

Research Report

# When promoting a charity can hurt charitable giving: A metacognitive analysis<sup>☆</sup>

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## Abstract

Charities need to come to mind to enter a potential donor's consideration set. However, feeling familiar with a charity and its cause can facilitate or impair giving. In most cases, perceived good memory for details of the cause fosters the impression of personal importance, which increases giving (Studies 1 and 3). But when the charity aims to increase awareness of a cause, good memory for the cause suggests that awareness is already high, which impairs giving (Studies 2 and 3). Hence, promotions for awareness-raising charities can actually have negative consequences, confirming the predictions of a metacognitive analysis.

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## Introduction

Common wisdom holds that charities need extensive promotional efforts to foster awareness and receive donations. Textbooks emphasize the importance of promotion for nonprofits and advocate strategies designed to increase awareness and knowledge (Kotler & Andreasen, 2000). Scholarly articles echo this belief with statements like, "To succeed in such a climate, a charity must rely on an effective promotional strategy" (Bendapudi, Singh, & Bendapudi, 1996, p. 33). Analysts value nonprofit brands based in part on media exposure (Cone, 2010). Indeed, charities require promotion to come to mind and to enter the consideration set of potential donors. Accordingly, a key goal of many charities is to achieve high visibility. Unfortunately, some marketing tactics can backfire for charities (Krishna, 2011) and high visibility and awareness may also

have deleterious consequences. The present research tests this possibility. It asks under which conditions it helps or hurts a charity when donors feel that they are well familiar with its cause.

A metacognitive analysis suggests that being familiar with a charity and its cause can convey different things to a potential donor. On one hand, the potential donor may conclude that the charity is very important to her or else she would not be familiar with details of its cause and work; on the other hand, she may conclude from her own familiarity that the charity is already so well known that her donation will make little difference. Conversely, being unfamiliar with the charity may convey that one never cared about this cause or, alternatively, that the charity and its cause are not yet widely known and therefore in particular need of support. Which of these considerations is likely to dominate may depend on the charity's goals. Charities that emphasize *awareness-raising* may be particularly likely to suffer from the perception that their cause is already highly familiar, as reflected in one's own good knowledge about it. In contrast, charities that pursue other goals—such as helping people in need—may benefit from the perception that one knows their cause well.

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Drawing on metacognitive theorizing, we test these conjectures in three experiments. To manipulate potential donors' perception of how much they know about a charity's cause we present them with memory tests that are easy or difficult to complete, leaving them with the impression that they remember quite a lot or very little about the respective charity. Confirming what most charity officers seem to assume, the impression that one knows a lot about the cause *increases* intentions to donate money and time (Study 1) as well as actual monetary donations (Study 3) when the charity asks for money to help people in need. In contrast, the impression that one knows a lot about the cause *decreases* intentions to donate money and time (Study 2) as well as actual monetary donations (Study 3) when the charity asks for money to raise awareness of its cause.

With regard to charitable giving, these findings draw attention to the role of metacognitive processes in donors' decision making and illuminate the conditions under which donors' sense of familiarity helps or hurts a charity. Most importantly, they identify a dilemma for charities that aim to raise awareness: when their cause does not come to mind to begin with, they will go without donations—but when potential givers believe they know the cause well, this also reduces donations. For these charities, extensive promotions may impair charitable giving. Charities that pursue other goals—such as relieving suffering, advancing self-reliance, or improving the environment—do not face this dilemma; for them, extensive promotions are likely to improve giving. With regard to basic metacognitive processes, the findings highlight that the same metacognitive experience can have either positive or negative implications, depending on the specifics of the current task and context. We return to these issues in the discussion.

## Theoretical background

Not surprisingly, people are more likely to donate to charities whose work they find meaningful, important, and relevant (Sargeant, 1999). Numerous variables can contribute to the assessment of a charity's personal importance and relevance, including its cause (Bennett, 2003; Small & Simonsohn, 2008) and the donor's past experience with the charity (Sargeant & Jay, 2004; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007). Moreover, people's affective response to a charitable appeal can signal its importance, resulting in increased donations when the victims are identified and coherent (Small & Loewenstein, 2003; Smith, Faro, & Burson, 2011), when the appeal elicits sympathy for the victims (Small & Verrochi, 2009; Weiner, 1980), or when considerations of one's own benevolence elicit positive feelings (Manucia, Baumann, & Cialdini, 1984).

### Metacognitive inferences

Here, we draw attention to a different set of variables, namely potential donors' metacognitive experiences when thinking about a charity and its cause. Every component of thinking can feel easy or difficult, from reading new information to recalling material from memory. What people conclude from experiences of ease or difficulty depends on which of many lay theories of mental

processes they bring to bear (Schwarz, 2004a, 2010; Schwarz, Song, & Xu, 2009). The most widely studied lay theory of memory is at the heart of Tversky and Kahneman's (1973) availability heuristic. It correctly holds that it is easier to recall examples when many rather than few exist in the world; hence people infer frequency and typicality from ease of recall (Schwarz et al., 1991; Tybout, Sternthal, Makaviya, Bakamitsos, & Park, 2005; Wanke, Bohner, & Jurkowsch, 1997). However, people hold many other, usually correct, lay theories of memory. One holds that we forget over time; hence, people infer that an event occurred more recently, the easier it is to bring to mind (Schwarz et al., 2009). Another assumes that repetition helps memory; hence people infer that they heard or saw something more often when it is easy rather than difficult to recall (Schwarz, Sanna, Skurnik, & Yoon, 2007; Weaver, Garcia, Schwarz, & Miller, 2007). Similarly, people correctly believe that personally relevant and important information is remembered better than unimportant information (Schwarz, 2004b); hence, they infer personal importance from ease of recall (Schwarz et al., 2009).

Which of these and many other lay theories of memory people draw on when making a judgment depends on the specific task and related context variables, reflecting that thinking is for doing and sensitive to one's current goals in context (Schwarz, 2004a, 2010). We propose that a charity's goal is one of the variables that influence theory selection when people consider whether to make a donation or not.

### Impact of the charity's goal

Not surprisingly, a charity's goal is a primary characteristic on which charities are evaluated by potential donors (Sargeant, 1999; Small & Simonsohn, 2008). Even subtle changes in the framing of the goal can have pronounced effects on donations (Das, Kerhof, & Kuiper, 2008; Smith et al., 2011) and can elicit different mind-sets in potential donors (Liu & Aaker, 2008; Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007). It is therefore very likely that potential donors attend to the charity's goal when they consider relevant inputs, including the information provided by their own charity-related metacognitive experiences.

In most cases, the importance of the cause will loom large in donors' decision making. This, in turn, is likely to bring to mind an applicable (and correct) lay theory that holds that important things are better remembered than unimportant ones (Schwarz et al., 2009). If so, good memory for details of the cause will suggest that one finds the cause important, a variable that is known to increase donations (Sargeant, 1999). Hence, perceived good memory should increase donations under these conditions. Not so, however, when the charity's goal is to *raise awareness* of a cause, such as the need to prevent destruction of the rainforest; in this case, noting that one remembers a lot about the cause provides ambiguous information. On the one hand, it may indicate that one found this cause important and paid close attention to it. On the other hand, it may indicate that one has heard about the need to prevent rainforest destruction many times before, suggesting that it is already an issue of public discourse. The latter interpretation is consistent with the (also correct) lay theory that repetition improves

memory, which makes good recall an indicator of frequent previous exposure and high popularity (Schwarz et al., 2007; Weaver et al., 2007). If potential donors draw the latter inference, they may donate less when they believe they remember the charity well—after all, further awareness-raising efforts may not be needed.

### Present research

The present research tests these conjectures. In three studies, participants read an appeal from a charity and subsequently take a memory test. Depending on conditions, the memory test is easy or difficult, leaving test takers with the impression that they remember a lot versus very little about the charity. We accomplish this by asking about the same content at different levels of detail (e.g., “Did the number of orphans increase or decrease last year?” versus “By how many did the number of orphans increase or decrease last year?”); this ensures that the same issues are salient in all conditions while allowing for variation in the experienced ease of recall. Importantly, random assignment to an easy or difficult memory test avoids any confound between participants’ actual memory for the charity and their metacognitive experience. As noted, the lay theory that important information is better remembered than unimportant information is correct—those who find an issue more important attend more to it and remember more about it (Conway, 1990). Hence, natural variations in memory performance are inadequate for isolating the influence of metacognitive processes, making experimental manipulations of *perceived* memory performance the method of choice.

Study 1 uses a charity that helps orphans in Uganda. We predict, and find, that participants assigned to an easy memory test intend to donate *more* to this charity than participants assigned to a difficult memory test. Study 2 uses a charity that aims to raise awareness about rain forest destruction. We predict, and find, that participants assigned to an easy memory test intend to donate *less* to this charity than participants assigned to a difficult memory test. Study 3 uses the same charity, concerned with childhood heart disease, for both types of goals in a single design and replicates the results with actual (rather than intended) monetary donations.

Note that our key prediction is an interaction of the charity’s goal and potential donors’ metacognitive experience: thinking that one remembers well will decrease donations for awareness-raising charities, but increase donations for other charities. While many other variables may be plausibly related to one’s performance on a memory test and one’s willingness to donate money, these variables predict main effects of test performance rather than the above interaction. For example, better performance on a test may improve one’s mood, self-esteem, or the accessibility of success related thoughts; while these and many other variables can affect charitable giving (for reviews, see Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007; Gardner, 1985; Piliavin & Chang, 1990), we are not aware of any alternative theorizing that predicts that the impact of one’s performance on a memory test on charitable giving is contingent on whether the charity aims to raise awareness or pursues another goal.

## Study 1: The more I remember, the *more* I give

Study 1 tests whether people donate more to a charity that aims to relieve suffering the more they seem to remember about its cause.

### Method

45 undergraduates from a large Midwestern University participated for course credit. They read a one-page description of a charity called Children of Uganda, which included a highly detailed account of the plight of Ugandan orphans and a description of the charity’s numerous activities designed to help them. To manipulate participants’ perceptions of how well they remember this information, they were randomly assigned to an *easy* or *difficult* memory test. Each test consisted of seven questions of comparable content, except that the *difficult* test asked for more intricate details than the *easy* test (e.g., the direction of change in Uganda orphan numbers versus the quantity of change in Uganda orphan numbers).

Participants were then asked, in an open response format, “Hypothetically, how much would you be willing to donate to the Children of Uganda charity?” They also reported their behavioral intentions (“I plan on getting involved with this cause,” and “I plan on telling a friend about this cause”, 1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree); these items correlated  $r(43) = .634$ ,  $p < .001$ , and were averaged to form an intended involvement index. In addition, participants indicated how difficult they found the memory test (1 = very easy; 7 = very difficult).

### Results and discussion

Participants answered more questions correctly on the easy ( $M = 6.1$ ) than on the difficult test ( $M = 2.67$ ;  $t(43) = 9.6$ ,  $p < .001$ ). They were aware of this difference and rated the easy test ( $M = 3.43$ ) as easier than the difficult one ( $M = 4.75$ ;  $t(43) = 2.7$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

We predicted that consumers who believe they remember a charity well will (i) donate more money and (ii) report a higher intention to get involved. As is often the case with charitable donations, the response variable was non-normally distributed with a large right skew. Accordingly, we follow the widely used method of analyzing donations with a non-parametric Mann–Whitney  $U$  test on donation–amount–ranks (Andreoni, 1995; Landry, Lange, List, Price, & Rupp, 2006; Lehmann, 1975). As expected, those who took the easy test intended to donate more than those who took the difficult test ( $U = 151$ ,  $p = .02$ ). Removing three outliers (\$3000, \$30,000, and \$100,000) and conducting a  $t$ -test yielded similar results; participants who took the easy test reported higher donation intentions ( $M = \$187.11$ ) than those who took the difficult test ( $M = \$59.67$ ;  $t(40) = 2.02$ ,  $p = .05$ ). Also as predicted, the former participants reported greater intentions to get involved ( $M = 3.62$ ) than the latter ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $t(43) = 2.25$ ,  $p = .03$ ).

In sum, participants assigned to an easy memory test responded more favorably to the charity and its cause than

participants assigned to a difficult memory test. Because the memory test manipulated participants' beliefs about how well they remember the charity, it also illustrates how mere measurement can affect consumer behavior (see also Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004). The finding is compatible with common wisdom: Potential donors who think they know a lot about a charity and its cause are more likely to donate, making extensive advertising a crucial element of philanthropic work. Our theorizing predicts, however, that this wisdom does not apply when the charity pursues awareness-raising goals. Study 2 tests this prediction.

## Study 2: The more I remember, the less I give

### Method

135 adults from the online pool MindField completed this study and others in exchange for payment of \$5. They read a one-page description of The Prince's Rainforest Foundation, which emphasized the goal of raising awareness of the need to prevent tropical deforestation. Subsequently, participants completed either an easy or difficult memory test involving 7 questions of comparable content (e.g. whether the charity's website has a certain feature versus what year that feature was launched). Participants then indicated in an open-ended response format how much money (dollars) and time (hours) they would hypothetically be willing to donate.

Participants also rated the difficulty of the test (1 = very easy; 7 = very difficult) and completed a four-item mood scale ( $\alpha = .92$ ) with the ends of 5-point scales labeled: sad/happy, bad mood/good mood, irritable/pleased, and depressed/cheerful (Lee & Sternthal, 1999; Swinyard, 1993).

### Results and discussion

Participants assigned to the easy memory test answered more questions correctly ( $M = 5.63$ ) than those assigned to the difficult test ( $M = 3.29$ ;  $t(133) = 10.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). They were aware of this difference and rated the easy test ( $M = 3.06$ ) as easier than the difficult one ( $M = 4.21$ ;  $t(133) = 4.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The donation data was again non-normally distributed and analyzed with a Mann–Whitney  $U$  test on donation–amount–ranks. As predicted, the previously observed pattern reversed. Participants who took the difficult memory test intended to donate *more* money to help the charity raise awareness ( $M = \$30.77$ ) than participants who took the easy test ( $M = \$13.63$ ,  $U = 1571.5$ ,  $p = .02$ ). An unequal variances  $t$ -test yielded similar results ( $t(83) = 1.94$ ,  $p = .055$ ). Paralleling this finding, participants who took the difficult test also reported that they would donate more hours ( $M = 13.11$ ) than those who took the easy test ( $M = 6.65$ ,  $t(114) = 2.07$ ,  $p = .04$ ). These results are *opposite* to the results of Study 1, where a difficult memory test was associated with lower intentions to donate to a charity that pursues a helping goal.

Finally, participants' mood reports showed no difference between conditions ( $M$ 's = 3.63 and 3.60,  $t(133) < 1$ , for the easy and difficult test, respectively). This is consistent with expectations.

While test performance can be used as a mood manipulation when it is framed as success or failure in a test of ability (see Gerrards-Hesse, Spies, & Hesse, 2011), this prerequisite is not satisfied in the present experiments. Further reducing the plausibility that mood plays a key role in the present findings, a difficult test was associated with high donation intentions in Study 2 but low donation intentions in Study 1, in contrast to the main effect predictions that follow from diverse mood accounts (for reviews of relevant mood theories, see Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994; Morris, 1989; Schwarz & Clore, 2007).

## Study 3: Behavioral consequences

Studies 1 and 2 point to an important role of metacognitive inferences in charitable giving decisions. However, the studies were limited to hypothetical donations of money and time and the charities used in these studies differed not only in their goals, but also in the issues they addressed. Study 3 addresses these ambiguities by soliciting real monetary donations for the same charity. In all conditions, participants learn about a charity that seeks to reduce the impact of childhood heart disease; however, the charity attempts to do so either by raising awareness or by supporting treatment. Next, participants take an easy or difficult memory test; the tests are identical across the two charitable goals. Finally, participants have the opportunity to make an anonymous donation to the charity. This replicates Studies 1 and 2 in a single design with a behavioral outcome variable, using the same charity in all conditions. We predict that consumers donate more to a charity that emphasizes the provision of help when perceived memory is good rather than poor, but more to a charity that emphasizes awareness-raising when perceived memory is poor rather than good.

### Method

255 adults from a paid-participant pool in a Midwestern college town completed this study and others in exchange for a payment of \$15. Participants read a one-page description of Heart 2 Heart, a charity devoted to reducing the impact of childhood heart disease. There were two versions of this description. The *helping-purpose* version emphasized the goal of treating childhood heart disease, whereas the *awareness-purpose* version emphasized the goal of raising awareness about childhood heart disease; the descriptions were identical in all other respects. Participants then took either an easy or difficult 7-question memory test; the tests were identical across charity-purpose conditions and of comparable content across quiz-difficulty conditions. Finally, participants had the opportunity to make anonymous monetary donations by placing their survey and donations in an envelope. Experimenters delivered all donated money to the charity. In addition, participants reported how easy or difficult they found the memory test (1 = very easy; 7 = very difficult).

### Results and discussion

Participants answered more questions correctly when the test was easy ( $M = 5.82$ ) rather than difficult ( $M = 4.22$ ;  $t(250) = 9.2$ ,

$p < .001$ ). They were aware of this difference and rated the easy test ( $M=4.1$ ) as easier than the difficult one ( $M=4.91$ ;  $t(251)=4.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Overall, 39% of the participants chose to make a donation. Due to the prevalence of \$0 donations, we used a Tobit model (Amemiya, 1985; Mitchell & Dacin, 1996) to examine the extent to which the difficulty of the memory test (easy versus hard) and the purpose of the charity (helping versus awareness-raising) affected the amount donated. The Tobit model was run with zero (no donation) and 8 (highest donation received) as the lower and upper limits, respectively; see Table 1 for results. The key finding is the predicted interaction between the difficulty of the memory test and the purpose of the charity ( $\beta = -2.31$ ,  $t(251) = -2.58$ ,  $p = .01$ ), shown in Fig. 1; it was diagnosed with one-tailed Tobit contrasts. When the charity's helping goal was emphasized, participants donated more money when the easy quiz conveyed that they remembered the details well ( $M = \$1.26$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) than when the difficult quiz conveyed that they remembered them poorly ( $M = \$.78$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ;  $\beta = -1.22$ ,  $t(124) = -1.87$ ,  $p = .03$ ). This replicates Study 1 with real monetary donations. Also as predicted, this pattern reversed when the charity's awareness-raising goal was emphasized. In this case, participants donated less when the easy quiz conveyed that they remembered the details well ( $M = \$.51$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) than when the difficult quiz conveyed that they remembered them poorly ( $M = \$.85$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ;  $\beta = 1.07$ ,  $t(127) = 1.79$ ,  $p = .04$ ). This replicates Study 2 with real monetary donations. Mann–Whitney contrasts yielded similar results ( $p$ 's  $< .04$ ).

Three points are worth noting. First, the robust replications across different charities in Studies 1 to 3 highlight that the crucial variable is indeed whether the charity pursues an awareness-raising versus another goal, not the domain of their cause. This reduces potential concerns about idiosyncratic aspects of the respective charities. Second, the actual monetary donations in this study were substantially lower than the hypothetical donations in Studies 1 and 2, while replicating the theoretically predicted patterns. The difference in the absolute size of hypothetical and actual donations is consistent with other findings (Murphy, Allen, Stevens, & Weatherhead, 2005). Third, the memory tests used in Study 3 were identical under help-providing and

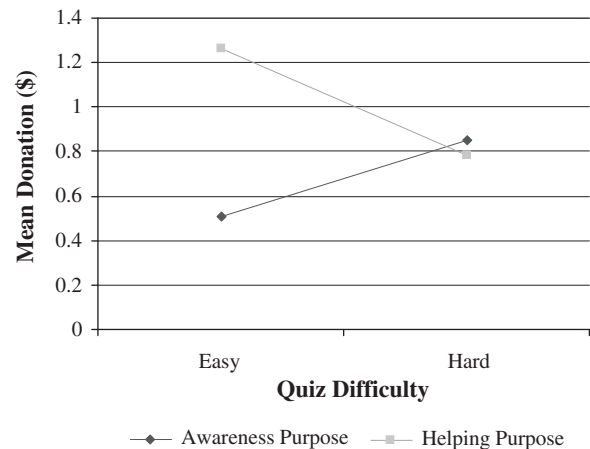


Fig. 1. The implications of perceived memory depend on the target. This figure includes participants who donated \$0.

awareness-raising conditions, ensuring that their differential impact is not driven by differential memory content or differential affective responses across these conditions.

## General discussion

In three studies with different charities, we found that potential donors' perceptions of how much they remember about a charity and its cause influence their intended (Studies 1 and 2) and actual (Study 3) charitable giving. When a charity has a goal of helping people in need, perceptions of good memory for the cause increase charitable giving; but when a charity has a goal of raising awareness for a cause, perceptions of good memory for the cause impair charitable giving. These effects were reliable for each individual study and combined analyses (following the adding- $z$ 's procedure of Rosenthal, 1978) result in overall effects of  $z = 2.98$ ,  $p = .001$ , for the helping charities and  $z = 2.89$ ,  $p = .002$ , for the awareness-raising charities. These findings are consistent with the theoretical rationale developed in other domains (Schwarz, 2004a, 2010) and contribute to our understanding of charitable giving as well as metacognition.

### Implications for metacognition

Our results highlight that consumers' use of metacognitive experiences as a source of information is sensitive to the specific context in which they make a decision. The observation that one remembers a lot about a charity one recently heard about is inherently ambiguous—it may reflect that one found the material personally important and paid close attention to it or that one had previously heard about the charity and was already familiar with some of the material. Which of the underlying lay theories of memory is likely to come to mind depends on which goal the charity emphasizes. When the charity aims to raise awareness, potential donors are likely to assess whether such awareness-raising is needed. Noting that they know little about the charity, they may conclude that awareness-raising is indeed required,

Table 1  
Tobit coefficients for amount of money donated to charity.

Full model	Coefficient	$t$ -statistic	$p$ -value
Constant	-1.83	-3.45	.001
Difficulty (easy=0)	1.13	1.76	.079
Purpose (awareness=0)	1.97	3.13	.002
Difficulty x purpose interaction	-2.31	-2.58	.010
<i>Helping Purpose</i>			
Constant	.061	.14	.89
Difficulty (replicating Study 1)	-1.22	-1.87	.032
<i>Awareness Purpose</i>			
Constant	-1.64	-3.03	.003
Difficulty (replicating Study 2)	1.07	1.79	.038

Note. Contrasts within purpose levels are single-tailed.

resulting in higher donations when memory is poor rather than good. When the charity pursues another goal—such as wanting to help people, animals, or the environment—awareness related considerations are less likely to come to mind and consumers may focus on the importance of the cause. In this case, good memory for details will suggest that one found the charity personally important, resulting in higher donations when memory is good rather than poor. These context sensitive inferences reflect a high level of sophistication in thinking about one's own memory processes and their context specific implications, indicating that the use of metacognitive experiences as a source of information is often part of a thoughtful and deliberate assessment of the available information in context (Schwarz, 2010).

This analysis may seem more compelling if it were accompanied by data that show the implied differences in participants' perception of the personal importance of the cause or the need to raise awareness, preferably complete with mediation analyses. Unfortunately, such data would be nondiagnostic. First, suppose that we assessed perceived importance at the end of the experiment, after participants donated. In this case, the act of donating may itself serve as an input into later importance judgments, providing apparent evidence for "mediation" that may well reflect reverse causality. Alternatively, suppose that we assessed personal importance prior to donations. In this case, the importance judgment would recruit the corresponding lay theory of memory in all conditions, thus thwarting the ability to observe goal-contingent differences. Similar considerations apply to measures of the need to raise awareness. As metacognitive analyses indicate, measurement changes the thought process and the desire to collect many measures in a single study is more likely to mislead than to illuminate (Schwarz, 2010).

#### *Implications for charitable giving*

With regard to charitable giving, our findings challenge conventional wisdom: Knowing a lot about a charity and its cause can hurt rather than help charitable giving, provided the charity emphasizes awareness-raising as a goal. Hence, awareness-raising charities face different marketing considerations than charities that pursue other goals, most notably the relief of suffering. For both types of charities, a simple truism holds: to enter a consumer's consideration set, they need to be sufficiently memorable to come to mind when the consumer considers making charitable donations. But once they pass the threshold of entering the consideration set, both types of charities differ in whether high memorability helps or hurts their purpose. When the charity aims at relieving suffering, consumers infer from high knowledge about the charity that they care about the cause, which increases the likelihood and size of donations (Studies 1 and 3). But for awareness-raising charities, high memorability can backfire when consumers infer that awareness is already high and conclude that additional donations are not needed. Our findings suggest that this conclusion comes easily to potential donors (Studies 2 and 3) and does not require prompts beyond the stated goal of raising awareness.

Hence, the more than 20,000 awareness-raising charities (Guidestar, 2011) face an important dilemma in their promotion goals. For example, consider VH1's Save the Music Foundation, which aims to raise "awareness about the importance of music as part of each child's complete education" (Vh1 Save the Music, 2011). To acquire the necessary donations, the charity needs to promote itself to potential donors. However, if the promotions lead potential donors to believe that they are already familiar with the charity and its cause, they may conclude that awareness of the need for music education in schools is already high and choose not to donate. Fortunately, there are several strategies that Save the Music Foundation can adopt to avoid this conundrum. First, the organization can attempt to segment its population of potential donors. Like many awareness-raising charities, they have multiple goals and could emphasize different goals for different segments. For existing donors, who are already familiar with the charity, they might focus on providing musical instruments to schools; for new potential donors, who are presumably less familiar with the organization, they could focus on their awareness-raising goal. This strategy could allow the charity to take advantage of positive effects of high perceived memory among existing donors as well as of positive effects of low perceived memory among new potential donors. Second, for charities that focus exclusively on awareness-raising, donation appeals should facilitate the attribution that being highly knowledgeable about the cause is indicative of one's own personal engagement rather than of broad societal awareness. Future research may fruitfully test these strategies and may extend the analysis to other organizations that attempt to raise awareness, including political interest groups devoted to changing the public's awareness of specific issues. If successfully implemented, either of these strategies would put awareness-raising organizations in the same situation as other organizations, allowing them to benefit from the memorability of their important and worthwhile causes.

#### *Future directions*

Theoretically, the influence of other metacognitive variables that can convey that one is or is not highly familiar with a charity should parallel the impact of perceived memory in the present studies. Such variables include all manipulations of fluency, from print fonts to rhyme (for a review see Schwarz, 2004a). Moreover, the conceptual rationale developed here is not limited to charities. Other product categories in which extensive promotion can have negative effects include identity signaling products, for which consumers prefer moderately low societal awareness (Berger & Heath, 2007), and products that benefit from exclusivity, such as some vacation destinations (Pocheptsova, Labroo, & Dhar, 2010). If promotion of these products leads to perceptions of high societal awareness, willingness to buy may suffer.

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