

A Note on Motivations for Charitable Donations
Evidence from Survey Data

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Abstract

This paper utilizes survey data to investigate motivations for charitable giving using a categorization of motivation based on Kohlberg's stages of moral development augmented with Gilligan's caring motive. We compare male and female responses to ascertain whether there are gender differences in motivation for other-directed actions such as charitable giving, doing a favor for a friend, and giving to the homeless. Caring and compassion is the most important motivation cited by both men and women for giving to charity or to the homeless, followed by concern for justice and equality, and feelings of social responsibility. There is some evidence that women are more likely than men to be motivated by caring and compassion, while men are more motivated by justice and equity. Men also more often say they give in the expectation that they may need the support of the charity in the future and do favors for friends expecting they will reciprocate. In questions linking motivations to charity choice, giving to ACCION USA was motivated by justice and equity, while giving to America's Second Harvest and the Cancer Research Institute was based on caring and compassion.