely virtual, i.e. when it is represented by mentions on a social media platform and when it is unrelated to any prior offline donation behaviour. To better understand these ideas, in this section we first explore the literature about donation behaviour and donation behaviour on social media in particular. Then, we examine the CDB construct and investigate how it has been explored in extant studies. Finally, we present the research hypotheses informing the structural model.

### 2.1 *The role of the social media platform for donation behaviour*

Bennett (2008, p. 164) argues that role of websites in charity advertising requires ‘radical new thinking’, in part due to Internet opportunities for donating. In particular, the Internet is a crucial tool to attract donations from under 35s, who tend to interact more frequently online (Aldridge and Fowles, 2013; Bennett, 2009) and are easier to reach online than through traditional media (Burt and Gibbons, 2011).

Given these opportunities, many studies have explored people’s reasons for giving. For example, prior knowledge of the charity, being an existing regular donor, feeling a personal involvement with the charity, and seeking an emotional uplift, are antecedents of



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3 impulsive giving (Bennett, 2009). Anik *et al.* (2014) show, using field and online  
4 experiments, that contingent matching – giving a prediction of others' *likely* behaviour – is a  
5 more effective inducement encouraging people to upgrade their donations than social proof  
6 information based on other's previous behaviours. In addition, experimental research  
7 involving modifications to website button design reveals transactional trust positively  
8 influences donation compliance (Burt and Gibbons, 2011).  
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13 Relevant to the current study, are findings related to the influence of 'helpers' high'  
14 on donations. Individuals who experienced a 'warm glow' associated with making a gift were  
15 more inclined to donate (Bennett, 2009). In studies of potential donors leaving a donation  
16 page without donating, it was investigated whether the 'warm glow' of entering that section  
17 of the website would suffice, providing a benefit to the individual without needing to donate.  
18 This was not found to be so (Bennett, 2016).  
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24 To date, much of the research on charities' use of online media has investigated  
25 donors' responses to a single charity's website (Bennett, 2009; 2016), to a group of charity  
26 websites (Burt and Gibbons, 2011), or the application of websites such as eBay for cause  
27 related marketing (Aldridge and Fowles, 2013). Studies investigating the role of social media  
28 have investigated networks such as Facebook and Twitter as tools to attract donations and  
29 build communities. For example, Quinton and Fennemore (2013) use semi structured  
30 interviews with charity managers and marketing agencies to elicit their views about social  
31 media use by UK charities. Lucas (2017) adopts a multicase study approach to explore how  
32 charities use Facebook for fundraising campaigns, to identify success factors, also using  
33 webometrics, such as allowing the number of shares and the number of likes to indicate the  
34 shareability of each post, as well as a survey of users who liked or shared Facebook posts to  
35 elicit reasons for interacting with the Facebook page. Lucas (2017, p. 8) advocates further  
36 research, explaining "there are no studies examining specifically the motives of people who  
37 connect with charities via Facebook".  
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48 Social media platforms offer a means of conspicuous consumption, whereby people  
49 can incorporate goods into their personal profiles, with little obligation to match this 'virtual  
50 consumption' with their material reality. Therefore, this research advances knowledge about  
51 social media use exploring completely 'virtual' CDB, as a form of conspicuous consumption  
52 without presuming any intention to donate, or any previous offline association with the  
53 charity. This research builds on studies of virtual consumption on social media platforms,  
54 where consumers, as noted earlier, use products and other items to create a virtual self that  
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3 may not be reflective of their offline reality (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Our study therefore  
4 expands understanding of CDB. We next discuss the extant CDB literature.  
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## 7 *2.2 Conspicuous Donation Behaviour*

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9 While donors to charity are often anonymous, one area investigates CDB, which is predicated  
10 by the idea that donations can extend from 'altruistic', where a donor seeks to maximise  
11 pleasure for the receiver, to 'agnostic', where a donor seeks to maximize personal satisfaction  
12 (Sherry, 1983, p. 160). For example, in a study, appeals for organ donation that focused on  
13 the benefits to the self (people would think the donor as good and caring) were more  
14 successful than altruistic appeals (McIntyre *et al.*, 1987). The interpretation of the  
15 consumption of 'being good' builds upon Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous  
16 consumption. Conspicuous consumption allows the individual to display wealth through  
17 luxury expenditures (Trigg, 2001), meeting their need for 'furtherance and enhancement' of  
18 their self-concept (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967, p. 26). Extending the idea of conspicuous  
19 consumption, 'conspicuous compassion' (West, 2004), considers the deliberate use of  
20 charitable donations to display social prestige.  
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30 Grace and Griffin (2006) expanded this idea further, introducing the concept of CDB,  
31 which they define as 'the art of donating to charitable causes via the visible display of  
32 charitable merchandise or the public recognition of the donation' (Grace and Griffin, 2009, p.  
33 16). Therefore, they explained that CDB is a mechanism through which the consumer  
34 enhances the self, achieving public recognition. In their original CDB conceptualisation,  
35 Grace and Griffin (2006) asserted those who are less involved with a charity, those with weak  
36 community values, those who are high self-monitors, and those who are younger in age, will  
37 be more likely to make donations in a conspicuous manner. Grace and Griffin (2009)  
38 developed the CDB construct further by presenting a scale, validated in part by evidence that  
39 material success and reference group influence correlated with CDB.  
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47 Table 1 presents an overview of the main CDB literature to date. As noted above, the  
48 CDB concept was proposed by Grace and Griffin (2006), and the CDB scale was developed  
49 and tested by Grace and Griffin (2009). To date most studies have drawn on the concept of  
50 CDB without testing CDB as a construct (see Shrum *et al.*, 2014; Wiepking *et al.*, 2012), or  
51 they have tested the CDB construct, but only in the context of existing donors who exhibit  
52 recognition for previous donations (see Chell and Mortimer, 2014).  
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3 Grace and Griffin (2009) explain that individuals will seek 'conspicuous avenues' to  
4 donate to achieve recognition. One such 'conspicuous avenue' is the social media platform,  
5 for example Facebook. CDB is positively correlated with reference group influence (Grace  
6 and Griffin, 2006), and therefore, a social media platform, where ones' behaviour is highly  
7 visible to the reference group (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012), is an interesting context to  
8 explore CDB. On social media platforms such as Facebook, brand associations are not  
9 limited by the consumer's reality, as 'digital association blurs the distinctions among the  
10 material, the immaterial, the real and the possible' (Schau and Gilly, 2003, p. 401). Therefore,  
11 the Internet offers a means to create a more idealised version of the self, in part by expressing  
12 identity through the 'subtle cues' of visible mentions of products or brands (Hollenbeck and  
13 Kaikati, 2012), but without any requirement for offline ownership (Belk, 2013). The purpose  
14 of this behaviour is in part the construction of the virtual self-identity, to form an impression  
15 among those who view their social network. Sharing and joint possession (through virtual  
16 association) on social media platforms can enhance a sense of community and also aggregate  
17 the extended self (Belk, 2013). Therefore, consumers may mention a charity on a social  
18 medium to connect with others and enhance identity, without ever having engaged with the  
19 charity in the offline 'real' world. However, the relationship between this form of CDB and  
20 offline charitable behaviour remains unexplored.  
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24 It is clear that research into CDB on social media platforms would yield unique  
25 insights, because online behaviours may be more self-motivated than other-motivated.  
26 Moreover, online behaviours can be completely unrelated to offline behaviours. For example,  
27 a person may share a video from a charity with friends, without donating to the charity, yet  
28 create a positive impression on their Facebook page through virtual association with the  
29 charity. This study questions whether consumers are motivated to engage in CDB on  
30 Facebook for the purpose of self-presentation, cognisant of the impression they make among  
31 their network. It explores, for the first time, whether such online virtual 'consumption' of the  
32 charity leads to prosocial offline behaviours. We next explore the antecedents of CDB and  
33 the relationship between Facebook CDB and offline behavioural intentions.  
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### 53 *2.3 Antecedents and consequences of CDB on social media platforms*

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55 In developing the CDB scale, Grace and Griffin (2009, p. 22) advocated it would 'enable the  
56 meaningful examination of CBD within a nomological network of relationships', to  
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3 incorporate antecedents as well as consequences of this behaviour. Extant studies suggest  
4 offline prosocial behaviour reflects a mix of intrinsic, extrinsic and reputational motivations,  
5 which can be inferred from consumers' choices (Benabou and Tirole, 2006). The present  
6 study also questions whether these motivations influence online 'donation behaviour', by  
7 exploring the effect of traits on CDB. Common to the literature on donation behaviour,  
8 conspicuous consumption and social media behaviours are self-esteem, materialism, and self-  
9 monitoring (see for example Belk, 2013; Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2011; Grace and Griffin, 2009;  
10 Rose and DeJesus, 2007; Schau and Gilly, 2003; Souiden and M'Saad, 2011). This study  
11 considers these traits as antecedents of CDB on social media platforms. We also explore  
12 consequences of CDB: intention to donate time and money. Each hypothesis is set out below.  
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### 22 *2.3.1 Self-esteem*

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24 Self-esteem is an individual's overall self-evaluation of their own worth (Rosenberg, 1965).  
25 Offline, self-esteem is an antecedent of both conspicuous consumption and donation  
26 behaviour. The social network is beneficial for those with low self-esteem, since it allows  
27 those hesitant to self-disclose the opportunity to make rewarding connections (Forest and  
28 Wood, 2012; Mehdizadeh, 2010). Recent studies of undergraduate social media users  
29 revealed lower self-esteem participants found the social medium Facebook to be a safer place  
30 to express themselves (Forest and Wood, 2012). However, those with higher self-esteem  
31 were more likely to see Facebook as a means to gain attention and expose more positivity  
32 (Forest and Wood, 2012). Self-esteem has long been identified as an antecedent informing  
33 consumers' self-presentation strategies. For example, higher self-esteem consumers are more  
34 likely to engage in conspicuous consumption, to make themselves visible and distinct  
35 (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2011). In studies of charitable behaviours, high self-esteem is a key motive  
36 for donation (Sargeant *et al.*, 2006), due to the intrinsic benefits presented. It is therefore  
37 posited:  
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48 **H1: Higher self-esteem will be positively associated with CDB on social media platforms.**

### 49 *2.3.2 Materialism*

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54 Belk (1984, p. 291) defines materialism as 'the importance a consumer attaches to worldly  
55 possessions'. Materialism has typically been considered an individually-oriented or even  
56 'selfish' value, negatively associated with collective oriented values such as benevolence and  
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community values (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002). Research suggests materialistic people may be *less* likely to donate. Belk and Austin (1986) found materialistic people less likely to wish to donate body organs. In Richins and Dawson's (1992) study where respondents were asked to assume they were given €20,000, materialistic respondents were three times as likely to spend the money on themselves and would contribute less than half of what low materialists would to Church or charity organisations. Therefore, one could assume materialism could be negatively associated with charitable donations.

However, CDB is a form of conspicuous behaviour, which may or may not be related to actual charitable behaviour. Therefore, this hypothesis is informed by the literature on conspicuous consumption, where materialism has been described as a 'central value' (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2011, p. 221). Extant literature suggests a consumer's sense of identity is a form of narrative, where consumers use goods to reflect the self, both to oneself and others (Ahuvia, 2005). Earlier it was noted consumers may also use possessions to forge a narrative of the self on the social network, without any connection to those possessions in their material reality (Schau and Gilly, 2003). In the current study, materialism is proposed as an antecedent of CDB on social media platforms, accepting consumers may engage in CDB on social media as a form of conspicuous consumption. The hypothesis tests Grace and Griffin's (2009, p. 21) assertion that 'materialists may wish to establish positive images of themselves through displaying material evidence of their donation behaviour'. Thus, the study postulates:

**H2: Greater materialism will be positively associated with CDB on social media platforms.**

### 2.3.3 *Self-monitoring*

Self-monitoring is 'self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness' (Snyder, 1974, p. 526). Low self-monitors are less sensitive to surrounding cues, tend to maintain a consistent self-presentation in any situation (Rose and DeJesus, 2007) and define themselves by characteristics within themselves (Snyder, 1987). By contrast, high self-monitors are more sensitive to surrounding social cues and use these to monitor behaviour. Self-monitoring influences self-presentation attitudes (Bian and Forsythe, 2010). Earlier research has shown social aspects of the product influence high self-monitors'

behaviour (Becherer and Richard, 1978) and high self-monitors are more image conscious than low self-monitors (O’Cass, 2000).

Self-monitoring is especially appropriate for consideration in a study of CDB on Facebook, where one engages in visible, virtual self-presentation. Prior research indicated consumers seeking to ‘package’ themselves on social media platforms were not successful without other’s validation (Hong *et al.*, 2012). As high self-monitors are concerned with the appropriateness of their self-presentation, it is likely they would be more likely to seek to demonstrate CDB than low self-monitors. Grace and Griffin (2006) also postulate a positive relationship between high self-monitoring and CDB. This study therefore hypothesises:

**H3: High self-monitoring will be positively associated with CDB on social media platforms.**

#### *2.3.4 CDB and intention to donate*

The literature has explored a range of factors influencing intention to donate, such as nostalgia (Merchant *et al.*, 2011), the storytelling of the charitable organisation (Merchant *et al.*, 2010), and the way donation outcomes are framed (Ye *et al.*, 2015). Charitable donations may be useful signalling tools where the donor gives money and is publicly recognised (Glazer and Konrad, 1996), or anticipates a positive outcome for donating (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2007; Ye *et al.*, 2015). This study investigates whether CDB on Facebook predicts donation intention. Do individuals’ mentions of charities on social media platforms predict intentions to donate? This study offers a unique insight into the relationship between CDB and offline behaviour, because social media provides a virtual space, in which conspicuous consumption does not require consumption (Belk, 2013; Schau and Gilly, 2003). For example, commercial brands ‘Liked’ on Facebook for self-expressive reasons have weak offline brand loyalty (Wallace *et al.*, 2014). In addition, although association with a charity on social media platforms might bolster the self, research by the Institute of Volunteering Research reported real-world volunteering was perceived as ‘boring’ and ‘uncool’ by younger consumers (Ellis, 2004). Therefore, it is possible the charitable behaviours mentioned on social media platforms for self-expressive reasons would never be engaged in offline. The study tests the relationship between CDB and intention to volunteer time and donate money, hypothesising:

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3 **H4: CDB for a charity on social media platforms will be negatively associated with**  
4 **intention to volunteer time to that charity.**  
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7 **H5: CDB for a charity on social media platforms will be negatively associated with**  
8 **intention to donate money to that charity.**  
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17 Figure 1 presents the structural model, showing the relationships proposed in the hypotheses.  
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### 24 *2.3.5 Altruism as a moderating variable*

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27 The study also explores the moderating effect of altruism on the model, consistent with extant  
28 literature that considers altruism as a moderating variable (Vlachos, 2012). Research queries  
29 whether prosocial behaviour comes from a motive of ‘doing good’, or ‘doing well’ (Ariely *et*  
30 *al.*, 2009, p. 545). Just as offline recognition for monetary donations reinforces that  
31 behaviour (Glazer and Konrad, 1996), this study queries whether factors influencing and  
32 arising from CDB on Facebook are informed by the extent to which individuals believe they  
33 are doing good.  
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39 When reputation is influenced by prosocial orientation, ‘what is valuable is not to  
40 resemble the average, but to appear as altruistic as possible’ (Benabou and Tirole, 2006, p.  
41 1655). Studies on ‘crowding out’ suggest altruistic acts may not be motivated by a desire to  
42 improve the public good, but rather an expectation of private benefits (Bekkers and Wiepking,  
43 2011). Altruism may be ‘pure’ or ‘impure’, as one may care about the public benefit of ones’  
44 actions, or one may simply seek the ‘joy of giving’ that ‘makes him value his own  
45 contribution more than someone else’s’ (Benabou and Tirole, 2006, p. 1657). When  
46 individuals seek a ‘warm glow’ from giving, their donation has a seemingly selfish motive  
47 and is therefore considered impure (Andreoni, 1989). Waterman (1981) asserted individuals  
48 commit altruistic acts to increase the likelihood others will help them if in need.  
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56 It is posited that CDB on Facebook may be a form of virtual gift-giving, as the charity  
57 receives a mention from the consumer and their comments function as virtual world gifts  
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(Schwarz, 2010). Motives for virtual gift-giving range from ‘reciprocity-seeking, ingratiation, and status-seeking, to altruism and love’ (Belk, 2013, p. 492). Therefore, this study examines the moderating effect of altruism. Due to the lack of theory and previous research examining the moderating effect of altruism on CDB’s antecedents and consequences, specific hypotheses are not proposed. Instead, we explore the effect of this variable by addressing the question: Does altruism moderate the relationships proposed in the conceptual framework?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Participants and context

Consistent with extant research on how people donate and relate to charity (Ho and O’Donohoe, 2014; Skarmeas and Shabbir, 2011), our study focuses on a sample of young consumers. Survey respondents were students attending an Irish University. A student sample was used for the following reasons. First, social media platforms are important sites of psychological development between adolescence and adulthood (Belk, 2013). Hinz *et al.* (2014) note social network density and social influence may decrease once individuals leave school. Studies exploring online methods of self-presentation have focused on millennials and student samples in particular (Pounders *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, to investigate individuals’ CDB on social media platforms, a student sample was necessary.

Second, recent research on social media segments has revealed that ‘actives’, whose interaction on social media plays a vital role in their offline behaviour, are highly likely to be younger (Campbell *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, student samples offer better insights into behaviours on social media than the general population, as they are heavier users of the Internet in general (Gallagher *et al.*, 2001), of social media sites (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015; Ho and Dempsey, 2010) and of Facebook in particular (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009).

Third, existing related studies have also utilised student samples, for example, explorations of online shopping websites (Park *et al.*, 2012) and the viral effects of social networks on purchase intentions (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015).

Fourth, CDB may be more common with younger donors, as older individuals seek out less conspicuous donation avenues (Grace and Griffin, 2009). In addition, previous research on materialism and self-monitoring was conducted with student participants (Rose and DeJesus, 2007) and it is recognised the behaviour of young adults is susceptible to self-



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3 esteem and self-monitoring (Souiden and M'Saad, 2011), as well as altruism (Kiani *et al.*,  
4 2016).  
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6 The specific context of our study is Facebook. Characteristics of Facebook distinguish  
7 it from other social media platforms, as Facebook users primarily communicate with people  
8 who are already part of their extended social network, all Facebook friends are visible on the  
9 network, and items posted on Facebook (for example charitable mentions), have a high level  
10 of visibility to others on Facebook (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012). Facebook also plays a  
11 critical role in a student's identity presentation (Hyllegard *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, students'  
12 CDB on Facebook offers a unique source of invaluable insights into CDB on social media  
13 platforms.  
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### 23 3.2 Scale items

24 Respondent attitudes were elicited using the following measures from the literature.  
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27 **Conspicuous Donation Behaviour** (CDB) was measured using Grace and Griffin's  
28 (2009) scale, adapted to reflect CDB on Facebook. The 'conspicuous donation' act of  
29 wearing merchandise or charity ribbons presented in Grace and Griffin's (2009) original  
30 measure was replaced with the 'conspicuous donation' act of mentioning the charity on  
31 Facebook. For example, the item 'It increases my self-respect when I wear merchandise that  
32 benefits charities' was presented as 'It increases my self-respect when I mention this charity  
33 on Facebook', on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree'; 7 = 'strongly agree').  
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39 **Self-esteem** was measured using Rosenberg's (1965) scale. This includes statements  
40 such as 'I feel that I am a person of worth'. Consistent with Rosenberg (1965) each item was  
41 presented as a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree'; 5 = 'strongly agree').  
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45 **Self-monitoring** was measured using the susceptibility to interpersonal influence  
46 scale by Bearden *et al.* (1989). Scale items include 'When I am uncertain how to act in social  
47 situations, I look to the behaviour of others for cues'. Items were measured on a 5-point  
48 Likert scale with anchors 'Always false' and 'Always true', consistent with extant literature.  
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52 **Materialism** was measured using Richins' (1987) scale, including statements such as  
53 'It is important for me to have really nice things'. The items were scored on a 7-point Likert  
54 scale (1 = 'strongly disagree'; 7 = 'strongly agree').  
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3 *Intention to Donate* was measured using items from Wheeler (2009), drawing on  
4 MacKenzie *et al.* (1986). The scale distinguished between intentions regarding volunteering  
5 time and donating money, in line with Wheeler (2009). Respondents rated the possibility,  
6 likelihood and the probability of ‘volunteering time to this charity’ and ‘donating money to  
7 this charity’ on a 7-point Likert scale (for possibility, 1 = ‘impossible’; 7 = ‘possible’, for  
8 likelihood 1 = ‘unlikely’; 7 = ‘likely’, and for probability 1 = ‘improbable’; 7 = ‘probable’).

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13 *Altruism* was measured using Rushton *et al.*’s (1981) scale. This measured frequency  
14 of occurrence for 20 items, including ‘I have given directions to a stranger’. A 5-point scale  
15 invited respondents to record their behaviour for each item (1 = ‘never’, 2 = ‘once’, 3 =  
16 ‘more than once’, 4 = ‘often’, 5 = ‘very often’), in line with the original scale.  
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### 21 22 23 3.3 Process

24 Following a pretest and pilot test, the survey was issued via Students’ Union (SU) email to  
25 students of an Irish University. The email provided confidentiality reassurance and contained  
26 a hyperlink to a SurveyMonkey survey. Students were provided with a definition of  
27 ‘Charity’, as provided by the Charity Commission, UK (2013):  
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32 *“A Charity includes any non-profit organization that works to: Aid the prevention of*  
33 *poverty, advance health or the saving of lives; Advance citizenship or community*  
34 *development; the arts, culture or heritage; amateur sports; Advance environmental*  
35 *protection; Provide relief of those in need (those who are aged, have a disability, financial*  
36 *hardship, or other need); Advance animal welfare.”*  
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41 Respondents were screened using ‘In the past year, have you mentioned a charity  
42 brand on Facebook?’ ‘Mentioned’ was used because pretests and pilot tests revealed  
43 consumers often use photographs, mention a brand in posts, share content from the brand, or  
44 ‘Like’ a brand, in order to associate with it. Therefore ‘mentioned’ was considered more  
45 inclusive than ‘Liked’ and more reflective of CDB activities.  
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50 The survey included twenty-six questions and took an average of 20 minutes to  
51 complete. To enhance responses, an iPad was offered as a prize for a completed survey, with  
52 the winner randomly selected. This prize was typical of incentives for research among  
53 university students and was approved by the Students’ Union.  
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3 Table 2 presents a summary of respondent information. In total, 234 complete cases  
4 were returned that (i) had a Facebook account accessed during the past month, and (ii) had  
5 actively mentioned a Charity brand on Facebook in the past year. This number is consistent  
6 with samples from previous research of students who had made charitable donations offline  
7 (Skarmeas and Shabir, 2011). In this study, all the mentions of charities were visible to  
8 others in respondents' Facebook social network.  
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### 16 17 18 3.4 Common method bias 19

20 Several techniques were employed to address common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).  
21 First, the study implemented procedural remedies, such as assuring response confidentiality  
22 and anonymity and introducing the dependent and independent variables on different pages  
23 of the electronic questionnaire, trying to avoid respondents inferring cause-effect  
24 relationships. Second, statistical procedures were used. Exploratory factor analysis was  
25 conducted from which seven factors emerged explaining 71.41% of variance. The first factor  
26 explained only 15.28%, suggesting there was not a single factor accounting for the majority  
27 of variance. In addition, Harman's single-factor test by means of confirmatory factor analysis  
28 with EQS 6.2 was used to confirm this. This showed the goodness of fit for a measurement  
29 model in which all the variables loaded on a single factor was substantially lower than the  
30 goodness of fit for a model where every item loaded on its corresponding latent variable.  
31 Therefore, it was concluded the presence of common method bias was not a major concern.  
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### 42 43 3.5 Data analysis 44

45 To test the proposed model, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used. SEM combines  
46 aspects of multiple regression and factor analysis to estimate a set of interrelated dependence  
47 relationships simultaneously (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Unlike other multivariate procedures, SEM  
48 has several advantages: it takes a confirmatory rather than exploratory approach to data  
49 analysis; it provides explicit estimates of measurement error; finally, it enables researchers to  
50 incorporate both unobserved (latent) and observed variables (Byrne, 2006).  
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55 Moderation analyses were conducted using the Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes,  
56 2013; model 1) for SPSS. Since the moderator (altruism) is continuous, the Johnson-Neyman  
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3 technique (Bauer and Curran, 2005; Hayes and Matthes, 2009) was used to identify the  
4 turning points in the range of the moderator where exactly the effect of the independent  
5 variable on the dependent variable transitions between statistically significant and  
6 nonsignificant (for a pre-specified significance level of 0.05). This approach has the  
7 advantage that it does not require the researcher to set values representing low, moderate, or  
8 high on the moderator variable (e.g., standard deviation below the mean, the mean, and a  
9 standard deviation above the mean) (Hayes, 2013).  
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## 20 **4. Results**

### 21 *4.1 Measurement model results*

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23 Scales were evaluated using confirmatory techniques to assess reliability, dimensionality and  
24 validity. In the first stage, exploratory factor analyses were performed to explore the  
25 dimensionality of each construct. Results suggested the corresponding items of each scale  
26 grouped into a single factor, with one exception. CDB was found to be a multidimensional  
27 construct, with two factors, consistent with Grace and Griffin (2009). As such, CDB  
28 comprises 'self-oriented' CDB, where consumers are 'motivated by the desire to seek  
29 intrinsic benefits' and CDB 'other-oriented', where consumers are 'motivated by the desire to  
30 display the behaviour to others' (Grace and Griffin, 2009, p. 22). As virtual consumption on  
31 Facebook may be driven by self-image concerns, this study distinguishes between 'self-  
32 oriented' and 'other-oriented' CDB (Grace and Griffin, 2009), where 'self-oriented' CDB  
33 provides intrinsic benefits to the self and 'other-oriented' CDB has the goal of making an  
34 impression on others.  
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44 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using EQS 6.2 and the robust maximum-  
45 likelihood estimation method was next performed. Results suggested the deletion of three  
46 items of the self-esteem construct, two of the materialism scale, six of the self-monitoring  
47 measure and one of the CDB construct, since their standardised parameter estimates were  
48 below 0.5, indicating weak factor loadings. After these deletions, CFA produced an  
49 acceptable fit to the data (Hair *et al.*, 2006). In addition, all standardised factor loadings  
50 exceed 0.5 and were statistically significant suggesting convergent validity of the factors. The  
51 average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values were greater than 0.5  
52 and 0.7, respectively, with one exception. The AVE of the materialism factor was close to,  
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3 but below the recommended cut-off value (AVE = 0.493). Discriminant validity was also  
4 supported. In all cases the AVE for any two constructs was always greater than the squared  
5 correlations. See Tables 3 and 4 for full details.  
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#### 17 4.2 Structural model results

18 The results of the structural model indicate the model fits the data well (S-B $\chi^2$ (338) = 613.92  
19  $p < 0.001$ ; NNFI = 0.903; CFI = 0.913; IFI = 0.915; RMSEA = 0.059). The conceptual  
20 framework posited CDB construct as a single variable. However, the analysis suggested a  
21 two-factor structure for CDB (self- and other-oriented CDB), consistent with Grace and  
22 Griffin (2009). Therefore, in presenting the results in Figure 2, the study distinguishes  
23 between self-oriented CDB and other-oriented CDB. That is, H1 to H5 are split into two  
24 hypotheses.  
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31 The results indicate perceived self-esteem predicted self-oriented CDB positively and  
32 significantly ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $t = 2.44$ ). However, the relationship between self-esteem and other-  
33 oriented CDB was not significant ( $\beta = .105$ ,  $t = 1.58$ ). Therefore, H1 was partially supported.  
34 Materialism predicted both self-oriented ( $\beta = .154$ ,  $t = 1.87$ ) and other-oriented CDB ( $\beta$   
35 = .141,  $t = 1.89$ ), providing support for H2. Finally, self-monitoring had a positive and  
36 significant effect on other-oriented CDB ( $\beta = .225$ ,  $t = 3.03$ ), but no significant effect on self-  
37 oriented CDB ( $\beta = .074$ ,  $t = .93$ ). Thus, H3 was partially supported.  
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44 Contrary to expectations, higher self-oriented CDB positively predicted intention to  
45 volunteer time ( $\beta = .333$ ,  $t = 3.12$ ). The relationship between other-oriented CDB and  
46 intention to volunteer time was not significant ( $\beta = -.125$ ,  $t = -1.23$ ). Therefore, H4 was  
47 rejected. Finally, as expected, findings show other-oriented CDB was negatively and  
48 significantly associated with intention to donate money ( $\beta = -.181$ ,  $t = -1.74$ ). However, self-  
49 oriented CDB positively predicted intention to donate money ( $\beta = .354$ ,  $t = 3.47$ ). Thus, H5  
50 was partially supported.  
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Moderation analyses using the PROCESS macro were conducted to examine whether altruism (Cronbach's alpha = .875) moderates the relationships proposed (see Figure 3). Interestingly, results revealed that altruism moderates the relationship between self-esteem and self-oriented CDB (interaction coefficient  $\beta = -.480$ ,  $t = -2.411$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Specifically, the Johnson-Neyman technique showed that for respondents below 3.029 on the uncentered altruism score (corresponding to a centered score of .0763), self-esteem has a significant positive effect on self-oriented CDB. Conversely, among those above 3.029, self-esteem does not have a significant effect on self-oriented CDB. Similarly, altruism moderates the relationship between materialism and other-oriented CDB (interaction coefficient  $\beta = -.194$ ,  $t = -2.046$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The Johnson-Neyman technique showed altruism at a value of 3.082 (corresponding to a centered score of .130) is the turning point from non-significance to significance of the effect of materialism. The relationship between materialism and other-oriented CDB was positive and significant at altruism scores below this threshold and nonsignificant at altruism scores above this. Finally, results revealed the effect of self-monitoring on other-oriented CDB was a function of the levels of altruism (interaction coefficient  $\beta = .343$ ,  $t = 2.193$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The Johnson-Neyman technique indicated altruism at a value of 2.712 (corresponding to a centered score of -.241) is the turning point from non-significance to significance of the effect of materialism. The influence of self-monitoring on other-oriented CDB was positive and significant at altruism scores above this threshold and nonsignificant for values of altruism below 2.712. Altruism did not moderate the remaining relationships. The next section discusses the results' implications.

<Insert Figure 3 about here>

## 5. Discussion

Findings reveal the relationship between online and offline charitable behaviour depends on the orientation of an individual's CDB, which in turn is informed by their personality traits. Results show that people who have higher self-esteem are more likely to engage in CDB on social media platforms to make themselves feel good (self-oriented CDB). In turn, those expressing self-oriented CDB are likely to donate money and volunteer time to that charity. By contrast, individuals who are high self-monitors are more likely to engage in CDB to impress others (other-oriented CDB). By engaging in other-oriented CDB, high self-



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3 monitors seek to show others they are a good person, and to make themselves look good.  
4 This study reveals a significant negative relationship between other-oriented CDB and  
5 individuals' intentions to donate money to charity. Findings also indicate more materialistic  
6 social media users are likely to engage in both self-oriented and other-oriented CDB. The  
7 study also provides new insights into 'impure' altruism, as results show high self-esteem has  
8 a positive effect on self-oriented CDB, among people low in altruism. For people low in  
9 altruism, materialism positively influences other-oriented CDB, whereas the influence of  
10 self-monitoring on other-oriented CDB is higher for people high in altruism. These findings  
11 implications are discussed below.

### 20 21 *5.1 Implications for theory*

22 The study offers a number of theoretical implications. First, prior to this study, CDB had  
23 been considered only in relation to rewards for previous donation behaviour, where symbolic  
24 acts such as wearing ribbons were considered indicative of CDB (Grace and Griffin, 2009).  
25 This study is the first to explore the relationship between individuals' mentions of charities  
26 on social media platforms, as a virtual form of CDB, and intention to donate money or to  
27 volunteer time. The study of CDB on online social media platforms is especially interesting,  
28 as the literature suggests virtual 'consumption' on social networks may have little  
29 relationship to the person's material reality (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Extant literature has  
30 considered online impression management, where individuals post content to express a  
31 specific and desired image of themselves and may communicate an ideal rather than an actual  
32 self (Pounders *et al.*, 2016). Our study explored CDB on social media platforms, in the  
33 context of Facebook. Results reveal that other-oriented CDB on Facebook, as a form of  
34 impression management, is negatively associated with those individual's intention to donate  
35 money to the charity offline. By contrast, self-oriented CDB on Facebook, where the person  
36 mentions the charity because of personal meaning, is indicative of actual donation intention.  
37 This was an unexpected finding, as a negative relationship between CDB and charitable  
38 behaviour was proposed. Therefore, the intended audience of the conspicuous behaviour  
39 (self or other) is an important distinguishing factor influencing the relationship between  
40 online 'consumption' and offline intent. This finding extends insights provided by research  
41 on why individuals may choose *not* to give to charity (see Chatzidakis *et al.*, 2016), as we  
42 suggest that other-oriented CDB on social media platforms may provide sufficient self-  
43 enhancement and therefore those consumers perceive even less need to donate time or money  
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3 than others, because the virtual self-enhancement is sufficient and the charitable donation  
4 would serve no additional purpose.  
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7 Second, the study addresses Grace and Griffin's (2009) call to explore the influence  
8 of personality traits on CDB. Although self-esteem and materialism have both been  
9 associated with offline conspicuous consumption (Wong, 1997), this study distinguishes  
10 between the two traits, as it identifies that self-esteem is positively associated with self-  
11 oriented CDB and not with other-oriented CDB. People with high self-esteem are likely to  
12 mention charity brands, only when those charities have personal meaning. The literature  
13 suggests people with high self-esteem are likely to engage in conspicuous consumption to  
14 gain attention (Forrest and Wood, 2011), to spread positivity (Forest and Wood, 2012) and  
15 because of confidence in their abilities and taste (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2011). Based on these  
16 findings, it is posited people with high self-esteem are more confident to display their  
17 charitable affiliations on social media platforms, because the charity has personal meaning  
18 for them. The literature suggests materialistic individuals are less likely to express  
19 community-oriented values (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002) or to donate (Richins and  
20 Dawson, 1992). As this study revealed a positive relationship between materialism and both  
21 self-oriented and other-oriented CDB, the relationship between materialism and CDB could  
22 be further investigated, because the present study has identified that only self-oriented CDB  
23 will be positively associated with intention to engage in charitable behaviour.  
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36 Furthermore, findings reveal the influence of self-monitoring on impression  
37 management on social media platforms, in the context of postings on Facebook. The  
38 literature suggests high self-monitors are more image conscious (O'Cass, 2000), revising  
39 their self-presentation according to surrounding cues (Rose and DeJesus, 2007). High self-  
40 monitors may form favourable attitudes towards a brand if they perceive it has a high social  
41 function for them, helping them to garner status or generate esteem (Bian and Forsythe,  
42 2012). This study hypothesised the public nature of Facebook would therefore entice high  
43 self-monitors to exhibit CDB. Consistent with the literature, this was found to be true, only  
44 where CDB is other-oriented. High self-monitors will mention a charity on social media  
45 platforms to impress others. This result may also indicate a desire among high self-monitors  
46 to meet other's expectations. It is suggested that one can interpret their other-oriented CDB  
47 to reflect a desire not to violate others' expectations, rather than a concern for the welfare of  
48 others (Dana *et al.*, 2006). This study cautions that high self-monitors, although more likely  
49 to engage in other-oriented CDB, have less actual intention to donate to the charity than other  
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3 people. These findings extend the understanding of self-monitoring and its influence on  
4 conspicuous behaviour, on social media platforms, and on Facebook in particular.  
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7 Finally, this study shows high self-esteem is positively associated with self-oriented  
8 CDB, among people with low altruism. Extant literature would suggest high self-esteem  
9 would be positively associated with altruism and with participation in voluntary intervention  
10 (Kiani *et al.*, 2016). One could have expected high, not low, altruism would influence the  
11 relationship between self-esteem and CDB. While the finding of this study may appear  
12 surprising, it may suggest individuals low in altruism seek the joy of giving. Andreoni (1989,  
13 p. 1448) suggests 'impure altruism' exists, where people act because they are driven by the  
14 'warm glow' received for their generosity, rather than a genuine concern for others. It may  
15 be the case that, on social media platforms, the 'warm glow' individuals receive is enhanced,  
16 because of the public nature of the social network. On social media, individuals with high  
17 self-esteem can say something positive about themselves and their charitable behaviours,  
18 reinforcing their self-image and making them feel good. Therefore, these people may enjoy  
19 giving, for the 'warm glow' they receive.  
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29 For respondents low in altruism, materialism has a greater influence on other-oriented  
30 CDB. Materialistic people might be demonstrating to others they are good people by  
31 associating with a charity. Benabou and Tirole (2006, p. 1673) explain 'holier than thou  
32 competition', where competition may induce participation in prosocial activities that may  
33 have little public benefit, but high public visibility. The findings suggest the 'holier than thou'  
34 phenomenon among materialistic people, who engage in other-oriented CDB to look better  
35 than their Facebook friends. For these individuals, other-oriented CDB is not positively  
36 associated with offline charitable behaviours.  
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43 Finally, high self-monitors who are highly altruistic are more likely to engage in  
44 other-oriented CDB. These individuals will still engage in a form of CDB that does not lead  
45 to any charitable behaviours offline. This interesting finding suggests that, even though these  
46 people are more prosocial than others, high self-monitors engage in CDB behaviour on social  
47 media platforms, solely to impress others. The literature suggests prosocial orientation  
48 individuals may consider proself behaviour as creating an unattractive impression than would  
49 proself individuals (Iedema and Poppe, 1994) and they may therefore seek to signal prosocial  
50 behaviour. As high self-monitors, they may be inclined to demonstrate to others they are  
51 good people, by engaging in other-oriented CDB. Further research should explore the  
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3 relationship between altruism and self-monitoring and its effects on other forms of virtual and  
4 offline consumption.  
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7 There is an important distinction between self-oriented and other-oriented CDB in the  
8 findings. Although altruism informs both forms of CDB, self-oriented CDB is positively  
9 associated with offline charitable behaviours. These individuals may be giving charities time  
10 or money in the 'real world', in part seeking the 'warm glow'. By contrast, those engaging in  
11 other-oriented CDB have achieved their goal, by appearing better than others on their social  
12 network. Although they are giving 'virtually', they have no intention to donate money or  
13 volunteer time to the charity mentioned on social media platforms.  
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### 21 *5.2 Implications for practice*

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23 It is difficult for charitable organisations to attract money or time from potential donors.  
24 Fundraising has become intensely unpredictable and turbulent, especially following recent  
25 economic downturn (Skarmeas and Shabbir, 2011). Social media platforms, such as  
26 Facebook, appear to be an ideal forum for charities seeking donations or volunteers. This is  
27 especially true when seeking donations from younger people. It has already been noted that  
28 the need to attract and retain young donors has led charities to utilise these online media  
29 platforms (Aldridge and Fowles, 2013). Yet as highlighted earlier, donations from this group  
30 have stagnated (Ho and O'Donohoe, 2014), and extant research calls for further  
31 understanding of young people's behaviour in relation to charities on social media platforms.  
32 This study offers helpful new insights into these younger donors, by investigating their CDB  
33 on Facebook. Findings confirm that CDB on social media platforms is self-oriented (CDB  
34 which reflects the intrinsic self), or other-oriented (CDB to impress others). We suggest that  
35 implications for practice can be informed by whether the CDB is self-oriented or other-  
36 oriented, and we recommend actions for charities seeking to optimise donations from these  
37 individuals.  
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49 Findings reveal that self-oriented CDB is positively associated with the intention to  
50 volunteer time or money to the charity. When people mention a charity on a social media  
51 platform, because they believe it says something about their true selves, they are also more  
52 likely to make donations to that charity. To encourage self-oriented CDB we recommend  
53 charities engage in specific messages to enhance these individuals' feeling of prosocial  
54 impact. Aknin *et al.* (2013) suggest prosocial impact is greater when people give to specific  
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3 individuals and causes, rather than general causes. For example, a charity could take the  
4 name of a person who is experiencing an illness, or the name of a local region where  
5 donations would be allocated. This could enhance self-oriented CDB, as people may feel the  
6 charity has a more personal meaning for them. Moreover, social media campaigns utilising  
7 messages about making a personal difference to the lives of specific others (Anik *et al.*, 2014)  
8 may encourage people to engage in self-oriented CDB, as they perceive their donation is  
9 having a direct benefit, and they have some self-determination in a positive outcome for  
10 others (Grant, 2007). Furthermore, existing research has shown using emotive pictures  
11 ‘telling a story’ about the organisation’s work, can link the potential donor’s ideals and  
12 values to the charity and increase their sense of ‘warm glow’ and the personal satisfaction felt  
13 after giving (Bennett, 2016). Social media campaigns could adopt this approach of  
14 storytelling using emotive pictures, to enhance self-oriented CDB through sharing these  
15 images and stories, which would ultimately enhance offline donations.  
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25 By contrast, findings reveal other-oriented CDB on Facebook has a negative effect on  
26 intention to donate. When people mention charities on social media platforms to impress their  
27 friends, they are less inclined to donate to the charity than others. Charities should therefore  
28 be cautious when developing fashionable ‘viral’ campaigns because, although people may  
29 engage with them to impress friends, these campaigns may not lead to charitable behaviours  
30 offline. Also, in this study, we show that high self-monitors tend to engage in other-oriented  
31 CDB. This means people who regulate their behaviour according to social situations will  
32 adopt certain behaviours on social media platforms in order to form the correct impression.  
33 In our study, while high self-monitors will share messages about a charity on Facebook to  
34 meet others’ approval, they do not donate offline. To address these issues, we recommend  
35 three solutions.  
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44 Firstly we recommend charities could augment viral campaigns with a facility to  
45 make a small donation via Facebook, at the donor’s discretion. For example, eBay buyers  
46 can add a donation to their order when purchasing online (Aldridge and Fowles, 2013). In  
47 the same way, a viral video or other social media marketing activity could be accompanied  
48 by a ‘donate now’ button, so the individual, in that moment of sharing the video, is  
49 encouraged to make a donation at the same time.  
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54 Secondly, we advocate charities could provide an online ‘I’ve donated’ symbol, such  
55 as a tick or a colour, so high self-monitors who engage in other-oriented CDB, could add this  
56 symbol to their mention of the charity. When they share a charity’s video with friends, the  
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3 'I've donated' symbol would accompany the video. As these individuals are engaged in  
4 CDB to impress others, allowing this symbol to accompany the charitable mention would  
5 encourage them to donate, especially if the 'I've donated' symbol was widely recognised. In  
6 the same way as wearing a well-known and desirable brand logo may enhance an individual's  
7 standing with their peers, increasing recognition for an 'I've donated' symbol may enhance  
8 its desirability among peer groups, increasing individuals' motivations to display it on their  
9 social media platforms and to donate to attain the symbol. Moreover, as online recognition  
10 for existing donations enhances further donations (Chell and Mortimer, 2014), adding an  
11 'I've donated' symbol may have the additional benefit of motivating other-oriented  
12 individuals to donate to that charity in future. For example the Pieta House 'Darkness Into  
13 Light' fundraising and awareness campaign adopt the annual 'Fundraising Star' badge, which  
14 people can wear to charity events once they have made their first donation. Enabling  
15 individuals to display 'fundraising stars' or similar symbols on their social media may also  
16 enhance their motivation to donate and to repeat that donation.  
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27 A third method to target people engaged in other-oriented CDB, is to encourage  
28 contingent donations. A charity could induce individuals to become donors by stating they  
29 will match donation amounts and, where legally allowed, by providing information about  
30 other donors. In recent experiments, Anik *et al.* (2014) found people who are advised that a  
31 charity will match donations if 75% of other donors agree to a recurring donation, will  
32 increase the likelihood of their recurring donation. Therefore, charities that provide running  
33 updates such as 'many people are donating!', will incentivise individuals to donate, or to  
34 repeat a donation. We suggest high self-monitors who engage in other-oriented CDB on  
35 Facebook would be particularly motivated by the idea of being part of a group of donors who  
36 were seeking to meet a target and if this group is visible to others, such as Facebook friends,  
37 it may encourage them to engage in donating or to repeat their donation. For example,  
38 allowing high self-monitor 'Mary' to display 'Mary has helped us reach our 75% target!' on  
39 her Facebook page will encourage Mary to donate and to keep donating. We advocate  
40 therefore that charities engaged in social media campaigns should consider using the  
41 technique of contingent matching and encouraging donations and repeat donations by  
42 providing visible tallies of donors on social media platforms such as Facebook, as well as by  
43 highlighting donors' inclusion in that tally.  
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56 Furthermore, research suggests that self-construal may have a role in creating donor  
57 loyalty, through relationship quality (Skarmeas and Shabbir, 2009). We suggest Facebook  
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3 offers marketers an opportunity to develop such relationships and we suggest marketers  
4 explore the nature of individuals' charitable mentions on social media platforms,  
5 distinguishing between self-oriented or other-oriented posts, to identify those most likely to  
6 engage in a relationship with the charity on this medium. A challenge for marketers is to  
7 distinguish between those whose CDB is self-oriented and other-oriented. We next address  
8 this issue in our recommendations for further research.  
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### 13 14 15 16 *5.3 Limitations and recommendations for further research*

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18 This study is limited to a student sample and to the social media platform Facebook. The  
19 findings' generalisability may not extend to other samples, or to CDB offline. However, it is  
20 argued that the sample and the social media Facebook is appropriate for this study. Also,  
21 gender differences in altruistic behaviour have been identified in the literature (Paulin *et al.*,  
22 2014). However, this sample was skewed to females and therefore it was not possible to  
23 investigate gender as a moderating variable in the model. Further research could explore the  
24 influence of gender on CDB on Facebook.  
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30 Moreover, while this study focused on CDB, we acknowledge some donors may seek  
31 anonymity for their charitable donations and we advocate further research to better  
32 understand the relationship between mentions of charities on social media and anonymous  
33 donation behaviour. Earlier we noted Raihani (2014) found that those seeking anonymity for  
34 extremely high charitable donations, did so due to concerns about deviation from group  
35 norms and to avoid paying social costs for higher than average displays of altruism. We  
36 suggest further research might investigate the role of concern for reputation on cooperative  
37 behaviour, such as 'excessive' donations, deviance from group norms, and anonymous  
38 donation behaviour, where the 'group' are a Facebook social network group, and group  
39 donation norms may be influenced by the social network, or perceived 'sanctions' from the  
40 network, such as 'unfriending'.  
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49 In addition, although results suggest that CDB on Facebook is similar to other forms  
50 of conspicuous consumption of Facebook, self-oriented CDB and other-oriented CDB have  
51 different outcomes. We have provided insights into both forms of CDB by identifying trait  
52 antecedents. We advocate further research investigate a typology of donors, based on the  
53 CDB construct, to profile donors who engage in self-oriented CDB or other-oriented CDB.  
54 We have outlined practical implications for charities seeking to optimise donations from  
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3 people engaging in either self-oriented or other-oriented CDB. A donor typology based on  
4 CDB would enable charities to further segment and target their marketing activities.  
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7 Further research could explore the distinction between self-oriented and other-  
8 oriented CDB and their influence on offline behaviours, in other contexts. Furthermore, this  
9 study explored intention to donate time or volunteer money, as outcomes of CDB on  
10 Facebook. It was not feasible to measure the extent to which individuals followed through  
11 their intentions, or whether they posted subsequently on Facebook about their charitable  
12 actions. A longitudinal study could examine the relationship between CDB and intention to  
13 donate, as well as the relationship between intention to donate and actual donations and  
14 between actual donations and further CDB. This would provide further insights into the CDB  
15 construct and its influence on behaviour.  
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## 23 24 **6. Conclusion**

25 While social networks present opportunities for promotion, the ability of charitable  
26 organisations to attract donations or volunteers remains challenging. CDB is in its infancy  
27 and little is known about the relationship between conspicuous behaviour on social media  
28 platforms and 'real' donations of time or money. This study provides important insights into  
29 the relationship between CDB on Facebook and offline behaviours. Findings also inform the  
30 understanding of conspicuous behaviour on social media platforms and the role of personality  
31 traits in influencing those behaviours.  
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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

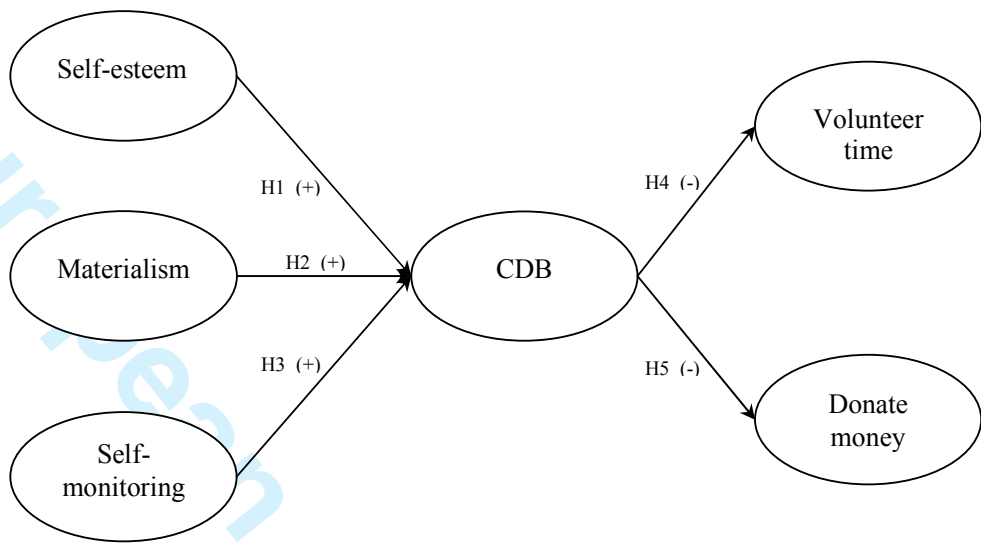
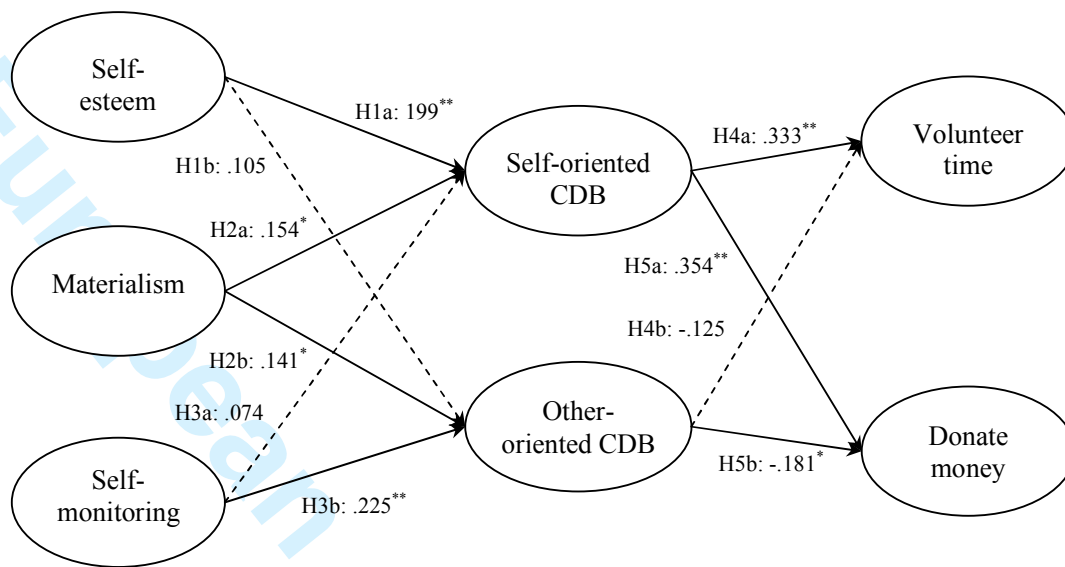


Figure 2: Structural model results

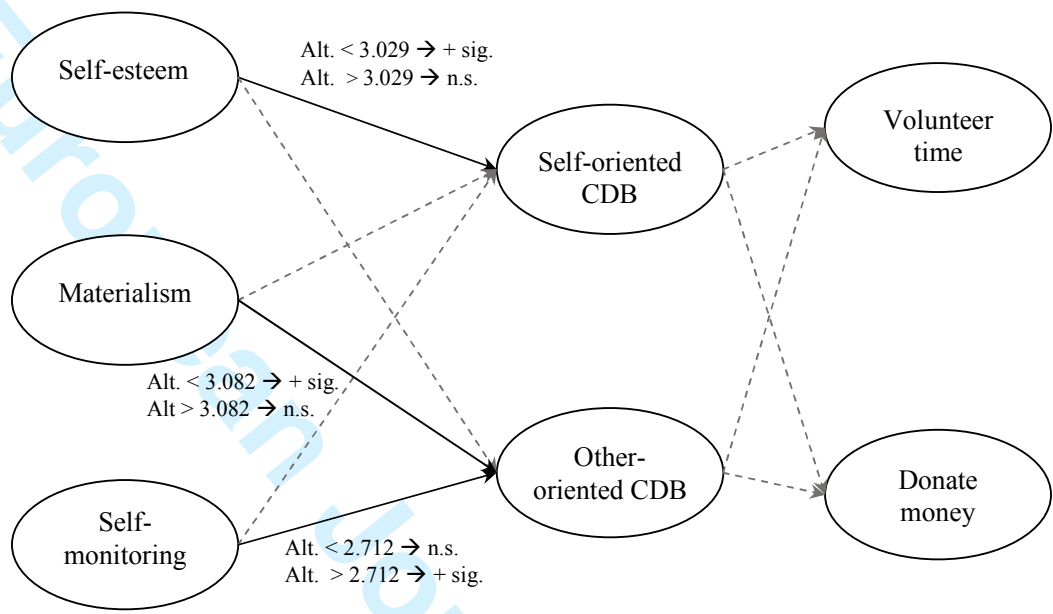


Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; Non significant relationships are drawn using broken lines.

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Figure 3: Moderation analyses: Johnson-Neyman results



Note: Turning points in the range of altruism (Alt.) where exactly the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable transitions between statistically significant and nonsignificant; + sig.: positive and significant effect; n.s.: nonsignificant effect; Centered scores. Relationships do not moderated by altruism are drawn using broken lines.

European Journal of Marketing



**Table 1.** An overview of the main CDB literature to date

Study	Paper/Subjects	How CDB is explored	Key Finding
Grace and Griffin (2006)	Conceptual paper.	CDB defined as “ <i>An individual’s show of support to charitable causes through the purchase of merchandise that is overtly displayed on the individual’s person or possessions (e.g. the wearing of empathy ribbons, red noses, etc.)</i> ”	Postulated that those who are more involved with the charity are more likely to make the donation in private; those with strong community values will make donations in an inconspicuous manner; high self-monitors will be more likely to make their donation in a conspicuous manner; those with higher susceptibility to interpersonal influence will be more likely to make donations in a conspicuous manner; younger people will be more likely to make donations in a conspicuous manner.
Grace and Griffin (2009)	Scale validation.	CDB measured in the form of wearing empathy ribbons.	Scale has two-factor structure: conspicuous self-oriented (designed to seek intrinsic benefits), and conspicuous other-oriented (designed to seek extrinsic benefits). Paper proposes that the scale will enable the meaningful examination of relationships between antecedents (such as personal characteristics and attitudes), and outcomes (such as loyalty, satisfaction or intentions). Identified a significant negative relationship between CDB and age.
Chaudhuri <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Development of a conspicuous consumption orientation scale.	CDB is not measured empirically. CDB is cited as a means to enhance social standing, as part of a broader explanation of conspicuous consumption.	Does not utilize the CDB measure in this study.
Wiepking <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Existing donors each selected from sapling frames of one of six charities.	CDB is not empirically tested, it is described in the context of satisfaction from previously giving, but not measured as a construct.	Identifies factors that influence likelihood to make a charitable request.
Chell and Mortimer (2014)	Existing blood donors.	CDB measured in the form of showing ribbons online, known as ‘twibbons’	People experiencing social value will engage in CDB, and those who seek social value will give blood again, if a token of recognition is offered.
Shrum <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Conceptual paper.	CDB mentioned in the context of disposition as a motivation for underlying charitable donations.	The paper explains that charitable giving is within the same category as conspicuous consumption as it provides a signaling function to others, or about the self. This idea draws Grace and Griffin (2009).

**Table 2.** Profile of survey respondents (demographics and Facebook use)

Category	N = 234
Gender	71.2% = Female 28.8% = Male
Age	Mean = 22.98 years SD = 6.056
Nationality	80.3% = Irish 19.7% = Other
Employment status	43.8% = Yes 56.2% = No
Level of education	80.3% = Undergraduate Student 5.1% = Higher Diploma 6% = Masters student 8.1% = Doctoral student
Has a Facebook account, accessed in past month	100% = "Yes"
Has mentioned a Charity brand on Facebook in the past year	100% = "Yes"
Type of mention*	41.9% = Profile activities/interests 88% = 'Liked' or reacted to a post or message about the Charity 73.5% = 'Liked' or reacted to a photo or video about the Charity 21.8% = 'Liked' or reacted to a post by a celebrity about the Charity 35% = Shared stories about the Charity from friends 37.6% = Shared stories about the Charity, from the Charity itself 8.1% = Shared stories about the Charity, from a celebrity 30.3% = Shared a photo or video of myself involved in activities in relation to the Charity 26.1% = Shared a photo or video from a friend about the Charity 7.7% = Shared a photo or video from a celebrity about the Charity 34.2% = Shared a photo or video from the Charity itself 27.4% = Tagged a friend in a story or post about the Charity 4.7% = Other
Number of Facebook friends	Mean = 570.47 friends SD = 372.02
How long do they spend on Facebook on a typical day?	Mean = 163.43 minutes SD = 112.5

Note: SD = Standard deviation from the mean. \* Percentages sum to greater than 100, as some respondents engaged in more than one type of mention.

Table 3. Scale items and measurement model results

Constructs and scale items	Standardised factor loading	CR	AVE
<b>Self-esteem</b>		.876	.542
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	.71		
I feel that I have much to be proud of	.69		
I feel that I am a person of worth	.78		
I have a lot of respect for myself	.68		
All in all, I am inclined to think I am a success	.77		
I take a positive attitude toward myself	.78		
<b>Materialism</b>		.738	.493
I would like to be rich enough to buy anything I want	.58		
I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things	.87		
It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I want	.61		
<b>Self-monitoring</b>		.881	.516
At parties I usually try to behave in a manner that makes me fit in.	.74		
When I am uncertain how to act in social situations, I look to the behaviour of others for cues.	.73		
I try to pay attention to the reactions of others to my behaviour to avoid being out of place.	.72		
The slightest look of disapproval in the eyes of a person with whom I am interacting is enough to make me change my approach.	.68		
It's important for me to fit into the group I'm with.	.68		
My behaviour often depends on how I feel others wish me to behave.	.64		
If I am the least bit uncertain as to how to act in a social situation, I look to the behaviour of others for cues.	.82		
<b>Conspicuous Donation Behaviour</b>			
<b><i>Self-oriented Conspicuous Donation Behaviour</i></b>		.844	.578
If I mention this charity on Facebook, I feel like I have made a difference	.66		
It increases my self-respect when I mention this charity on Facebook	.85		
Mentioning this charity on Facebook makes me feel good	.82		
I like to remind myself of this charity I support through mentioning it on Facebook	.69		
<b><i>Other-oriented Conspicuous Donation Behaviour</i></b>		.857	.750
I like to mention this charity on Facebook so that people know I am a good person	.93		
I like to mention this charity on Facebook because it makes me look good	.79		
<b>Intention to Volunteer Time</b>		.931	.817
Impossible / Possible	.88		
Unlikely / Likely	.95		
Improbable / Probable	.89		
<b>Intention to Donate Money</b>		.932	.820
Impossible / Possible	.85		
Unlikely / Likely	.96		
Improbable / Probable	.90		
<b>Fit indices:</b> S-B $\chi^2=598.95$ (329) $p<0.001$ NNFI = 0.903 CFI = 0.915 IFI = 0.917 RMSEA = 0.059			

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-esteem <sup>a</sup>	3.69	.69	.542						
2. Materialism <sup>b</sup>	4.28	1.40	.015	.493					
3. Self-monitoring <sup>a</sup>	3.01	.88	.022	.002	.516				
4. Self-oriented CDB <sup>b</sup>	4.07	1.28	.004	.028	.033	.578			
5. Other-oriented CDB <sup>b</sup>	2.46	1.36	.050	.025	.07	.364	.750		
6. Intention Volunteer Time <sup>b</sup>	5.87	1.37	.000	.006	.006	.066	.006	.820	
7. Intention Donate Money <sup>b</sup>	5.79	1.41	.005	.018	.003	.060	.001	.177	.817

Note: <sup>a</sup> 5-point scale; <sup>b</sup> 7-point scale; Means and standard deviations (SD) are based on summated scale averages. Items deleted in the validation process are not included. Squared correlations are below the diagonal and AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal.