Research on How the Media Can Impact Donations from Its Viewers and How It Does So

Kristina Moritz
University of New Hampshire, Durham

Kate Newman
University of New Hampshire, Durham

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Kristina Moritz and Kate Newman 5/14/2010

ABSTRACT

Without media and especially the news, society would have no way of being informed about anything outside of their own lives. This research focuses on how the media can impact donations from its viewers and how it does so. It will touch on types of advertising imagery, how people donate and where they mostly send their donations to, and what types of news stories are the most successful in provoking a person to donating. We found that from the people surveyed, most people donate by text or online, get their news from online, and would rather donate to community destruction. People also mostly donate to larger organizations and disasters within communities. Our research also proves that there is in fact a “warm glow theory” and people get satisfaction purely from helping others.

INTRODUCTION

“Disaster researchers view the media as management tools that have the potential to change people’s preparedness behaviors as well as their response to natural disasters” (Perez-Lugo, 2004:210). In other words, the media has a great effect on how a person donates and to whom they donate to. This paper studies the amount of influence media has on a person’s willingness to donate to natural disaster relief. We will elaborate on how the media impacts a person’s willingness to donate, who is more likely to receive those donations and why. We will also discuss different types of advertising imagery, specifically what type of imagery is the most successful in persuading a person to donate, along with what type of news story people are more apt to donate to.

Sociologically speaking natural disasters, although devastating, can bring a community together and form what Emile Durkheim would call collective conscience. “Collectively shared values and ideals generally shared by a whole community, which brings that community together” (Dillon, 2009:210). A natural disaster can bring any community around the world
together, regardless of where the disaster occurred. An example of this is how millions of people in the United States donated to Haiti after the devastating earthquake, all these people came together to help a community in need. Americans and many other people came together to share resources in order to help a community in need after a natural disaster.

The main key terms we will be using throughout this paper are natural disasters, donations, media and the “warm glow.” For the purpose of this paper we define natural disasters as any devastating natural occurrence such as, but not limited to, a volcano, earthquake or hurricane, that affects a community to the point where donations are needed. A donation is defined as a charitable gift in the form of money, blood, personal time, and resources (clothing, food, toiletries). Media is any form of public broadcasting including newspaper, television, radio, and online, etc. Lastly, the “warm glow” is the feeling that comes with donating purely to help others. With the help of the literature we were able to define more clearly these important terms.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the literature that was previously reviewed, there were many common ideas and facts that each researcher discussed that were similar to our findings. The first article researched what type of imagery was more effective in getting people to donate. Also how the media affected peoples likelihood to donate at all. In an article by Bennett and Daniel, scientists study the factors that encouraged the public of the UK to donate to a disaster relief fund after a disaster occurred in a third world country. They found that the major factor in getting people to contribute was “highly emotive advertising imagery”. Meaning advertising imagery that triggers more emotion than usual, an example included images of the helplessness of aid victims. Media sources also showed images of victims’ poverty, and starving children as a means of advertising imagery. We drew a lot of influence from this article’s methods and results when doing our own
research. In our research we included examples of highly emotive advertising imagery such as children suffering, flooded towns, and helpless earthquake victims. We also drew a hypothesis based on this article stating that showing pictures of children will draw the most donations from people. Our hypothesis which relates to this study turned out to be wrong with our sample, but that will be discussed later on.

The next article by Bennett and Kottasz, looks at factors that are more and less likely to persuade people to donate, from the donators’ point-of-view. Bennett and Kottasz also looked at which organizations were more likely to receive donations. They found that most people were more likely to donate when people looked like they were helping themselves; another very effective form was highly emotive advertising imagery. Media coverage that discouraged donations included: warfare and internal insurrection, or inefficiency in the relief operation. The article also stated that combined fund-raising efforts covering several organizations were viewed more favorably than just one organization working independently or state endorsements of particular campaigns. This article had a lot of influence on our research questions and hypotheses as well. In our survey we included a question asking which type of institution people would be most likely to donate to, finding that the answer was in fact that larger organizations were much more favorable over private organizations. We also asked about people’s motives in donating, which similarly to Bennett and Kottasz’s research, yielded similar answers.

An article that relates to Bennett and Kottasz’s discusses how topics shown on television during certain times, for example, during the Olympics, will receive less aid because there are two big news stories being shown. The article by Eisensee and Strömberg, looks at how top news happening in the US can make news in other countries less important, therefore making the US government less likely to donate to the disasters abroad. A significant finding shown in the
research in this article is that, “Higher news pressure significantly reduces both the probability that the networks cover a disaster and the probability that the disaster receives relief” (Eisensee & Stromberg 2007). Similarly if there are a higher number of deaths than there is a higher chance that the disaster will receive news coverage and relief from the US government. This article had some impact on how we asked questions, since more media coverage and/or deaths meant more relief from the US. We asked a question similar to see which type of news story would receive the most potential money donations. The results showed that the news story that included death tolls and statistics received a large majority of the donations.

This next article, by Vasterman, Yzermans, and Dirkzwager shows how not all media has a positive effect on post disaster relief. It talks about how the media can cause added stress to disaster situations. It also discusses how the media can have leading roles in how the situation may turn out. The strengths of this article are that it looks at a point of view of how media may hinder people based on their health after a disaster occurs. The weaknesses of this article are that it does not actually discuss donations that people may personally give. The methods of this article were a little different than the methods we decided to use for our research. Since they looked at the negative effects the media can have on people, and we are looking for the positive impacts. Although it did aid us in a question we asked about how people find their news sources mostly, and what news source would most likely persuade them to donate.

The next article that is by Brown and Wong, looks at three aspects of media and disaster relief. The first aspect looks at whether media coverage of the cyclone is correlated with charitable giving in Myanmar in 2008. Second, whether donations could have been offset by other natural disasters that may have happened shortly after. Lastly, how different types of news stories may affect giving to disaster relief efforts in Myanmar. The results showed that charitable
giving is definitely correlated with the media coverage, that giving to disaster relief of other countries at the same time impacts donations to Myanmar, and that media stories that are driven by a certain event have a strong positive influence on the level of donations while news stories that might be just for human interest do not have that great of an impact. This article also takes into account what people’s motives to donate might be, including the “warm glow theory”. The “warm glow theory” states that people choose to donate simply because of the feeling they get from donating. This article is where we got our main hypothesis for the research; that the media impacts a person’s willingness to donate after a natural disaster has occurred. We also asked questions having to do with the warm glow theory. We found that people do in fact mostly donate just for the feeling they get, rather than getting something in return.

In an article written by Marla Perez- Lugo, she focuses on how media coverage of a natural disaster is effective in creating a response to a natural disaster both locally and internationally. Although this article focuses on some of the positive impacts the media has, its main focus was on how the media helped the local area prepare and recover from a disaster, and not so much on how it gets people to donate to the aftermath. A way that people benefit from media coverage is that media brings people closer together and makes them feel as though they are not suffering alone. Some of the main findings were that people affected by the hurricane relied on the media throughout the disaster phases of preparedness, before the hurricane hit, to the recovery phase of dealing with the aftermath. The article also found that people that will be affected by the disaster are more likely to pay attention to different media sources such as television and radio before the hurricane actually hits. This research helped us come up with a question about when a disaster occurs in a familiar area, such as your home country. Although the research says people affected by the event are more likely to pay attention and help, our
research found something a little different. Most people, when asked about donating to an earthquake in Haiti, a fire in China, and a flood in the United States, said they would rather donate to the earthquake in Haiti. This bit of information was very interesting to our research for many reasons, which we discussed in the methods section.

METHODS

With help from the various hypotheses given in the literature we reviewed we were able to come up with our hypotheses which state that, firstly, media does impact a person’s willingness to donate to natural disasters. Secondly, online and over the phone donations are the most popular ways of donating. Also, above all other donation recipients, such as, private organizations (school or company doing a fundraiser) and organizations local to the disaster run by people affected by the disaster, we hypothesized that people would mainly donate to a major relief organization, such as the Red-Cross. Thirdly, in regards to the images the media depicts, we think that images showing children suffering will make people want to donate more than pictures showing community destruction or a place of familiarity, such as a home country. Fourthly, we hypothesized that event driven news stories containing actual death tolls and statistics will be the type of story that gets people to donate over stories that involve personal family situations or stories involving the government actions, such as the United Nations sending in troops to help.

Survey and Sample

In order to test our hypotheses we needed to conduct our research. The method used for conducting the research was a survey. The noninvasive characteristics of our survey were one of the main reasons we chose to use this method. Another reason was to be able to reach a larger
population on the University of New Hampshire in Durham campus. A major strength of our survey was that it was not time consuming for the participants, this ensured for a better chance of completion and less skipped questions. Other strengths included ease and anonymity; there was no way of tracing answers back to a specific participant. One main downfall of this survey is the hypothetical situations used. We realize that some questions asked in the survey do not have to do with real life situations, which means participants will answer these questions according to how they think they would act not knowing how they would actually act had they really been in the situation. This may mean the participants might not actually do what they say they would. These situations, however, helped us gain statistics on what types of news stories make UNH students donate more, which we will elaborate on a little later.

The survey had two demographic questions which included gender and age. These were to be able to compare males and females if needed and to be able to see if age impacts if people have donated in the past and if it impacts how the participants would donate. We also asked questions on participants past donation history to get a better understanding of how many people have actually donated. The survey then moved into the hypothetical questions which included questions based on three pictures. The pictures were used to try and answer our research question of which type of imagery is most likely to get a person to donate, community destruction, children suffering or a place of familiarity in distress. There was a second hypothetical question which was mentioned previously, it asked the participants to read about a fake natural disaster and then asked them to choose the type of news story that would make them want to donate.

To be able to get the most diverse sample within the undergraduate bachelor degree community at the University of New Hampshire Durham, simple random sampling was used. A
plethora of different classes from a variety of majors offered at the school were randomly selected from the online class list and then sampled if given the permission by the professor. After asking 11 professors we were able to survey six classes ending with a total of 175 surveys. The surveys were administered at the beginning of each class, every participant was told they did not need to participate and could leave any question blank if it made them feel uncomfortable. A strength of the survey was being able to reach a large number of students but a weakness was not being able to allow the students to justify their answers. A problem we ran into with the survey was the ink not printing dark enough so some of the pictures did not come out as visible as we would have liked. We also did not use three of the sixteen questions asked in our survey. These questions pertained to peer-pressure and were unrelated to our research questions.

**Variables**

For the first hypothesis, the media does impact the amount a person donates; the independent variable is the media types which are newspaper, online news source, television, radio with a category which states that the participant does not keep up with the news. This was measured by asking a multiple choice question listing each of these variables as an option for the question asking the participant where they are most likely to get their news from. The dependent variable is the participant’s donation history. This was measured by asking if they have ever donated giving them the options or yes or no. We realize that the type of media a person gets their news from is not the only factor causing people to donate; however, we are able to see the main medium used by participants that have donated in the past.

Hypothesis number two, which states that people are more likely to donate over the phone or online as opposed to mailing in a donation. It also states that the majority of these
donations are given to major relief organizations such as the red-cross instead of donating to an organization local to the disaster, run by the people affected or a private company trying to raise money to send such as a school. The independent variable is whether or not a person donated and in what way, the dependent variable is which type of organization people donated their money too. We measured the independent variable with the same question as the dependent variable in our first hypothesis which was have you ever donated to a natural disaster, with either yes or no as choices. We also asked a question the pertained to how they donated. The dependent variable was measured with a question asking which type of organization the participant donated their money/other resources to.

The independent variables for our third hypothesis, an emotive advertising image depicting children is more likely to get someone to donate to a natural disaster over images showing community destruction or a place of familiarity, are the media images showing one of the three previously mentioned types of photo. The dependent variable is what photograph the participant would hypothetically donate to. The independent and dependent variables were measured in the same question. This was possible because we gave each participant three different emotive advertising images with the previously mentioned characteristics and asked the participants which image was more likely to get them to donate.

The fourth hypothesis states that a media story including statistics and death tolls caused by the natural disaster is more successful in getting people to donate than stories about government involvement and stories including single families or neighborhoods. The independent variable is the type of story used by the media, in the case of our survey, a hypothetical story about a natural disaster. The dependent variable is the story the participants chose as the story that would most likely get them to donate. The participants were asked to read
three different stories about this disaster; each story included only the characteristics of the type of news story mentioned above and was about the same natural disaster, a volcano.

Another area worth mentioning is the research done on the “warm glow.” We included questions that asked about likelihood of donating if no one would find out or if they would not receive anything in return. These questions were used to gauge whether or not a participant would donate just for the pleasure of donating or if they were influence by an external influence such as recognition or tax benefits. The independent variables for this research are the external influence and/or the warm glow and the dependent variable is how likely a participant is to donate due to these influences.

Overall, our hypotheses were measured accurately with only a few glitches, which will be mentioned later. The ease of the survey and amount of participants helped with all the information we were able to gather. And although our questions were hypothetical and do not gauge real life actions, they were able to get a look into how a person might act in the future. The methods of our survey helped make analyzing all our data easy.

**RESULTS**

When looking at our research, the findings were very interesting and in some cases, not what we expected to find. We analyzed our data using the SPSS program, which gave us the results we were looking for. Our first research question asked “does the media impact a person’s willingness to donate after a natural disaster?” Our hypothesis for this research question was that yes the media does impact donations. Also that without the media, people would not be as informed about donation opportunities. When we cross tabulated if people donated with what type of media type people got their news from the most, the results were interesting. We learned that 91 surveyed have donated before out of 171, while 80 people have not donated before as you
can see in figure one. 57.1% who said yes to having donated previously get their news from online sources, while 51.3% of people who have not donated also get their news from online sources. So across the board, most people get their news from online sources. The runner up was television with 30.8% of people who have previously donated getting their news from television, while 35% of people who have not donated before get their news from television. We also can see that this research is not significant with an approximate significance of .360. For this particular research question we could not use chi\(^2\) because we had limitations in comparing our results and because of our hypothesis change.

After seeing these results and analyzing the data we realized that there is no way to actually measure the willingness of people to donate. We would therefore have to change our first research question. We can in fact see the type of donations that most people are likely to make. So therefore we would change our hypothesis to yes the media does impact donations, and that people who have donated previously keep up with the news more than those who do not donate. The overall findings are seen in figure two.

Figure 1:
Our next research question asked what is the primary way people donate, and who do they usually give their donations to? Our hypothesis was that we think online donations or over the phone will be the most popular, and those donations will most likely go to a relief organization. Based on cross tabulation between large emergency response organizations, small organizations, and private organizations, 63.6% of surveyors which is 21 out of 33 people that answered this question responded that they would be more likely to donate to large emergency response organizations. Out of the 21 who answered that they would donate to larger organizations, texting and online donating had equal amounts of people with six choosing that as their main method of donating. Out of the other options which included mail and other, the people who chose the larger organization, only one chose mail while eight people chose other.

You can see in figure 4 that “other” was the overall main method people chose to donate with 17 out of the 33 (51.5%) surveyed answering that. Although we were unable to see exactly
what people meant when they chose the “other” option. Our data overall was significant in this
section with an approximate significance of .004. With this part of our research we had to make
some changes to the results, because of a mistake made in the survey. One of the options we
gave as an answer for the question indicated “relief organizations” as a form of donating. We had
to exclude this from the data seeing as it was not actually a method, but rather who would they
donate to. With this change made, it took away 142 of our respondents because they chose that
as their answer. Thus 81.8% of our surveyors’ answers were voided from this question. Despite
our mistake, there still seems to be significant form. Chi$^2$ in this case was not significant, with a
significance of .310. Regardless of the medium, it seems the results are all going to emergency
response organizations even though chi$^2$ is not significant.

The results of this data show that most people do donate to the larger emergency response
organizations and donate over the phone or online, with the exception of the unknown “other”
choice. Even though we had to take out one of the options, there is still a significant difference in
the choices people made. We can see that this data greatly supports our hypothesis which states
that online donations or over the phone donations would be the greatest, and that most of the
donations would be to large relief organizations.

Figure 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>who</th>
<th>Rform</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emer. Response Org.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Rform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Org.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Rform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our third research question asked what type of advertising imagery is more successful in receiving donations? Our hypothesis is that we think showing pictures of children suffering will receive more donations. For this section of our survey we showed three different pictures to the people being surveyed. We asked people to pick which scenario they would be more likely to donate to, and then followed up with a question asking which would be one of your main reasons for donating to those pictures. In the first question we compared a disaster to a community, a disaster involving children, and a flood. Out of 169 people who answered the question, 104 of them chose the disaster in the community which is 61.5%. Only 18.3% chose the picture with the child, while 20.1% chose the flood scenario-these are the valid percentages for all three. The
results of this first question alone are extremely opposite of what our hypothesis was. The second part, which asked what people’s main reasons for donating explained a little why people chose what they chose. The options included community destruction, child suffering, a place of familiarity, and other. Eighty-five people chose community destruction which is 50.3%. Only 36 people (21.3%) chose child suffering which is what we predicted. Once again the “other” option produced pretty high results with 27 people choosing that, while only 21 people chose a place of familiarity as their reason.

Figure five below shows the results of the first question indicating how many people chose which scenario they would be more likely to donate to. It can clearly be seen that a majority of people chose the community disaster scenario as opposed to child suffering or the flood. Figure six is a pie chart displaying people’s main reasons for donating. The blue section shows that almost half of people chose community destruction as the reason for their donations. The graph is showing the percentages including the people who did not answer, while the percentages I talked about earlier were the valid percentages and therefore did not include those missing people. Therefore the blue section should be bigger to show that 50.3% of people actually did chose community destruction.

One part of this question that could severely alter people’s responses was the fact that below each vignette, and before the questions we put descriptions of the vignettes. The first vignette was labeled as “Earthquake in Haiti”, the second was labeled “Children suffering from a fire in Cambodia” and the third was labeled as “A flood in the US”. Therefore people could have been affected by those descriptions rather than what we were really looking for which was a donation just based on the pictures. So even though the findings were different than what we
found in the literature and what our hypothesis was, there still could be more thorough and correct research done to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

Figure 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth Disaster</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Missing System | 6 | 3.4 |

| Total          | 175 | 100.0 |

Figure 6:

The fourth and final research question we wanted to look at asked what types of news stories are more likely to get people to donate? Our hypothesis was that event driven news stories
that include statistics and death tolls are more likely to get people to donate. We asked questions with a potential news story which gave the options of a news story with statistics and death tolls in it, a personal family story of how they were impacted, and a news story that involved the government and national aid. The results showed that out of 171 people who answered, 123 people chose the story with the death tolls and statistics in it, which is 71.9% valid percent. Twenty-five people (14.6%) chose the families personal story, while twenty-three people (13.5%) chose the national/government story. So the findings very strongly support our hypothesis stating that statistical data would get more potential donations than personal stories or national/governmental stories. In figure 7 you can see how the percentages add up, and figure 8 is a histogram graph that shows the breakup of the percentages.

Figure 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>story</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Stats</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't/National</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8:
The last part we looked at, but was not in our research questions was the idea of the “warm glow theory”. The theory states that people donate based solely on the feeling they get from giving, rather than receiving anything in exchange. We asked a few questions to see what people would answer, therefore leading to our results. In the literature, it was said that most people would donate just for the warm glow feeling. Our first question asked if you were to receive something in return for your donation like a tax return, will this increase your likelihood of donating? Based on a Likert-scale from “not at all” to “a great extent”, only 12.6% of people said “a great extent” while 14.3% of people said “not at all”. 75.5% of people chose the middle two options of “somewhat” and “very little”. One case of entry error did occur though. Therefore we can see that based on this, the warm glow theory can be seen in some form because most people do not really care if they get something in return. Figure 9 displays exactly how the percentages were dispersed for this first question. The next question will further prove or disprove the “warm glow theory”. Our next question asked if no one will find out that you donated to a natural disaster, would you still donate? The answers were on a Likert-scale from “definitely” to “definitely not”. 59.8% of people chose definitely that they would still donate, which was 104 out of 174 people surveyed. Only 2.3% which is four people said they would
definitely not donate anymore. The remaining 66 people chose one of the middle choices, 56 of them were on the likely side. Figure 10 shows exactly what the percentages were.

Figure 9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Return</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No one</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probably Not</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definitely Not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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DISCUSSION
The major findings that we found from our research were very interesting and not always what we expected to find. Based on our first research question of does the media impact a person’s willingness to donate after a natural disaster, we found that we had to first change our hypothesis. After looking at our new hypothesis of whether those who have donated keep up with the news more, we found that yes people who have previously donated do keep up with the news more than those who do not donate. Our second research question asked what is the primary way people donate, and who do they usually give their donations to? Our results showed that people are most likely to donate to larger relief organizations, and they will mostly donate by texting and online although there was a high amount of people who answered “other”. Our third research question asked what type of advertising imagery is more successful in receiving donations? Our results showed that most people were more likely to donate to a disaster occurring in a community. Also that the main reason they wanted to donate was because of community destruction. We hypothesized the complete opposite and thought people would want to donate to children suffering the most. Our fourth research question asked what type of news stories are most likely to persuade people to donate? The results found that a large majority of people we sampled were more likely to donate when statistics and death tolls were involved in a news story. That was exactly what we had hypothesized.

There is a lot of value to the findings from our research. Most of the people surveyed are more likely to keep up with the news if they have donated previously. This shows that people who do not watch the news are much less likely to give donations after a natural disaster. This is very relevant because it was our main research question. People are also more likely to donate to larger relief organizations over private or small and local organizations. They are also most likely to donate by texting or online. These two relate because the larger organizations are most
likely more able to accommodate texting and online donations, whereas small and local sites are probably not able to accept donations that way, and they do not have the technology available to them in most cases. People are most likely to donate to a disaster if it occurred in a community and there was community destruction. This was very interesting to us because the literature had said otherwise, that people would donate to children and children suffering. It could have been the demographics of the people we were surveying, or possibly the natural disasters that have occurred during our lifetime which affect the answers. Even though it was not what we had hoped, the results are still very interesting. A large majority of people chose to donate to a story with statistics and death tolls included rather than personal stories and government and national stories. This is very valuable information because now we can see what types of stories capture audiences, especially if the media is looking for more donations. It is also good because we know what type of stories people do not like to donate to, or are more likely to not donate to. Even though we did not have a research question related to the warm glow theory, it was very interesting to see that it really does exist when people are donating. Most people do get the warm glow feeling from donating, and are not affected much by getting things in return for their donations.

We learned a lot about our research question and how it applies to everyday life. Natural disasters happen all the time, more often than we probably think. The news is always there to cover the stories and let the world know what is going on, so it was very interesting to study this topic and learn more about how it all works. Before doing this research, we did assume that the media had some sort of affect on people and how they donate. Since most people get their information about natural disasters occurring from the news, it seemed only fitting that they would also hear of donation efforts from the media. We also learned of the warm glow theory,
which we both had never heard of before. It is very interesting that that actually occurs in people, and they do not even realize it. Another thing we learned was how people would rather donate to community disasters rather than children suffering. Personally we would donate to children suffering, but not all people are the same. Something very interesting was that news stories with death tolls and statistics got way more donations than those who did not mention them. We would have never thought that that would be a seller in getting donations, but it clearly proved to be in our data. Overall we learned a lot of interesting facts and information about our topic.

Even though we had a lot of great findings, there was still a lot of room for improvement in finding our findings. We should have been more thorough in creating and distributing our survey, because we missed a few key points. Some of our questions did not exactly address our research questions that we were looking to answer. Also we left out important questions which we needed to get the correct answers. That was a serious flaw, especially in our first research question. Another way we could have improved findings was to get more participants to take our survey, our results might have been a little bit more drastic. If we had more time to analyze our data, we could have answered more questions and compared more data. We would have had a much greater amount of interesting information. Something else we could have done to improve our findings would be to go over our survey with professors before we distributed it, just to be sure we have the correct questions in order to answer our research questions and prove our hypotheses.

The biggest flaw in our study was the mistakes in our first two hypotheses. In the first hypothesis we did not ask a question that would measure our participant’s willingness to donate. Due to this we had to look at our data based on whether people who have donated before keep up with the news more than those who have not donated. With the second hypothesis we did not
measure forms of donating correctly. This was done by adding relief organizations as a choice; this is a type of organization and not a form of donating. To fix this problem we removed this choice when doing our data analysis.

Due to these flaw and other flaws that have not been picked up on yet this research could be improved. Future researchers may consider doing a focus group instead of conducting a survey where they show different news stories and ask questions on whether or not their participants would donate. This would better measure which type of television news story would make a person donate. This would have the advantage of showing real natural disaster footage making the situations more real than the hypothetical situations in our survey.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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