# From No Aid to Donate

## An Investigation of Donation Behavior & Brand Trust Under Cognitive Processing Theory

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## Abstract

Donation making is a social act of giving back to those in need. With the rise of the digital age, different forms of asking for donations have emerged. What predicts a donation however, still remains unclear. This research aimed to explore the factors that affect a donation decision and amount, from the perspective of the dual-processing theory. Following the earthquake that took place in Turkey and Syria on February 6th 2023, several e-commerce companies stepped up to gather donations. These initiatives were perceived very differently across cultures, inspiring us to investigate what types of brand image and user experience makes people donate. We investigated the possible effects of trustworthiness of the donation platform, the emotional connection individuals may feel towards the donation cause, cultural differences, and the experienced autonomy while donating. The act of donating was introduced in two steps: the initial "donation calls" and "the allocation of donations". We designed an e-commerce platform with four different conditions (combination of two different calls and two allocation methods). Although we observed an unexpected effect of autonomy on donation calls, we did not observe one on allocation methods. However, we observed an effect of allocation methods on amounts donated. It was concluded that we did not find an optimal way for designing a donation message. Although it was found that implementing donation options on an e-commerce site increased trust in brand, there was no effect found of the donation calls and allocation methods on this finding. The dual-processing perspective has yielded avenues for future work on the grounds of focusing on differentiating donation calls for fast and slow methods in order to observe an effect.


*Keywords:* Donations, trust, autonomy, dual processing theory, cultural differences, e-commerce, emotional processing, cognitive load, the role of affect, identifiable victim effect

# From “No Aid” to “Donate”:

## An Investigation of Donation Behavior & Brand Trust Under Cognitive Processing Theory

On February 6th of 2023, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake took place in the southeastern border of Turkey with devastating effects for both Turkey and Syria. Both countries were shaken to their core, with over 50,000 fatalities (Al Jazeera and News Agencies, 2023), 160,000 buildings collapsing (BBC News, 2023), and leaving more than 1.5 million people homeless (Foster, 2023). This event stands as one of the most tragic occurrences in the history of the Turkish Republic. The global and national efforts to provide better physical conditions to the survivors (Cinar et al., 2023) and protect their mental health (Garfin & Silver, 2023) are still ongoing.

Even though the Turkish Government seemed to have provided appropriate resources to the victims, the help was very late and very little, resulting in a massive public distrust towards the government (Tol, 2023). Consequently, a civil unity movement began, aiming to provide faster and more reliable responses to the victims. The movement relied on donations only, with zero financial support from governmental entities. In order to encourage more civilians to donate, major e-commerce and marketplace brands responded promptly by updating their websites and setting up donation pages. Users were not only able to send monetary donations directly, but also they could purchase essential items (such as tents, clothes, first-aid kits) for all eleven earthquake-stricken cities. Companies like “Hepsiburada”, one of Turkey's largest e-commerce platforms, saw an opportunity to use their existing platforms to assist the survivors of the earthquake. This approach, though unconventional, allowed Hepsiburada's users to autonomously decide on the donation product, and also provided transparency on how the donated funds would be utilized. This unique and empowering initiative was extremely helpful

for the victims (Hepsiburada, 2023), raising the theoretical question of "How can we optimize the donation procedure to maximize individuals' response in such drastic events?". By investigating the effect of the donation call experience on the donation response, we aimed to understand the determinants of "no-aid" versus "donate" across different cultures in unusual settings, namely, e-commerce websites.

Understanding these determinants were crucial for various reasons. In Turkey's case, donations had to make up for the lacking aid procedures of the government. Not only were the governmental aid establishments slow in responding to the tragedy, they were creating distrust amongst Turkish citizens on how funds were being spent. If non-governmental entities had not stepped up, many more fatalities could have occured in the earthquake region due to hunger, weather conditions and a lack of medical care. When these non-governmental entities rose to the task, they had to lay a trustworthy foundation for their practices and make up for the level of distrust against the government. Therefore, it becomes crucial to be able to understand the dynamics that increase trust and donation intention from a scientific perspective. If these dynamics are understood and studied in a way that allows for optimizing campaigns, it would mean that we could contribute to raising the donation amounts. Considering the case of Turkey and Syria, our goal in this study was to understand the circumstances under which people choose to make donations, and what conditions drive them to donate higher amounts of money. As these cases brought forward the unfamiliar concept of integrating donations on an e-commerce platform, we can discover various ways to optimize donations. However, research is lacking on identifying the best possible approach to make this optimization, due to the novelty of this topic. At the end of the day, if there is a key factor to increase donations and bring more help to those who need it, we must start with discovering the effective determinators first.

The possible determinators around donations used to be simpler, as the concept of donating and encouraging charitable giving has been present since early civilizations, driven by the idea of the fortunate helping the less fortunate (Daunton, 1996). Although the fundamental principle of giving remains unchanged, the modern society today may bring different motivations for charitable giving (Rutherford, 2010) such as empathy, religion, trust, socio-economic status (Neumayr & Handy, 2017), or belief in karma (Chen et al., 2022). However, these conclusions remained inadequate as they suggested that donation behavior could only be understood through the lens of individual differences. Although individual differences are an undeniable factor in any behavioral analysis, other studies have gone past them and focused on the presentation of the donation messages (Weyant & Smith,1987). For example, we can imagine a philanthropist donating for a particular cause who may or may not choose to donate if the cause of the donation was different. From an individual difference perspective, one might argue that the person just believes in one cause and not the other. From a behavioral perspective however, it could be argued that the presentation of causes were so different that the individual responded in an inconsistent manner. The individual differences perspective assumes that what makes people donate is mainly determined by their nationality (Afrouzi, 2021), financial wellbeing (Bryant et al., 2013), consumption history (Johnson et al., 2014), or even age (Zhang et al., 2017), which are all extremely difficult -if not impossible- to change or sparkle. The behavioristic perspective however, claims that there could be very little environmental cues that promote donations such as the tendency to trust across cultures (Deardorff, 2009) or closeness to the charitable cause (Zagefka et al., 2012). In other words, the perspective on individual differences is at risk of missing very simple behaviouristic cues that could have created the same donation impact. Therefore, we suggest that research should further investigate the potential mechanisms that

could maximize donations, especially in low-cost and popular platforms such as e-commerce websites.

One of the potential mechanisms that were introduced was the presentation of messages. Previous research in the field of online donation experiences mainly points to the effects of the presentation of messages (donation calls) through the use of the identifiable victim theory and the role of affect (based on the affect theory). Donation calls are the first presenters of the donation cause. They can be described as pitching where there is an attempt to convince potential donors to donate. Sometimes this is done through emotional and heavy texts and/or imagery (i.e., identifiable victim effect; Friedrich & McGuire, 2010). Other times, they can include statistical data and rational pieces of information that appeal to reason (i.e., the role of affect; Västfjäll & Slovic, 2020). Although a successful donation call is essential for directing a message for the causes of the donation campaign, they are not the only step for a conclusive donation decision.

Allocation methods refer to the mechanism of the donation procedure introduced by the charity establishment. Simply put, it is how the process of donation is designed. For instance, it can be a simple payment page, with integrations of different payment methods. Alternatively, it can have playful attributes, with additional perks for donating. Or, it can be introduced in a way that gives the individual more control on how their funds are being spent. The overlooked factor here is that the preference of either method is a message medium on its own. Until this study, the allocation of donations appeared as the “end result” or the “last step” in donation making. Apart from this, the prior studies introduced allocation of donations only in contexts where individuals would get a perk after donating. Which we suggest, disregards what happens between a donation call and receiving a perk. Hence, we are the first to suggest that the build and design of the allocation methods themselves should also be considered as a message medium in modern

society. As consumers of digital platforms are autonomous in choosing the most convenient payment method for their needs (Szumski, 2020), an integration to Apple Pay for example, can increase the likelihood of submitting donations; as opposed to entering your credit card information on a site you are unfamiliar with. Or, donating on an e-commerce platform that you are a member of, could also be a factor that increases trust and that could lead to making a donation, due to the fact that the integration of charitable causes is a message on its own. As well as this message can cause the existing trust in a brand to mirror on to the image of the charity , it is also plausible that existing trust towards a charitable movement to mirror onto the brand. Following from this reasoning, here we ask if the charitable cause could invoke trust towards the brand that incorporates it to their business activities. Previous research on this issue explored whether companies' charitable acts enhance brand image (Vanhamme et al., 2011) and concluded that they did. However, the research revealed that the company's way of communicating the donation message can affect the brand image negatively as well. In order to add to the existing literature, and explore the message delivery dynamics further, we delve into an unexplored area: the impact of donations on user trust when integrating charities into an e-commerce platform. Specifically, we aim to understand how the method of incorporating donation in an e-commerce website influences the users' perception of the e-commerce brand. This effect could be positive, because it could be pleasing to think that a brand you shop from cares about society, as He & Lai claims (2012). Nevertheless, it could also create a negative effect because one could find it offensive that a wealthy corporation is not choosing to donate their own money but asking their customers to do so (Dean, 2003). Therefore, we investigate if the differences in style of donation incorporated in an e-commerce brand could affect the brand image either positively or negatively.

In summary, in this study we aim to understand the effects of different donation calls and allocation methods on individuals' decision to donate or not, the donation amount, and a possible change in their trust towards the e-commerce brand. We add to the previous literature by investigating donation procedures in the context of e-commerce, and differentiating between the donation call and allocation of donations for the first time. We also aim to observe whether this differentiation is effective on the amount donated and brand trust. This way, we can draw conclusions for future charity campaigns to come up with beneficial optimization strategies that could lead them to success. In order to investigate these determinants of donations, we rely on Dual Processing Theory, Identifiable Victim Effect and the Role of Affect in our conceptual model.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Dual- processing Theory*

The dual-processing theory, introduced by William James towards the end of the 19th century, emphasized the conscious and subconscious processing mechanisms of the human mind (Osman, 2004). Since it was presented, many scholars have expanded on this theory and introduced additional mechanisms stemming from James' initial concepts. In the context of this research, the dual-processing theory was approached through the lens of CEST (The Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory), defining two processors: one, the "*non-experiential information processor*" that is rational, affect-free, abstract, and analytical, and two, the *"experiential information processor*" that is emotionally driven and encodes experiences as concrete exemplars (Osman, 2004, p. 988). As both emotional and logical drives are essential in donation decisions (Ratneshwar & Mick, 2005), the dual-processing theory serves as the foundation for the experimental manipulations in this study. The two routes for processing

information we obtain here are the fast (the emotional "*experiential information processor*") and slow (the logical "*experiential information processor*") mechanisms. Although dual-processing theory is heavily used in the existing literature while analyzing donation behavior, the links that were formed were limited to either donation messages (Van Steenburg & Spears, 2021) or amounts donated (Suk & Mudita, 2022), but there were no links made between the combination of these two concepts. Here we investigate the fast and slow processing of both donation messages and the donation amounts.

The need for introducing the dual-processing theory under a new light was based on what prior research had focused on while looking into donation behavior. Existing literature on donation behavior mainly focuses on whether individuals decide to donate or not. For example, Weyant & Smith (1987) studied whether different phrases used in donation calls would impact the decision of donation. Van Steenburg & Spears (2021) had a similar approach of differentiating messages, however they concluded that the overall interest in the message medium was what made the difference in donation decisions. Message mediums did not gather any attention for addressing donation behavior before the Steenburg & Spears' research (2021). Consequently, e-commerce platforms were not even considered as a message medium prior to the current study. To our knowledge, the current study is the first to introduce this theory to the context of the e-commerce industry.

Furthermore, since not only the donation decision but also the donation amount significantly impacts the success of a charity campaign, previous research also focused on the mechanisms that maximize the donation amount (Suk & Mudita, 2022). However, there have been no studies that differentiate between the impact of the donation cause (for what reason people donate) and the donation experience (how the platform of donation is designed) on the

donation decisions. In the current study, we separately examine the effects of "donation calls" and "allocation methods". Analyzing these two concepts independently sheds light on their potential effectiveness in influencing the decision to donate. If the donation call is ineffective, the users may not even see the allocation page. Similarly, even with a compelling donation call, an untrustworthy allocation page can deter users from donating. However, it is rather difficult to conceptualize arbitrary terms such as “ineffective” or “untrustworthy” as there could be endless examples of both in donation campaigns. These complexities limit the conclusions driven from existing research. To conceptualize the different insinuations of donation calls and allocation methods we suggest that different types of donation calls will function as triggers of either a fast or slow processing, in return affecting the decision to donate. Also, we suggest that the design of the donation allocation method will either trigger a fast or slow processing during the donation act, influencing the amount donated.

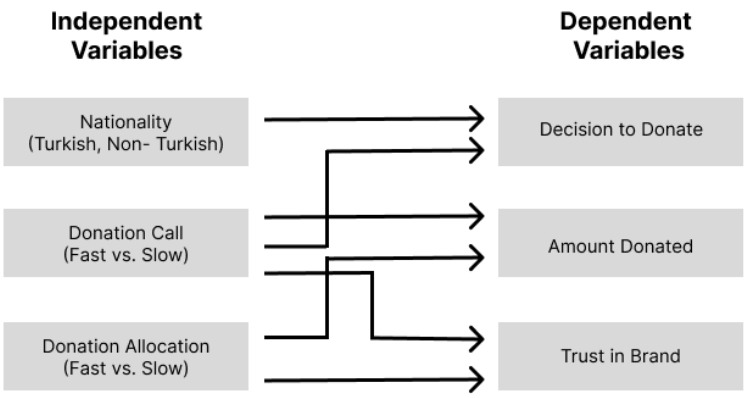
The potential effect of the donation call on the donation decision is also underlined by the Affect Theory (Västfjäll & Slovic, 2020). This theory suggests that one of the factors that influence the decision to donate is the logical assurance of one’s contribution. In other words, if individuals are logically convinced that their contribution will make a difference, they are more likely to donate. Conversely, if they are not convinced enough by the messages, they could undermine the effect of their contributions and not choose to donate after all. Thus, the way the donation message is presented plays a crucial role in the decision to donate.

Following from the aforementioned theories and gaps in the literature, we raise the following research questions: First, is a fast-process emotional donation call (i.e., the narration of the tragic story of a single victim) more effective in eliciting donation decisions, compared to a slow-process logical call (i.e., presenting statistical data of all victims)? Second, are fast-process

versus slow-process allocation methods effective on the amounts donated? Third, does belonging to the nationality of the victims have an impact on the donation decisions? And lastly, do people prefer the case where platforms or companies determine how their donation amounts are spent (low autonomy), or do they prefer more control over where their money will be spent (high autonomy)? In order to address these research questions, we present the following conceptual framework:

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual framework of the study*




Based on the concepts and background information discussed earlier, this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of different donation calls and allocation methods on the donation decision and amount, as well as examine their impact on individuals' perceptions of brand trust. To achieve this goal, four hypotheses were formulated, regarding cultural differences, donation calls, allocation of donations, and trust in brand.

***Cultural Differences***

***Culture and Willingness to Donate.*** Previously, numerous studies have investigated various factors influencing the willingness to donate, such as positive charity reputation (Hsu et

al., 2005), donor financial well-being (Bryant et al., 2013), donor age (Zhang et al., 2017), trustworthiness of donation websites (Küchler et al., 2020), and future donors' consumption habits (Johnson et al., 2014). However, the motivations behind donation decisions cannot be explained entirely by only one factor. Cultural differences, such as the tendency to trust or purchasing behaviors (Deardorff, 2009), are likely to play a significant role in individuals' decision to donate. The previous studies on cultural differences in donation behaviors are scarce. There is one study that compares two nations (Afrouzi, 2021), and another study that focuses on predetermined race groups (Bagozzi et al., 2001). Nevertheless, further research is required to understand how culture shapes the donation decision and the amount. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of cross-cultural factors in individual donation behavior, particularly in the context of disaster donations where one specific nation is perceived as the victim.

Cross-cultural comparisons have been a significant factor in analyzing donation behavior. Whether the comparisons are made between subcultures (i.e., the wealthy and the disadvantaged; Ye et al., 2015) or among different countries (Florenthal & Awad, 2021), culture emerges as a prominent consideration when investigating the general willingness to donate. Furthermore, introducing cultural differences also raises another important argument: closeness. Zagefka et al. (2012) suggested that the willingness to donate (for both decision to donate and the donation amount) may vary based on individuals' closeness to the community that have been affected and who will benefit from the charitable cause. This research aimed to see if Zagefka (2012) is correct; by introducing a charitable cause to two different populations that either had closeness to the donation cause (in terms of nationality) or not.

***Culture and Amount Donated.*** Cultural background could not only determine the willingness to donate but also influence the donation amount. While agreeing to donate is an essential step, the donation amount serves as an indication of the level of help the individual offers. This level of offered donation amount, we suggest, is also shaped by the individuals' culture. Social norms play a significant role in explaining how much people choose to donate, as highlighted by Teunenbroek et al. (2020). The authors suggested that individuals might be influenced by a simple logic of "I should donate if everyone else is donating". We follow the same reasoning and suggest that same-nationality donors (to the victims) will donate higher amounts in the context of disaster donations, since everyone they know is donating. In comparison, a non-Turkish individual may not choose to donate until someone from their close circle has made a donation. In short, following from the closeness argument and the role that social norms play, we suggest that Turkish nationals would donate higher amounts, as the number of fatalities from their own nation will likely result in immediate solidarity.

One important contribution of the current study is that we incorporate Teunenbroek's (2020) three suggestions he presented for the consideration of future researchers. The first suggestion was to focus on the understanding of social norms, and how they could be perceived differently, depending on the culture, instance and time. The second suggestion relied on analyzing the personal characteristics of individuals and how the categorization of certain characteristics could be effective in decision making. The last suggestion was redirecting future researchers to stop focusing on implementing new manipulations that might affect donation behavior. Instead, Teunenbroek (2020) suggested that we should analyze the manipulations that did not work and why this might be the case.

Following Teunenbroek's (2020) suggestions, this research adopted a specific event that centered around a particular culture, context, and time to set the tone of social norms. Participants were categorized as Turkish and non-Turkish to examine the perspectives of national victims and observers. By introducing the dual-processing theory, this paper investigated the dynamics of donation decisions to further analyze why previous manipulations - such as differentiating donation messages (Van Steenburg & Spears, 2021) or providing benefits for people who donate (Chang & Chen, 2019) - did not work. Following from the aforementioned theoretical arguments and Teunenbroek's (2020) suggestions, we formulated the following hypothesis:

*H1(Cultural Differences)*: Individuals who are from the country of where the disaster took place will be more likely to;

a. Accept the donation call

b. Donate higher amounts.

***Donation Calls***

When assessing the effectiveness of charitable donations, the donation call itself plays a significant role. A study by Weyant & Smith (1987) indicated that the phrases used when requesting a donation can impact the amount donated. Specifically, phrases like "a generous contribution would really help" are found to be less effective than phrases such as "even a penny will help." The authors concluded that people are less likely to donate when the requested amount suggests a high total (Weyant & Smith, 1987). However, with the advancement of digital technology and multi-modal communication methods, and considering the continuously shifting attention spans of individuals and their exposure to new media messages (Cardoso-Leite et al., 2021), the analysis of semantic associations remains insufficient. Here, we investigate what types

of messages are more effective in creating a donation decision, from the perspective of dual-processing theory.

The effects of donation messages had been previously explored by Van Steenburg & Spears (2021). The authors tested the impact of informative changes to the donation message rather than its presentation. They implemented two broadcast media messages, one containing a societal necessity of donations (emotional) and the other emphasizing the ease of contributing a small amount (logical). They concluded that regardless of the message formation, the unexpected indicator of the donation behavior was the level of interaction with the advertisement itself. This reinforced our ideas on the need to address donation behavior on a contextual (platform used, visuals provided, information presented etc.) level and not just on a semantic one. Avoiding the limitations of a purely semantic approach, the dual-processing theory's distinction between the fast (emotional) and slow (logical) messages enables a more comprehensive analysis of the messages. In addition, by incorporating photos, text, and interactive components, we account for other multi-modal factors. The question then arises: how do we integrate photos, text, and interactive components within the framework of the dual-processing theory? To trigger fast (emotional) processing, a commonly used method is the "identifiable victim effect" (Schelling, 1968), while the slow (logical) donation calls are stimulated by the "role of affect", derived from the "affect theory" (Tomkins, 1962). We employ both of these methods in order to create the multi-modal components of this paper. By combining emotional and logical elements, this study explores how various donation messages may influence individuals' donation decisions and behaviors in an e-commerce and donation website context.

To trigger the fast (emotional) processing of individuals, this paper utilized the concept of the identifiable victim effect by creating two donation pages: one containing an identified

(fictional) victim and one without. This approach allowed for further examination of whether this effect plays a crucial role in influencing individuals' donation decisions. Additionally, the role of affect was introduced as a trigger for the slow (logical) processing method, enabling a comparison between emotional and logical factors in the donation decision-making process.

***Identifiable Victim Effect.*** Previous research has demonstrated that presenting potential donors with actual victims of a charitable cause, rather than providing general statistics of the victims, is more effective in eliciting donations (Friedrich & McGuire, 2010). The identifiable victim effect appeared to be an "intuitive" way of deciding to donate, representing a fast mechanism that relies less on critical thinking (Railton, 2015). Another study by Small et al. (2007) also supported this idea, showing that one identifiable victim generated greater empathy, leading to higher donation amounts and willingness to donate compared to statistical victims. This concept was further supported by prior research conducted by Kogut & Ritov (2005), who found that telling the story of hundreds of victims was insufficient in gathering donations when compared to highlighting an identifiable individual's story. In other words, emphasizing the story of a single victim in the donation call surpassed the impact of additional information about the charitable cause. Thus, we suggest that presenting the single victim will function as a fast (emotional) donation call, which will increase both the willingness to donate and the donation amount.

***The Role of Affect.*** According to the role of affect (Västfjäll & Slovic, 2020), individuals are more inclined to help out when they are convinced of the effectiveness of their contribution. In other words, if the donation call does not relay the rational benefits of donating, the individual is unlikely to engage in donation behavior. If a fast thinking mechanism intervenes in the donation message, they may question whether their small contribution will truly make a

difference in the donation cause (Västfjäll & Slovic, 2020). This highlighted the self-depreciatory nature of individuals' thoughts when considering their donations. Here, the emphasis is on the individual's doubts about the impact of their contribution. People are at risk of underestimating their donation's impact and thus withdrawing from donating. A reason for this is that a high volume of donation causes in existence, and we believe that it is not realistic to be sympathetic and emotionally moved by each cause. In fact, the more that individuals are faced with tragic stories, the more likely that they will become desensitized to them (Seu, 2003). That's why, we suggest that implementing the role of affect will trigger the slow thinking process for the users of the donation platforms. In order to trigger slow processing, the role of affect can be implemented into research designs in various ways. For example, Verkaik (2016) introduced mathematical problems before exposing subjects to donation calls, assuming that it would initiate logical thinking. However, the author did not attribute the role of affect to the logical triggers in the thinking process, he instead relied on an unrelated cognitive task to create logical thinking processes. This mathematical manipulation was ineffective, and the results were not applicable to real-life scenarios. Conversely, Howard (2019) implemented slow thinking in their design by using event-related cues such as making both "strong arguments" and "no arguments" while asking for a donation. They have concluded that donation calls triggering slow (logical) processing mechanisms were more effective in eliciting donations, as individuals chose to donate more when there were strong arguments presented when explaining why each contribution mattered. Here, we follow a similar approach in our design, by triggering slow thinking via *earth-quake related* logical messages. These prior inconsistent findings were not sufficient to guarantee a positive response to a specific donation call style. Here, we suggest that provoking the role of affect with stimuli that is more relevant to the donation cause itself could make a

difference in succession. Mathematical tasks, although may increase slow (logical) thinking, do not prompt thinking deeper into donation decisions. Therefore, the statistical data of the donation cause that is being presented to individuals may still put them under a slow thinking state. Which, in comparison to the visual saliency that is usually used for the identifiable victim effect, would be a more fair comparison to make rather than number memorization.

To sum up, in this study we create a clear division between different styles of donation calls by using the identifiable victim effect (for fast processing) and the role of affect (for slow processing). The identifiable victim effect was previously used for evoking an immediate emotional reaction from potential donors and increasing donation amounts. On the other hand, the role of affect was previously used for providing individuals with a substantial amount of factual information, triggering a logical reaction toward the charitable cause. By including the role of affect in this study, our goal is to prevent individuals from relying solely on their emotional judgment when assessing the effectiveness of their contribution. Also, we wanted to introduce a novel way of triggering the slow thinking mechanism other than mathematical problems. Our main goal was to replicate an actual charitable interaction without emphasizing the experimental setting as much as possible. However, considering the density of the proven success of the identifiable victim effect in increasing donation amounts, and the less remarkable results that the role of affect in increasing the donations, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2 (*Donation Call*): Individuals who experience a fast (emotional) donation call instead of a slow (logical) one will be more likely to:

a. Accept a donation call.

b. Donate higher amounts.

***Allocation of Donations***

The dual-processing mechanism discussed earlier was also applied to investigate donation methods in this research, which was referred to as "allocation of donations." While the literature primarily focused on the donation call when addressing the amount donated, a few discussions exist around the allocation of donations. For instance, a study by Suk & Mudita (2022) showed that different methods of donation collection can influence how much people donate. They tested the order of donation calls and requested amounts to see if the presentation order affected the amount collected. Sentences like “X amount is needed! Turkey needs your support” and “Turkey needs your support! X amount is needed!” were presented to two experimental groups in order to see which order would generate more donations. The authors found that showing the donation cause first was associated with higher donation amounts, but that the collection methods were not effective in either order. They also found that showing the donation cause first resulted in higher donation amounts, but the collection methods were not effective in either order. These findings provide an example of how the donation procedure design can by itself impact the amount that is donated. However, one limitation of this study was not tailoring the allocation methods to the same extent as their other experimental factors. Here, we tailored the allocation methods according to the level of control that individuals have and observe whether the intensity of the given autonomy resulted in different donation amounts.

In another example of studies that manipulate allocation methods, Chang and Chen (2019) introduced two different product placement strategies for two charitable causes. In the first strategy, an individual would win a product when donating to the "inspirational cause," while in the second strategy, an individual would buy an additional product that would be sent out to benefit the "sympathetic cause." The division between the inspirational and sympathetic

causes was derived from the dual-processing theory, claiming that fast (emotional) decision making in the inspirational condition. The authors concluded that fast processing leads to a higher amount of donation. However, in Chang & Chen's study (2019), the design aimed to trigger a fast or slow process via incorporating gift incentives, instead of focusing on logical or emotional processes themselves. Here, we differentiated between the allocation methods by designing different levels of control in the process, highlighting the effect of the nature of the donation procedure itself. We implemented different severity of control on the allocation of donations and observed whether the presence or lack of control would trigger slow or fast processing, and in return increasing the amount donated. We suggest that the presence of control would trigger a slow process because controlled settings and a density of options push individuals to search for the most applicable decision. It almost becomes a prerequisite for the brain to engage in critical thinking when there are a variety of choices. Hence, we suggest that a lack of control would trigger a fast thinking process. A less controlled and simpler mechanism provides a single action which individuals do not need to reflect on as much as the prior case.

In summary, we aimed to explore how different allocation methods might influence individuals' donation decisions, taking into account both emotional and logical factors. By manipulating allocation methods to trigger either the fast or slow processing, this study aimed to understand how individuals respond to different approaches in the donation allocation process for the first time in the relevant literature. We ensured the allocation methods were accurately manipulated, so that the fast or slow processing would indeed be triggered, via the lens of the cognitive load theory and the effect of autonomy.

***Cognitive Load and Slow Thinking.*** Cognitive load is a term that was first introduced to explain the limitations of our working memory by John Sweller (1988). It was introduced to

explain the learning process of individuals and suggested that stimuli overload for the working memory would prevent information from being transferred into our long-term memories (Sweller, 1988). In line with the dual-processing theory, the role of cognitive load was previously used to understand altruistic behavior. A study by Tinghög et al. (2016) evaluated donation behavior by applying manipulations of time and cognitive load. In their study, they forced the participants to respond to questions as fast as they could (time-pressure group), meanwhile the cognitive-load group was bombarded with factual information that they were required to remember afterwards. The authors concluded that cognitive load neither prevented or predicted altruistic behavior (Tinghög et al., 2016). Time pressure also did not produce significant results. One limitation of this study is that the authors did not focus on the donation messages and provided manipulations that were *irrelevant to* donation behavior. Taking into consideration the insights from this prior study, the question arose of how to differentiate the *relevant* dual-processing triggers in the context of allocation methods. One study by Grossman et al. 's (2014) introduced the concept of cognitive load to distinguish between fast (emotional) and slow (logical) triggers behind donation decisions. Although their research did not specifically focus on the allocation of donations, they present an applicable distinction between the two processing styles. For slow (logical) processing, they imposed a cognitive load by asking participants to memorize strings of numbers before introducing the donation call (Grossman et al., 2014). However, their experimental design had limitations when comparing the fast and slow processing outcomes. As previously mentioned, the numerical tasks are also irrelevant when used in comparison to emotional victim imagery (the fast process) and create a discrepancy. This discrepancy may have distorted their findings, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions. Our reasoning here is that it would be a detaching experience for the participant to

face an emotional image and be redirected to a mathematical challenge. To address this detachment issue, the present study aims to create *relevant* cognitive load by increasing the steps of the donation tasks. This approach allowed for a more authentic and continuous experience, enabling participants to experience different levels of cognitive demands while allocating resources for donations. Unlike previous studies, we avoided introducing a non-charity-related challenge to the participants and relied on increasing cognitive load via event-related tasks. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the trigger for slow (logical) processing in allocation methods was ensured through the cognitive load theory by adding more steps to the donation procedure, creating a more natural and accurate experimental setting for investigating the influence of cognitive demands on donation behavior.

***Autonomy and Fast Thinking.*** For the design of the fast (emotional) condition, we built on the literature regarding autonomy. Donation behavior ideally should be autonomous, meaning that individuals should feel in control of their decisions when contributing to a charitable cause and not forced into it. Prior research also showed that individuals tend to be more supportive when feeling autonomous (Ferguson et al., 2015). If individuals feel emotionally manipulated or if the allocation process is overly complex, it may lead to unsuccessful donation calls. Also, individuals who tend to experience more control over the way they make donations are more likely to donate higher amounts (Lv & Huang, 2022). However, previous findings on autonomy may have overlooked the varying severities of donation causes and how they can overshadow an individual's need for control. To address this, Evans and Stanovich (2013) made a distinction between "automatic" and "controlled" responses in the context of the dual-processing theory, corresponding to fast and slow thinking processes, respectively. They found that autonomous processes resulted in faster and more automatic reactions, reducing the potential for individual

differences to occur. However, when individuals faced challenging tasks or encountered complex sentences, they engaged in higher-order reasoning processes, leading to slower and more controlled decision-making. As Thompson (2013) pointed out, this would also contain autonomy. This was a direct response to Evans & Stanovich's (2013) findings, which claimed that as long as individual decision making is present, there is a sense of autonomy. Applying this knowledge to the framework of donation behaviors, an autonomous allocation page is likely to result in a faster allocation decision. Following Evans & Stanovich's (2013) individual differences argument, a slow allocation method should bring up these differences and remind individuals that some of them are victims of a national disaster, whereas the rest of them are observers. In line with this argumentation, we suggest that an autonomous allocation method will trigger fast processing, as the lack of in-depth actions presented on a donation page would suppress the need for critical thinking.

In summary, we claim that different designs of the donation methods will either trigger the slow process (via cognitive load) or the fast process (via underlining autonomy). We expect that these fast and slow processes will directly influence the donation amounts, where the amounts are higher when individuals are able to make informed decisions and critically think about where they are spending their money. Parallel to our suggestions, the following hypothesis was formulated:

> *H3 (Allocation of Donations):* Individuals who are able to allocate the amount of donations in a slow (logical) processing manner instead of a fast (emotional) manner will donate higher amounts.

***Trust in Brand***

During the last few years, trust has become a significant concern for charities and nonprofits as they operate in an increasingly digital world (Kenang & Gosal, 2021). Whether it is the high salaries of charity workers, abuse of charitable standing (Gaskin, 1999) or general corruption level of a government, digitalization places these issues into the public eye. In such a climate of questioning trust, brands and corporations took their place in the discussion (Wymer et al., 2013) while continuing to engage in charitable actions on a digital medium. From a corporate perspective, "trust in brand" is crucial for maintaining a strong relationship with customers (Koschate-Fischer & Gartner, 2015). Regardless of what the purpose of the brand is, corporations have been heavily relying on social responsibility projects and charitable actions as a way to enhance brand image (He & Lai, 2012). However, it remains unclear if this increased engagement in charitable actions is actually effective for increasing the trust in the brand.

Following the donation trend in order to increase trust in brands, huge corporations like eBay with suitable digital infrastructures have integrated donation options into their business platforms. It was observed that the initiative of eBay resulted in increased trust in the brand (Aldridge & Fowles, 2012). However, it is important to note that similar conditions may not yield the same results for all businesses (Aldridge & Fowles, 2012). Additionally, it is debatable if the charity implementations led to an increase in trust towards eBay, or if this trust was already existing given eBay's high success and popularity. However, when considering a brand that individuals are less familiar with, it is reasonable to assume that the inclusion of a donation option would result in higher trust in the brand, since the brand seems to align with the customers' values and altruism virtues. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*H4 (Trust):* Individuals will report higher levels of trust in an e-commerce brand when the brand includes a donation option.

# Method

## Design

This study tested the effect of cultural differences, donation calls and allocation methods through the lens of the dual-processing theory. This study was conducted with the purpose of measuring donation decisions, trust, and amount donated by generating a fictional website to experiment on different conditions. The fictional website was specifically generated as an e-commerce platform for ecological validity while preserving control over the experiment. In addition, the e-commerce context may provide anchoring, in terms of the value of fictional money, assuming that the participants could be more inclined to make donation decisions on a donation platform in an experimental environment (Benz & Meier, 2006). A 4x4 experiment with a between-subject design was conducted. This method allowed the participants to randomly experience (for randomness algorithm see Appendix A) one of four different conditions in a large sample and analyze whether the conditions have an effect on the overall trust and the outcome of different decision making processes during an e-commerce site experience. The experiment was conducted via an online questionnaire in Qualtrics with the Javascript integration of four separate prototypes that were specifically designed for the purposes of this research. The prototypes were implemented as a simple click-through website, based on an initial design in Figma (Figma, n.d.). As this study required a rather large sample size, the questionnaire format was preferred for convenience and accessibility reasons. Two different Qualtrics links were sent out for Turkish and non-Turkish participants to ensure the four prototype conditions would be equally separated for Turkish and non-Turkish participants while observing a possible effect of cultural differences.

## Participants

A total of 227 participants were recruited for this research. Individuals were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions that were mentioned above (fast/slow donation call and fast/slow allocation method). However, data cleaning eliminated 121 participants due to attention checks and the valid data consisted of 106 individuals. Table 1 depicts the detailed demographic information of the participants.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information of the Participants*

| | | Number of Participants | Turkish | Non-Turkish |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 45 | 26 | 19 |
| | Female | 60 | 33 | 27 |
| | Non- Binary | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | High-school degree | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| | Bachelor degree | 4 | 35 | 11 |
| | Master's degree | 6 | 18 | 31 |
| | Other | 49 | 3 | 2 |
| | | 5 | | |
| Donation Call | Fast | 57 | 31 | 26 |
| | Slow | 49 | 29 | 20 |
| Allocation Method | Fast | 59 | 34 | 25 |
| | Slow | 47 | 26 | 21 |

The participants were gathered using convenience sampling, from the researcher's network via social media contacts and other communication channels. There were no inclusion criteria in terms of gender and educational background of the participants as this research only evaluates the frequency of e-commerce usage behavior and sentiments. However, an inclusion

criteria regarding age was applied, and the participants under the age of 25 were not included in this research. The reason behind this criteria was the fact that individual income was one of the most important considerations in this research when autonomously deciding to spend money on donations and ages below 25 are not likely to have individual income. The sample size was also divided to two groups in terms of nationality where 80 of the participants were gathered from Turkey, whereas the rest of the participants were gathered from other countries in order to make a cultural differentiation for the purposes of this research.

**Procedure**

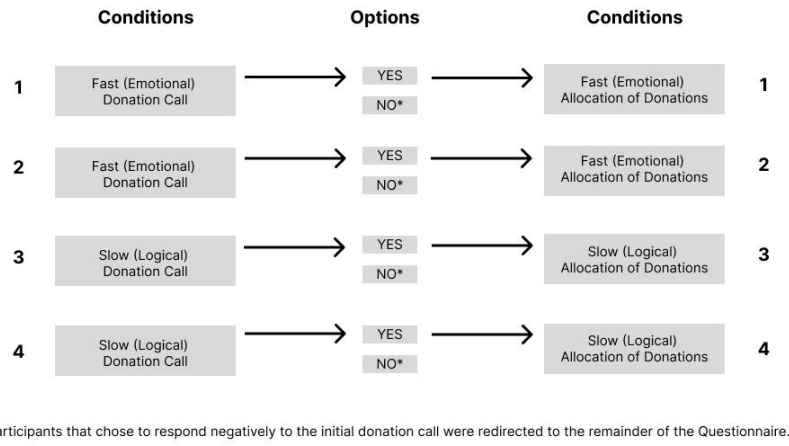
The questionnaire was distributed through online social media or communication channels via the Qualtrics link that was provided. The questionnaire began with a consent form (included in Appendix B) which contained a short explanation of the study along with a brief assurance that the fictional account, credit card, and address information that the participants will interact with were only placed for displaying purposes and the participants would not be asked to provide any personal information. Before the experiment began, the users were informed that any user information or credit card information that they would view during this experiment is designed for familiarity purposes and no monetary or digital information of the participants would be required throughout the experience.

The first data gathering block of the questionnaire began with common questions regarding age, gender, nationality and educational background (included in Appendix C) which contributed to the cultural differences investigated in this study. The monetary values addressed in the questionnaire were also modified to a Turkish and non-Turkish setting to prevent an additional cognitive load which could possibly occur while calculating currency changes, which were the only questions in the questionnaire that were different from each other (see Appendix D

& Appendix E). Following the general demographic questions, the participants were shown a validated questionnaire regarding their general trust in brands and charities (included in Appendix F). Before introducing the prototypes that were specifically designed for the purposes of this study, the participants were shown a generic paragraph that introduced the fictional brand of ShopDrop briefly (prompt available in Appendix G), and were asked to reflect on the perceived trustworthiness of the brand by following the further questions of the same validated questionnaire. Each participant only experienced one prototype condition out of the four (see Appendix H), which were randomized by Qualtrics. Figure 2 states the differentiation between these four conditions.

**Figure2**

*Differentiation of Conditions*




The Figma integration to Qualtrics via Javascript allowed the recording of time spent on the pages of the prototype, alongside the clicking actions of the participants. Experiencing the prototype started by showing the participants a task on purchasing a specific product on an e-commerce website by using the category tree of the website and the filters. After successfully completing the task, the participants were then shown one of the four different conditions of a donation call and a donation allocation process (Figure 2). The participants chose between

donating and not donating. If they responded positively to the donation call, they had the opportunity to change their mind and leave the task by not allocating any amount; which was stored separately from the initial response of not donating.

After their experience with the prototype websites, participants were presented with the same validated questionnaire on trust. This way, we observed if perceived trust towards the brand ShopDrop had changed after their shopping experience. Followingly, several open-ended questions were presented to participants alongside another validated questionnaire on autonomy, as a measure of the level of autonomy they had experienced while experiencing the prototypes.

**Materials**

The main material for this research was a questionnaire with a four-way randomization regarding different e-commerce site prototypes. The prototypes were of a fictional e-commerce brand named “ShopDrop” and it was designed to be a lookalike of other e-commerce sites in order to assure familiarity of users. The ShopDrop website was created via online prototyping tool Figma, converted to a simple website, and then implemented into Qualtrics by Javascript based code integrations. The experience of ShopDrop began by showing a task that needed to be completed by the participants. The task demanded the fictional purchase of a specific product by using the website’s category tree and filtering options.

**Figure 3:**

*Screenshot of the task page presented in Qualtrics (Figma, n.d.)*

Purchase the product shown above named “Red four person tent with additional room” from the “Outdoors” category. Use the category tree and filters of the website only. Do not try to purchase anything else.

GO

The four prototypes were identical to one another until the checkout process of each participant. The product that needed to be purchased was specifically chosen to be a genderless product with a salient color, that would later on connect to the donation call message as a need of the earthquake victims.

**Figure 4:**

*Screenshot of the identical flow for all participants*

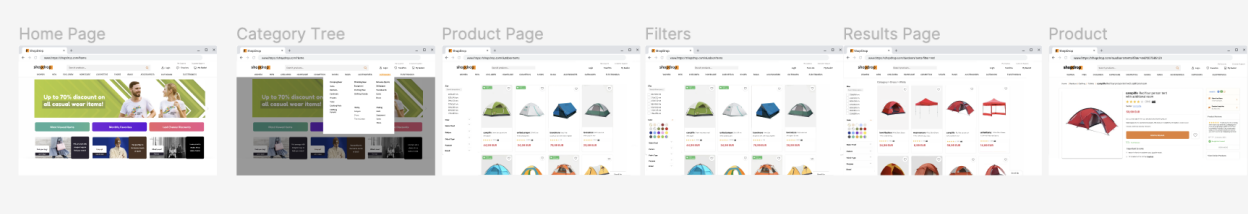
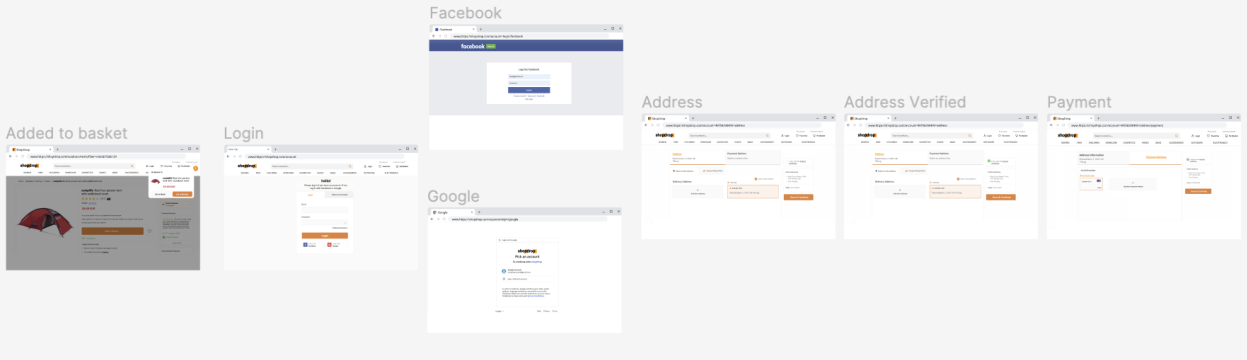



**Figure 5:**

*Screenshot of the identical flow for all participants (continued)*




The pages were titled respectively as; Home Page, Category Tree, Product Page, Filters, Results Page, Product, Added to Basket, Login, Facebook & Google Login, Addresses, Address Verified and Payment. The assigned task, as mentioned above, was to purchase a camping tent. From the home page onwards, the participants navigated through the pages by using the required filters and category trees that were provided. Towards the checkout process, the prototype filled

in sample login information, sample address information, and sample credit card information as frequently used e-commerce sites generally keep returning user information stored. After the payment page, the four manipulations were randomly applied to the ShopDrop website for the four different experimental conditions.

**Figure 6:**

*Screenshot of the Fast (Emotional) Donation Call*

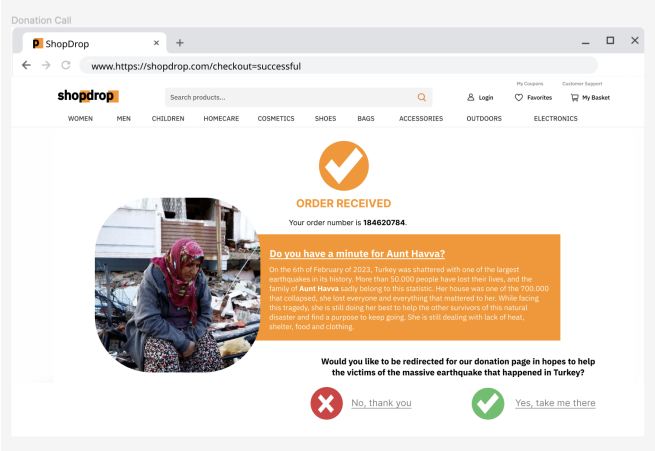
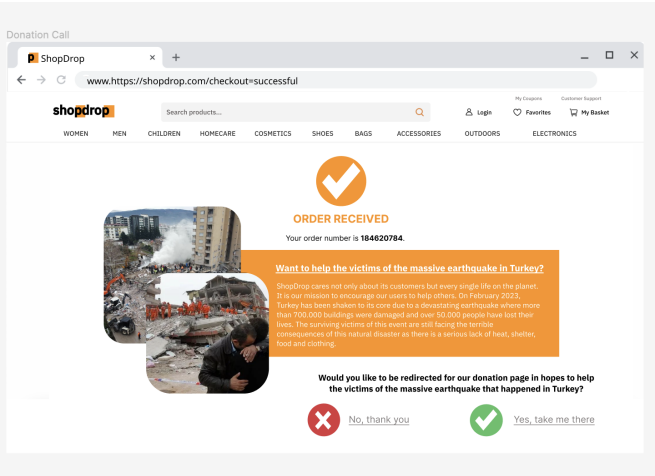



**Figure 7:**

*Screenshot of the Slow (Logical) Donation Call*



Figures 6 & 7 present the two variations of the fast (emotional) and slow (logical) donation call, which were randomly introduced to the participants. The fast call was aimed at invoking the emotions of the participants, where the identifiable victim effect was used by fictionalizing a victim. The slow call aimed at invoking logical thinking of the participants by simply presenting the facts of the earthquake and triggering a more rational process. The participants who accepted to make a donation were randomly presented with the fast (emotional) or slow (logical) donation allocation pages depicted on Figures 8 & 9.

**Figure 8:**

*Screenshot of the Fast (Emotional) Donation Allocations with slider*

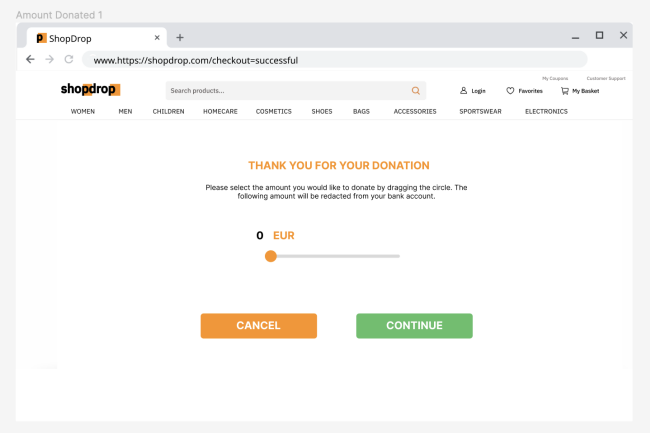
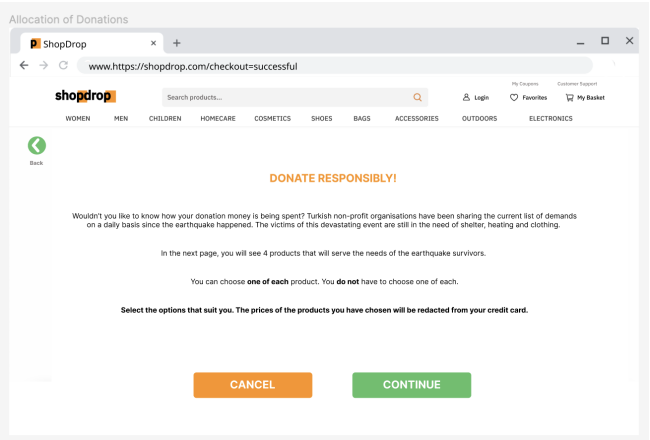
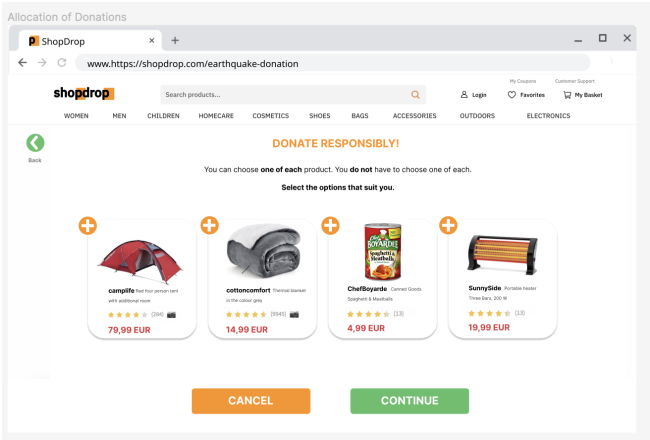



**Figure 9:**

*Screenshot of the Slow (Logical) Donation Allocations with product selection*

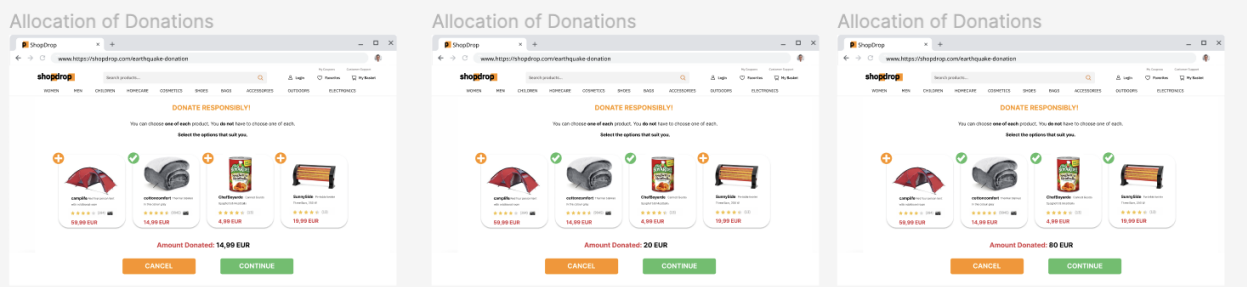


The fast allocation page (Figure 8) included a slider feature that only allows for a designated amount to donate, for which the maximum donation amount is 100 EUR. This slider was chosen for the allocating donation, since it did not have any other functionality. The slow allocation method is presented in Figure 9, which includes the availability of controlling how the donation money will be spent and spread across different needs. This process was chosen for the slow allocation of donations, where participants would now have learnt about the major needs of the earthquake survivors (either emotionally or logically) and now they could allocate their funds on what they believe the earthquake region needed the most. For this part, the maximum amount donated was also 100 EUR, if the participant agreed to include each one of each product presented. The participants could also choose either one, two, three or four of all the products presented (Figure 10), however they could only choose each product once, as stated on the page itself.

**Figure 10:**

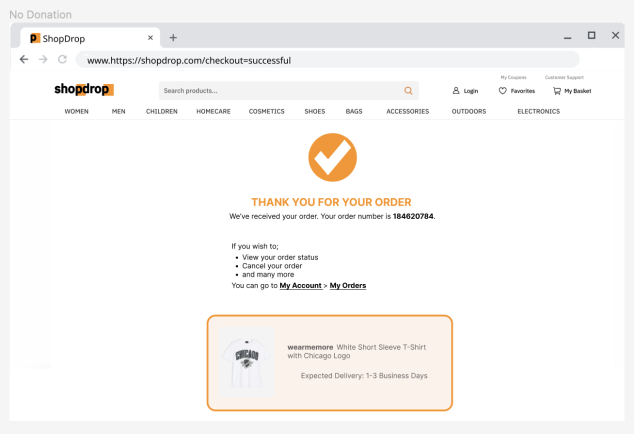
*Screenshot of possible donation allocations*




The participants were able to decline the initial donation call or abort while on the allocation pages by clicking “cancel”. In both cases, they would be thanked for their initial purchase (see Figure 11) of the tent (initial task completion) and continue on with the questionnaire on Qualtrics (Qualtrics, n.d.).

**Figure 11:**

*Screenshot of the No Donation Page*




## Measurements

The data was gathered through a questionnaire on Qualtrics. The questionnaire contained demographic questions at the beginning and it continued with Chapman et al.'s (2021) validated questionnaire on trust regarding corporations and non-profit organizations. This scale originally includes certain questions about the shift of trust after an apology message regarding a scandal. These questions were removed from the questionnaire for the purposes of the current study. The remaining questions regarding brand trust and trust directed to charitable organizations were implemented fully. The trust scale was presented to the participants twice: once at the beginning, after viewing an informative text on the brand (pre-trust) and once again after the donation experience on the brand's website (post-trust). Pre/post-trust was measured with seven items (e.g. 'I would buy their product') on a 7 point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The results revealed that the scale had good reliability ($\alpha = .811$).

After the trust questionnaires, the participants were asked whether they were affected by the events of the earthquake in Turkey on February 6$^{th}$, 2023 (see Appendix I). Depending on their prior knowledge on the earthquake, the participants were asked about their actual previous

donation behavior for the victims of the earthquake (Appendix J). All participants were given a set of open-ended questions (Appendix K) in order to receive qualitative insights on their experience of ShopDrop. Lastly, in order to measure autonomy, another validated questionnaire (Appendix L) was presented to the participants, to check if they actually felt more autonomous while experiencing the prototype. This validated questionnaire was originally used to determine the level of autonomy reported of an individual behavior (Weinstein et al., 2012). A validity analysis for this scale is presented in Appendix M, where a questionnaire made up of 15 likert scale (ranging from 1 to 7) questions divided into 3 subcategories with a high reliability score ($\alpha = .621$). This questionnaire was altered to simply evaluate the level of autonomy experienced after each prototype interaction. For instance, where an original question from the questionnaire was "I do a lot of things to avoid feeling ashamed" (Weinstein et al., 2012) we presented the question as "I donate to avoid feeling ashamed" for the purposes of this study. This modification was done in order to measure the perceived autonomy of participants, through the possible significant effect of either fast or slow donation allocation processes.

**Statistical Analysis**

All analyses were conducted on IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29.01). Hypothesis 1a was tested using a proportions test in order to find a proportional distribution between nationality and accepting donation calls. H1b was analyzed with a t-test, where we tested if the donation amounts differed between different nationalities. Another proportions test was used for H2a, where we investigated if the acceptance of a donation call differed according to the type of donation call. We tested H2b with a t-test, b in order to determine whether the donation amounts depend on the type of donation call. H3 was also tested with a similar t-test, in order to determine whether the amount donated was influenced by the allocation methods that were given to the

participants. Further analysis was conducted to observe the possible role of autonomy. Lastly, for H4, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to observe whether the pr/post- trust of the participants would change after experiencing ShopDrop.

## Results

### Nationality and Donation Behavior

**Figure 1**

*Accepting Donation Call According to Nationality*

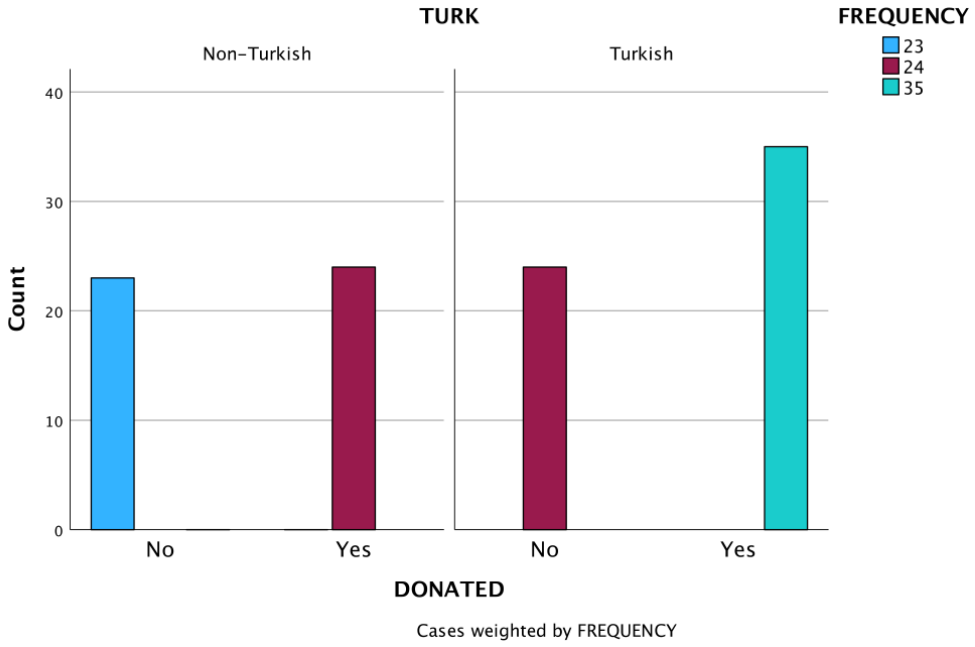



Figure 1 displays the proportional distribution of the donation decisions according to their nationality. The results of the proportions test showed that nationality was not a significant determinant ($X^2$ (1, N =106) = .72, $p$= .44) when accepting donation calls; therefore H1a was not confirmed.

**Nationality and Amount Donated**

**Figure 2**

*Amount Donated according to Nationality*

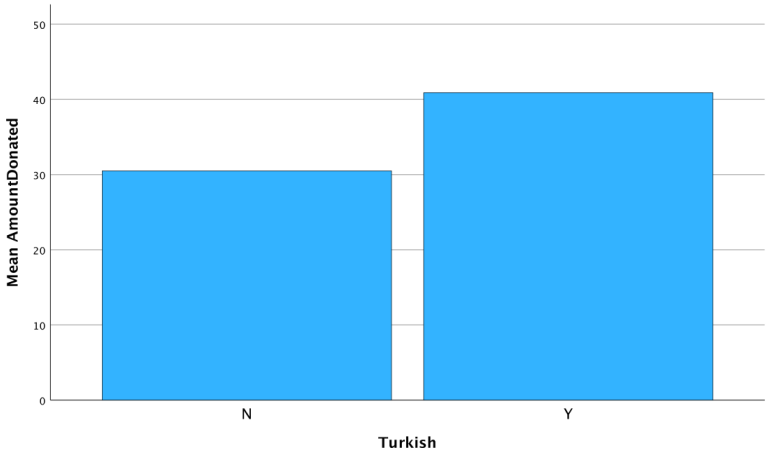



Figure 2 displays the mean amount donated in the prototype by both Turkish (Y) and non-Turkish (N) participants. For the test of H1b, a similar design was conducted for Turkish (Y) and non-Turkish (N) participants, this time tested for the (fictional) amount they donated. As previously mentioned, the amount donated was between 0-100 EUR for all participants regardless of which allocation method they had received. The participants that donated 0 EUR were categorized as "did not donate". Out of the 106 participants who took part in this study, 59 of them chose to donate. Therefore, the test was done amongst 59 participants who allocated a donation amount. The t-test analyzed the state of being Turkish (1) or non-Turkish (0) and the numerical amounts donated between 0-100 EUR. On average, the sum amount that was donated by Turkish participants ($M$=40.89, $SD$=36.51) was higher than the amount donated by non-Turkish participants ($M$=30.50, $SD$=33.83). The mean difference had a small-sized effect ($d$=.293) which was not significant ($M_{dif}$=10.386, $t(57)$=1.115, $p$=.27). Therefore, H1b was also not confirmed.

**The Effect of Donation Calls on Donation Behavior**

**Figure 3**

*Frequency of Accepting a Donation Call Based on Dual-Processing*

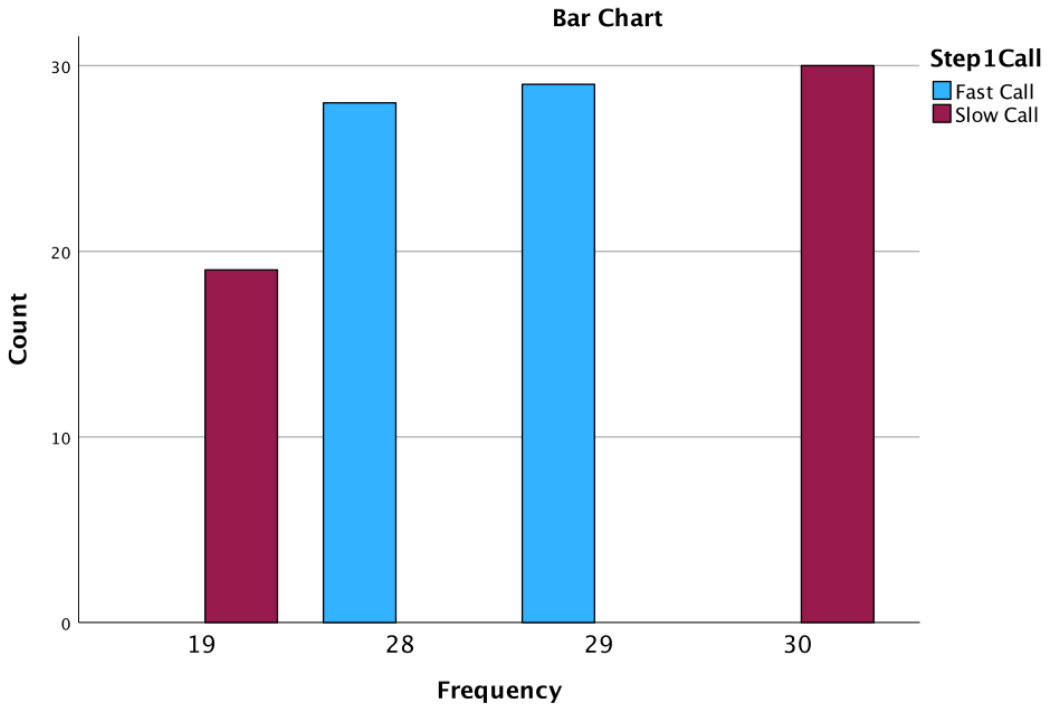



Figure 3 depicts the frequency of participants who have accepted a donation call based on the type of call they have received. It is observed that there is not a difference between acceptance rates for the fast and slow calls. The proportions test for H2a was conducted with the donation call as the independent variable and the (positive or negative) response to the donation call as the dependent variable. For this test, regardless of the nationality of the participants, the donation calls they had received were coded as (0) fast donation call and (1) slow donation call. These were then put in the proportions test with the participants' donation intentions in which (1) stood for accepting a donation call and (0) stood for not accepting the call. The left hand side of the graph indicates the rejected donation calls whereas the right hand side shows the accepted donation calls. The results of the proportions test revealed that the nature of the donation calls

was not a significant determinant for accepting a donation call ($X^2$ (1, N =106) = .285, p = .330). Following these findings, H2a was not confirmed.

**Figure 4**

*Total of Amounts Donated in Response to Donation Calls Based on Dual-Processing*

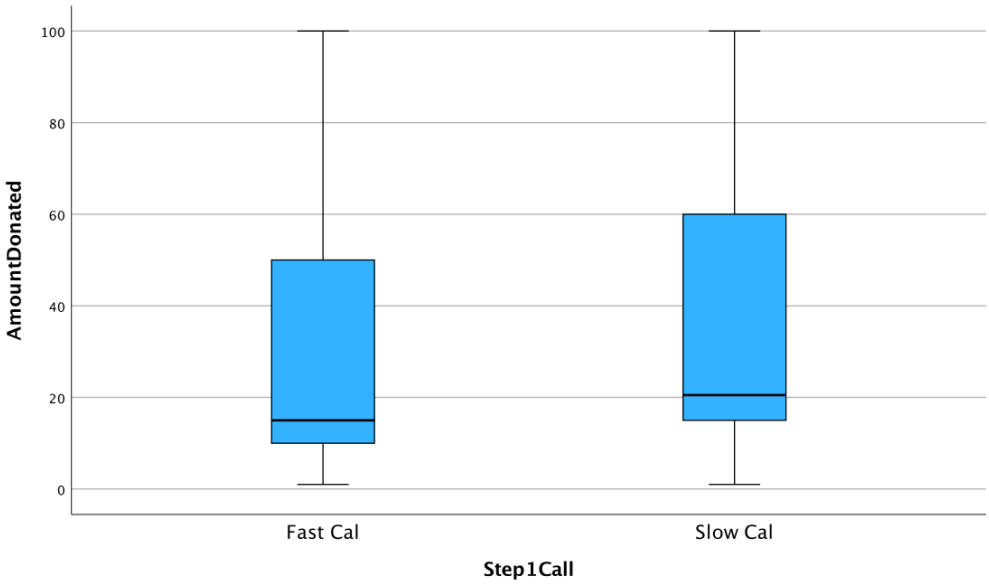



Figure 4 depicts the amounts donated amongst the 59 participants that have chosen to make a donation, based on the fast or slow donation call they had received. We performed a t-test, where the independent variable was the fast (0) or slow (1) donation calls. The dependent variable was the amount they had donated. On average, the amount that was donated by participants who have received a fast donation call ($M$=18.79, $SD$=33.21) was lower than the amount donated by participants who have received a slow donation call ($M$=22.67, $SD$=31.25). The mean difference had a small-sized effect ($d$=.504) which was not significant ($M_{dif}$=-3.89, $t(103)$= -.62, $p$=.54). Therefore, H2b was also rejected, showing that a fast donation call does not result in higher donation amounts.

**The Effect of Allocation Method on Donation Behavior**

**Figure 5**

*Total of Amounts Donated in Response to Allocation Methods Based on Dual-Processing*

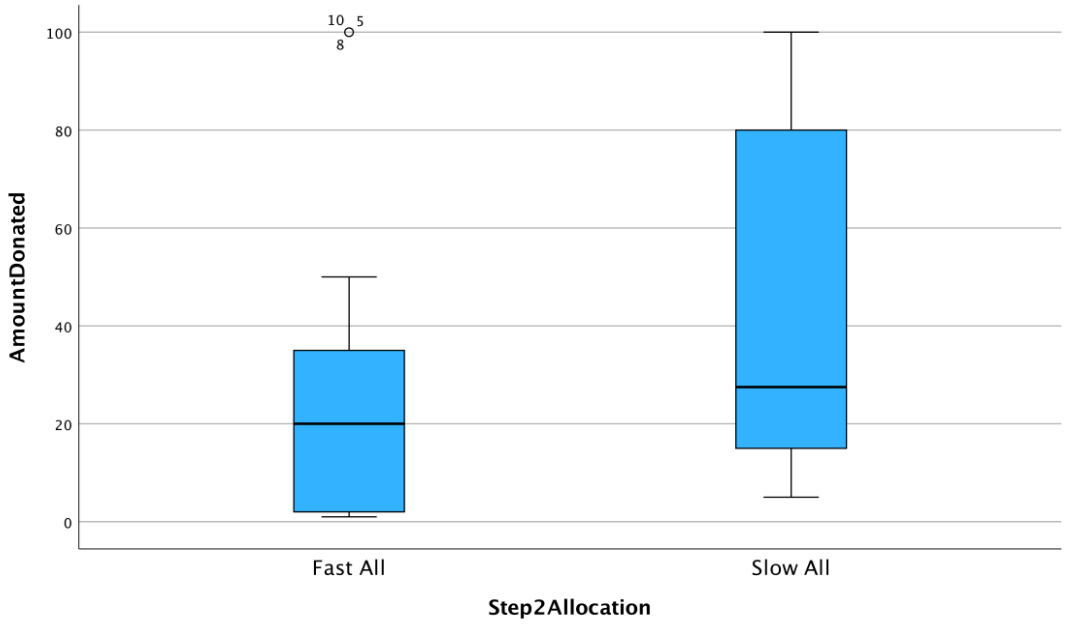
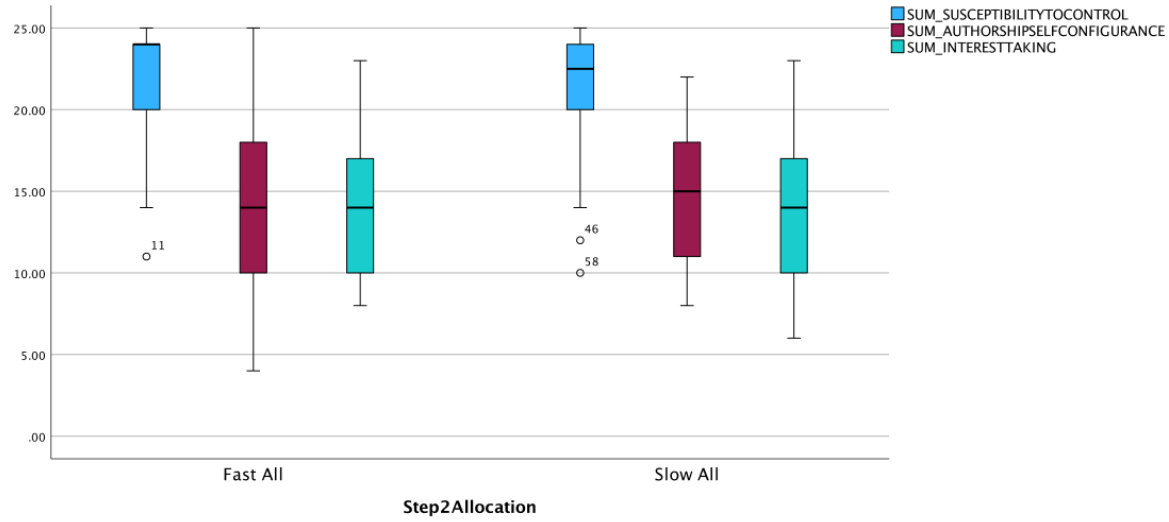



Figure 5 depicts the amounts donated by the participants between 0-100 EUR, based on the method of allocation they had received. Here, only the 59 participants who chose to make a donation could be included. In order to observe the effects of the fast and slow allocation methods, an independent sample t-test was conducted for H3. On average, the amount that was donated by participants who have received a fast allocation method ($M$=28.88, $SD$=33.474) was lower than the amount donated by participants who have received a slow allocation method ($M$=46.5, $SD$=36.215). There was a marginally insignificant difference between the two allocation methods in the expected direction ($Mdif$=-17.660, $t(57)$= -1.941, $p$=.057). Therefore, this data was not sufficient to confirm H3, however a rising trend was observed for the slow allocation method.

**Role of Autonomy in Relation to Allocation**

**Figure 6**

*Allocation Method and Autonomy*




A multivariate ANOVA was conducted for further analyzing the role of autonomy while testing H3, where the allocation methods were taken as the independent variables, and the three subscales of the self-report autonomy scale by Weinstein et al. (2012) were taken as the dependent variables. The three subscales in question were Authorship/ Self- Configurance, Susceptibility to Control and Interest-Taking. This analysis was also conducted for the 59 individuals that chose to donate for the purposes of this study. Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics of this analysis.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Step2Allocation | Step1Call | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Susceptibility to Control | Fast Allocation | Fast Call | 21.5263 | 4.04651 | 19 |
| | | Slow Call | 21.7143 | 3.72989 | 14 |
| | | Total | 21.6061 | 3.85632 | 33 |
| | Slow Allocation | Fast Call | 21.6000 | 4.03320 | 10 |
| | | Slow Call | 20.6250 | 4.39507 | 16 |
| | | Total | 21.0000 | 4.20476 | 26 |
| | Total | Fast Call | 21.5517 | 3.96940 | 29 |
| | | Slow Call | 21.1333 | 4.06612 | 30 |
| | | Total | 21.3390 | 3.98969 | 59 |
| Authorship / Self-Configurance | Fast Allocation | Fast Call | 15.0000 | 5.67646 | 19 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.1429 | 3.67648 | 14 |
| | | Total | 14.2121 | 4.94822 | 33 |
| | Slow Allocation | Fast Call | 16.9000 | 3.51030 | 10 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.2500 | 4.10690 | 16 |
| | | Total | 14.6538 | 4.22320 | 26 |
| | Total | Fast Call | 15.6552 | 5.05170 | 29 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.2000 | 3.84528 | 30 |
| | | Total | 14.4068 | 4.60928 | 59 |
| | Fast Allocation | Fast Call | 13.8421 | 4.43801 | 19 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.4286 | 3.73578 | 14 |
| | | Total | 13.6667 | 4.09776 | 33 |

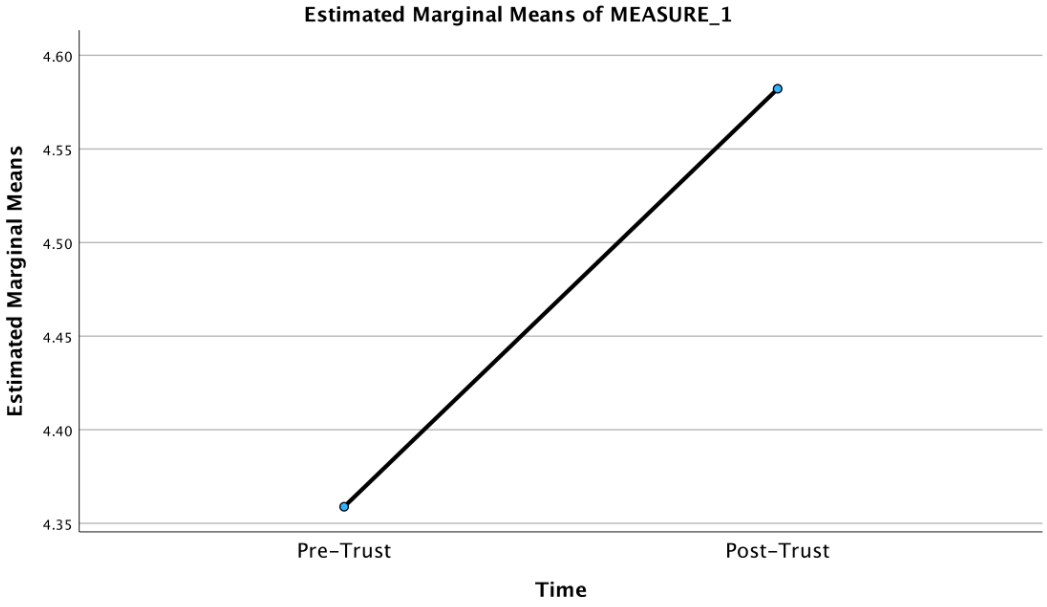
| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interest Taking | Slow Allocation | Fast Call | 13.6000 | 5.69990 | 10 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.9375 | 4.17083 | 16 |
| | | Total | 13.8077 | 4.70760 | 26 |
| | | Fast Call | 13.7586 | 4.80814 | 29 |
| | | Slow Call | 13.7000 | 3.91417 | 30 |
| | | Total | 13.7288 | 4.33840 | 59 |

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, since the Levene's test of equality of error variances was not significant for neither of the dependent variables: authorship /self-configurance, (F(3, 55) = 2.002, p = .124) susceptibility to control (F(3, 55) = .035, p = .991) and interest- taking (F(3, 55) = .758, p = .522). According to the between-subject effects, there was a significant effect of the donation call on authorship / self-configurance of the participants (F(1,55)= 5.199, p=.026). The fast call for donations resulted in higher scores on authorship and configurance than the slow call. However, there was no significant effect observed of the allocation methods on neither authorship and configurance (F(1,55)= 14.059, p=.410**)**, susceptibility to control (F(1,55)= 3.599, p=.643**)**, nor interest taking (F(1,55)= .248, p=.975**)**. As for the interaction effect of donation calls and allocation methods, there was no significant effect observed on authorship and configurance (F(1,55)= 11.217, p=.461**)**, susceptibility to control (F(1,55)= 4.720, p=.596**)** and interest taking (F(1,55)= 1.968, p=.754**)**. In summary, the donation call was shown to be related with higher autonomy experiences, in terms of authorship / self-congruence.

**The Option to Donate and Trust towards the Brand**

**Figure 7**

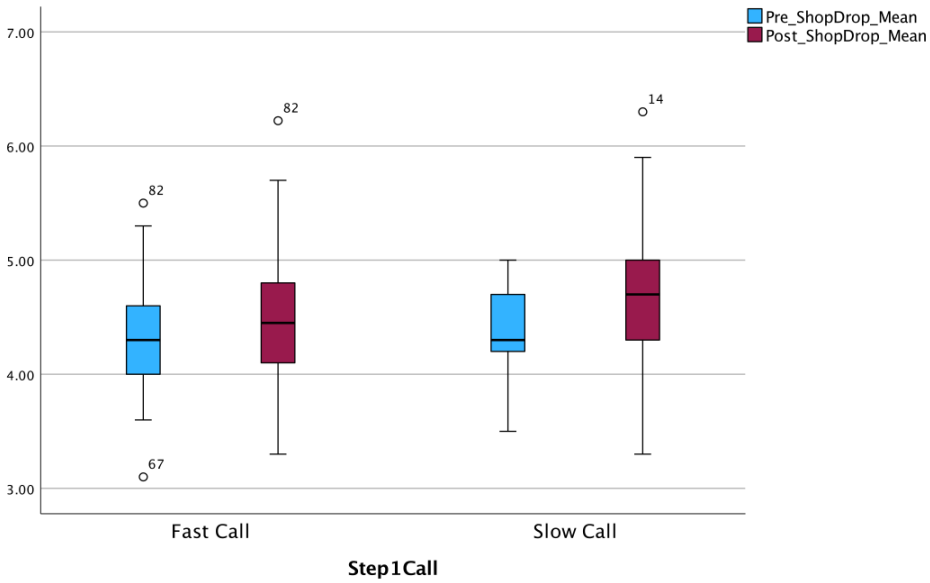
*Trust of Participants Before and After Experiencing ShopDrop*




A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to observe whether significant difference of trust between participants before and after experiencing the fictional ShopDrop website. As this study measured the trust towards the fictional brand of ShopDrop before and after experiencing the website, the two trust measures were taken separately, labeled as "pre-trust" and "post-trust". On average, the pre-trust reported by participants ($M$=4.34, $SD$=.399) was lower than the post-trust reported amongst the same individuals ($M$=4.56, $SD$=.559). The interaction effect of time on pre-trust and post-trust of individuals was significant ($F(1,105)= .990$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, as trust was observed to be increased after the website experience, H4 was confirmed.

**Figure 8**

*Trust and Donation Call*



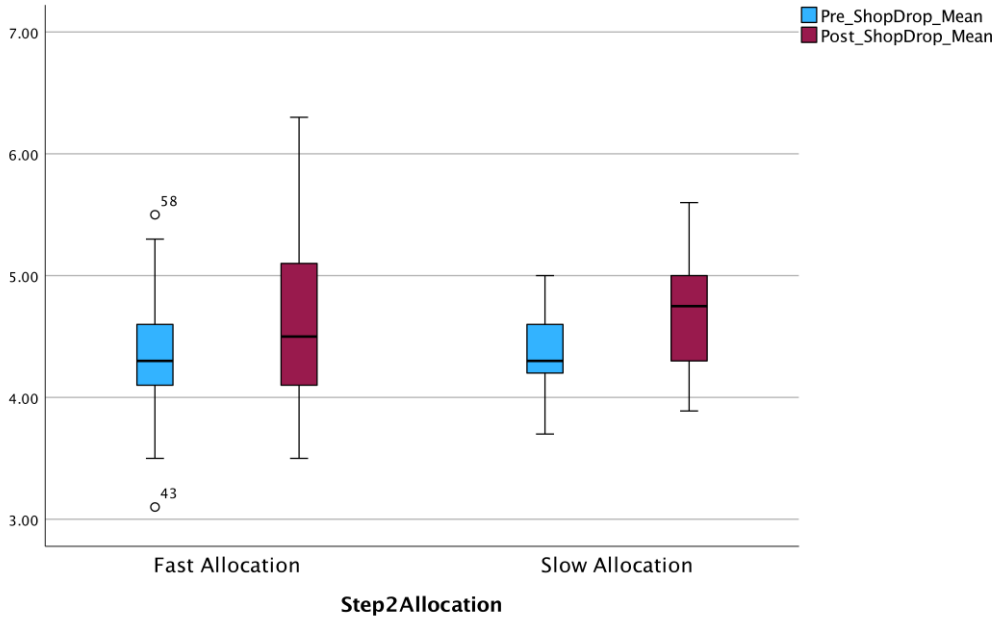

As an additional analysis for H4, we tested if the increased trust towards the brand was influenced by the donation calls. Figure 8 represents the trust reported by individuals before and after they have experienced ShopDrop, according to the donation call they have received. Visually, post-trust of the participants appeared to be higher for participants who have received a slow donation call. The trust scores were normally distributed for pre-trust ($z_{kurtosis}$ = .465, $z_{skewness}$= -0.85) and post-trust ($z_{kurtosis}$ = .403, $z_{skewness}$= .299). The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for both pre-trust (F(1, 101) = .585, p = .446) and post- trust (F(1, 101) = .365, p = .547) because the Levene's test of equality of error variances was not significant.

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to observe whether there was a significant shift of the trust for the brand in accordance with the donation call. The repeated measures testing was done by defining "time" as the repeated measure, as the dependent variables were determined on the time of experiencing trust before the prototype, and the time after. The

interaction effect between fast & slow donation calls and the time of experiencing trust was not significant (F(1,99)= .672, p=.414); which showed that donation calls did not predict the change in the trust levels of individuals. As a result of this, this additional analysis did not reveal any effects on the change in trust levels.

**Figure 9**

*Trust and Allocation Method*

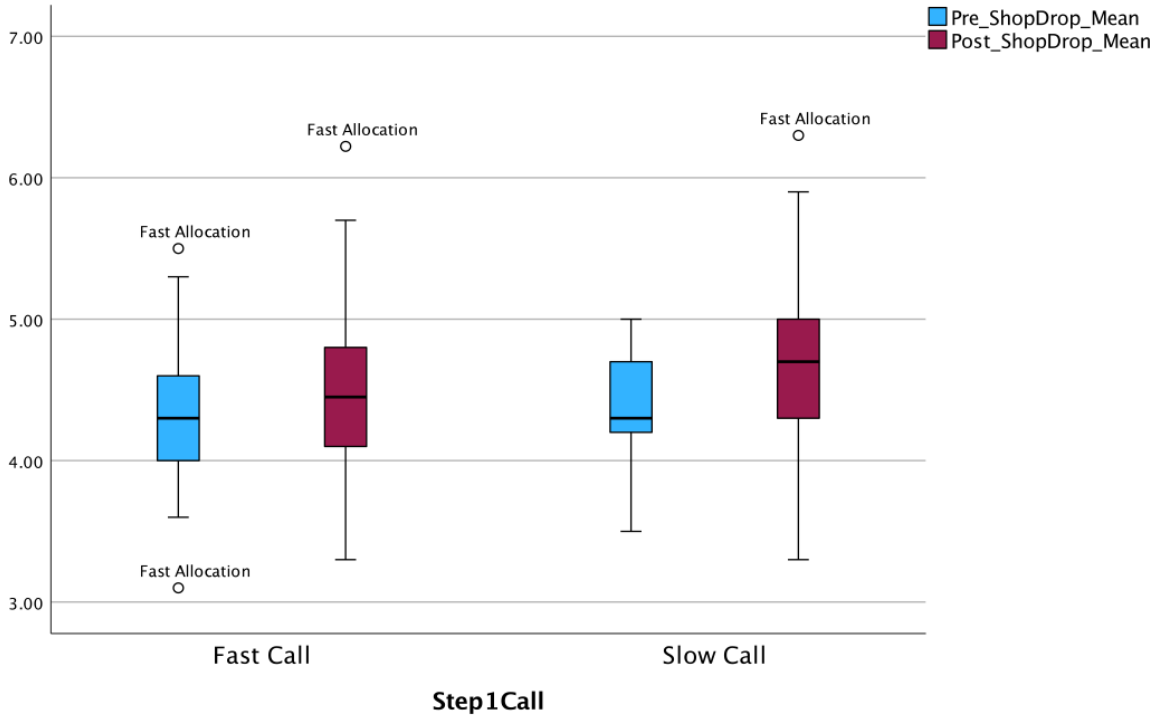



As a further analysis of H4, we tested if the allocation method had any effect on the change in trust levels before and after the donation experience. Figure 9 depicts the distribution of pre/post-trust of the participants according to which method of allocations they had received in the experiment. The figure visually shows that the change in trust was higher when presented with a fast allocation method. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to observe whether there was a significant shift of the trust for the brand in accordance with the allocation methods. The repeated measures testing was once again by taking account the interaction of "time" as the dependent variable. The allocation of donations where the fast (0) and slow (1) allocation

processes acted as the independent variable. We saw that the method of donation allocation did not affect the change in the individuals' levels of trust (F(1,99)= .073, p=.788).

**Figure 10**

*Trust and the Combination of Donation Calls and Allocation Methods*




In order to observe if a specific combination of donation calls and allocation methods contributed to the difference in pre-post trust of the participants, an additional analysis was conducted. Once again, the interaction of time was taken into account while conducting the repeated measures ANOVA. As figure 10 shows, there was no significant interaction (F(1,99)= .586, p=.446) between trust and a donation call & allocation method. Therefore, a specific combination of different donation calls and allocation methods were not determinants of the change in the trust levels of participants.

*Qualitative Analysis on Trust*

Lastly, we checked if the subjective characteristics of the participants had any effect on their tendency to build trust towards the brand. We asked the participants why they decided to donate or not donate. Their qualitative responses showed that different motivations to donate did not have a significant effect on trust. When asked why the participants had or had not made a donation, the written responses from the participants were divided under five categories being “agency" (when referring to having experienced control over the situation)”, “ease (when emphasizing the ease of the platform”, “help (when explaining the worth of philanthropy)”, “trust (when feeling trust for the ShopDrop platform) ” and “no trust (when feeling no trust for the ShopDrop platform)”. However, none of the categories had a noticeable density in comparison to others. In total, only 5 participants reported that the ShopDrop platform made donating an easy practice. In total, 27 of the participants reported that they only donated to help people in need, while 25 individuals either made real-life donations prior to the experiment or did not want to conform with a seemingly profitable company’s donation requests and brought their sense of agency forward. 23 participants reported no trust towards the brand ShopDrop and 10 participants explicitly reported trust for the website. When asked about how the participants felt about their donation decisions, 49 out of 106 participants have reported sympathy for the victims. The majority of individuals did not mention anything about the trustworthiness of the platform.When asked about the participants’ general feelings toward ShopDrop, 45 out of 106 participants reported a positive emotion. However, only 5 of these 45 positive emotions were about trust felt towards the platform. Therefore, although a variety of emotions were in existence in the participants’ self-report, “trust" was not a striking detail amongst the open-ended questions.

## Discussion

Prior studies have investigated the relationship between the dual-processing mechanism of individuals and general donation behavior. This study took into account many additional factors that could be triggered by different dual-processing mechanisms and attempted to find an increased donation behavior under the right donation calls and allocation methods. Even though the majority of our hypotheses were not supported by the data, our results brought up interesting questions that could be looked into further.

### Cultural Differences

*Culture and Willingness to Donate & Amount Donated*

The demographic distribution of the participants of this study has acted in a way to explore Pentecost and Andrews' (2009) argumentation further, implying that newer generations are less inclined to help others. The majority of the participants were examples of the newer generations that were mentioned in 2009 (Pentecost & Andrews, 2009). However, in terms of demographic information, neither age nor nationality proved to be crucial determinants on individuals' donation decisions. On the other hand, nationality of the participants did not predict a higher tendency to donate or higher donation amounts. It's important to note that when inspecting the graphs of these hypotheses (H1a & H1b), the visual representations of the analysis show a rising trend of Turkish participants being more willing to donate and willing to donate higher amounts as well. Therefore, a larger sample size could have revealed statistically significant results.

### Donation Calls

*Identifiable Victim Effect*

Friedrich & McGuire's claims on the identifiable victim effect (Friedrich & McGuire, 2010) was not supported by the data in this study. Pointing out a single victim instead of statistical facts was not enough to make a significant difference on the proportions of accepting a donation call. However, the donation call including the single victim proved to be effective in raising the sense of authorship and self-configurance felt by individuals, as part of their sense of autonomy. It could be argued that individuals feel more autonomous while making the initial decision to donate, if the call appeals to the identifiable victim effect. This could potentially be an additional area to explore for future research and Howard's (2019) claim about the effectiveness of logical processing mechanisms on donation calls may need more confirmation. Conversely, the suggested relationships regarding the effect of donation calls on the donation decision and amount (H2a & H2b), although insignificant, was visually at a rise for slow (logical) donation calls being more impactful on the amount donated. Nevertheless, there were not any substantial results that could indicate a more impactful type of donation call. This could, once again, be a result of the desensitization to tragic imagery as previously pointed out by Seu (2003).

*The Role of Affect*

The role of affect acted as one of the main inspirations behind altering the donation calls of this study. Our goal was to highlight the role of affect, and prevent the self-depreciation it creates, by showing individuals how impactful they could be in the grand scheme. The relationship between donation calls and amount donated was not significant as H2 claimed, there was a striking visual difference observed between fast and slow donation calls. The visual trend showed that a slow call was more effective. Although this finding did not support the initial hypothesis, the results can be seen as indicators of how putting more emphasis onto these

practices can lead to higher amounts donated. Therefore, the claims of Västfjäll & Slovic (2020) could still be correct in the sense that a slow (logical) processing mechanism is effective in decreasing the role of affect and potentially having an effect on increasing the donation amounts.

**Allocation of Donations**

*Cognitive Load & Slow Thinking*

Following from Wielenga-Meijerand et al.'s (2012) suggestion, this study aimed to replicate an autonomous scenario for the allocation of donations in order to decrease the cognitive load of individuals to prevent them from making slow (logical) decisions. This confirmed Tinghög's initial findings (2016) cognitive load was neither an enabling or disabling factor in making donation decisions. Also, autonomy was seen as one of the key parts of this study due to Ferguson et al.'s (2015) claim that more support comes from feeling autonomous. We wanted to challenge this claim by generating cognitive load in a unique way and did not find that one affected donation amounts more than the other.

*Autonomy and Fast Thinking*

Returning to Ferguson et. al.'s claim, we found that their claims could even be partially supported since there was a trend in the data showing higher autonomy was related to a higher tendency to accept the donation calls. Our findings yielded substantial results on the effect of a fast donation call on one of the subscales of autonomy (authorship and self-configurance). However, as the testing for this hypothesis yielded marginally insignificant conclusions, it is also important to point out that a larger sample size could have generated different results. Nevertheless, this finding supports the idea that autonomy was indeed a factor that affects donations in a positive way. However, as the testing for this hypothesis yielded marginally insignificant conclusions, it is also important to point out that a larger sample size could have

generated different results. Even so, this effect was not limited to the allocation methods as predicted. Hence, we concluded that the focus of autonomy needed to be placed on the donation calls instead of the allocation of donations. This could be the result of the empowerment that initially comes from accepting a donation call. It is possible to conclude that individuals are more likely to abandon a charitable action after accepting to donate in the first place. Therefore, as Lv & Huang claimed, a higher perception of autonomy can result in more donation amounts (Lv & Huang, 2022). Following this initial idea, autonomy is clearly a concept that needs to be analyzed further in studies regarding donation behavior.

**Trust in Brand**

The results revealed a higher sense of trust for the brand ShopDrop after experiencing the donation procedure on the website.. However, this increase in trust was not affected by the fast or slow allocation methods from the lens of dual-processing theory.

The ineffectiveness of the allocation methods could have been due to the characteristics of the fictional e-commerce brand. As Hsu et al. (2005) have pointed out, the trustworthiness of a charity platform, whether online or offline, has an impact on the willingness to donate. Conducting this research on a fictional e-commerce website may have acted as the main source of distrust which could then lead to the unwillingness to donate. Similarly, answering the prior question of Zagefka et al. (2012) on whether the closeness of the charitable cause is effective on the willingness to donate, our data showed otherwise. Even if the charity cause was in close relation to Turkish nationals, it did not increase willingness to donate, especially when the donation platform is unfamiliar to the users.

Trust was not related to either the cause nor the fast / slow information processing domain of the donation task. There were no effects of dual-processing mechanisms on trust in

this study. As Purwandari et al. (2022) stated, the pre-existing trustworthiness of the website is completely effective on the donation behavior; and this study concluded that message presentation could not outweigh the importance of this phenomenon. For future studies, a version without the donation implementation could be added as a control group, in order to see whether the donation cause really had an effect on the pre/post-trust of the participants.

**Limitations and future research**

A variety of limitations need to be considered before concluding this study. The main limitation of this study was the limited sample size. Although the number of participants distributed amongst conditions were almost identical, the data-cleaning process eliminated a large number of participants, which may have decreased the power and caused an underestimation of the hypothesized effects. For the analyses related to donation allocation methods, only participants that actually chose to donate could be included, further reducing the statistical power.

In addition, the elimination of almost half of the participants during data-cleaning has shown that the build of the study was perhaps too complex for non-academic participants. For future studies, one or more of the elements of an e-commerce context, prior trust questions or autonomy related questions could be eliminated in order to achieve more dedicated participants. On the other hand, the prototype was designed in English, which could have caused a sense of alienage especially for the Turkish participants when describing an incident that happened in Turkey. Perhaps, this could be one of the reasons for the number of abandoned questionnaires. Taking this into account, this study can be replicated by presenting the prototype in Turkish to the Turkish participants.

Another important limitation of this study was the way the fast (emotional) and slow (logical) donation calls and allocation processes were implemented. The fast calls were characterized by an identifiable victim whereas the slow calls contained a crowd of generic statistical information. The fast allocation method was characterized by a user-friendly slider that was very efficient in comparison to the slow allocation method with a long introductory text and an unfamiliar donation setup. Since this is the first time these two concepts were systematically implemented in a prototype and evaluated, it is possible that these differentiations did not create the desired perceptions of fast vs. slow processes. The between-subject design of this research resulted in an unavailability to test the parallel between the conditions and how they were actually perceived by the individuals. Therefore, for future research, a within-subject experiment could be preferred in order to control for the effect of the manipulation of fast vs. slow calls and allocations.

**Conclusion**

This study aimed to observe the role of the dual-processing theory in the context of online donations in e-commerce platforms. The research question was: How do cultural background, type of donation call (whether it be *fast/ emotional* or *slow/ logical*) and allocation of donations (deciding on an amount of money or types of products) affect the willingness to donate, amount donated, and trust in the brand of the e-commerce website where the donation call is integrated? The main goal of this study was to observe an ultimate scenario of creating a donation call and an allocation system that would guarantee the highest amounts of donations when needed, as well as still ensuring increased individual trust and sense of autonomy.

There were statistically significant results on the role of (slow) allocation of donations on autonomy and the amount donated. Although neither the nationality, the type of donation calls,

or pre-existing trust were not shown to be effective on the donations, our findings point to important nuances between the designs of donation platforms that can be analyzed further in future studies. Most of the visual representations of the results, although not significant, seem to be trending toward the hypothesized relationships. Therefore, this study, if replicated with a standardized inducement of the fast/slow thinking processes and a larger sample size, may lead the way to more significant and generalizable conclusions. The conclusions that could be gathered from the variations of this research are crucial for determining whether there is a formula for optimizing donation calls and allocation methods. Although the initial findings did not support the general hypothesis around donation calls and allocation methods, they did generate visual graphs of rising trends. These trends emphasized the area of development around the separation of donation calls and allocation methods. Additionally, the inclusion of trust and autonomy did generate valuable results for the future, meaning that they were crucial determinants when researching donation behavior. The findings of this research showed that even around the topic of national disasters and fictional settings, individuals are not motivated to help in any way that they can. Therefore, we must keep these findings and rising trends in mind for future research and keep on finding an optimization for presenting charitable causes. Some causes need more immediate attention than others. In order to provide valuable help at a high speed rate, we must keep on focusing on what created the difference between “no aid” and “donate”.

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# Appendix

## *Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey Flow*

*EmbeddedData*
- *AnonymizeResponseValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *DidDonateValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *AmountDonatedValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *TimeSpentStep1MsValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *TimeSpentStep2MsValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *Step1SlowValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *Step2SlowValue will be set from Panel or URL.*
- *NumHintsValue will be set from Panel or URL.*

*Standard: Block 1: Introduction Statement (1 Question)*
*Standard: Block 2: Consent Question (1 Question)*
*Branch: New Branch*
- *If*
  - *If In confirming your participation, you declare: - That the introduction has adequately informed yo... I hereby decline to participate in this survey. (After selecting this option, the survey will automatically close). Is Selected*
  - *EndSurvey:*

*Standard: Block 3: Demographics (4 Questions)*
*Standard: Block 4:Participant's Online Purchasing and Charity Support Behaviours (2 Questions)*
*Standard: Block 5: Propensity to Trust (3 Questions)*
*Standard: Block 6: Introducing ShopDrop (1 Question)*
*Standard: Block 7: Pre- Shop Drop (2 Questions)*
*BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements*
- *Standard: Block 8: Prototype condition 1 (fast/fast) (2 Questions)*
- *Standard: Block 9: Prototype condition 2 (fast/slow) (2 Questions)*
- *Standard: Block 10: Prototype condition 3 (slow/fast) (2 Questions)*
- *Standard: Block 11: Prototype condition 4 (slow/slow) (2 Questions)*

*Standard: Block 12: Post- ShopDrop (2 Questions)*
*Standard: Block 13: Prior Knowledge (1 Question)*
*Branch: New Branch*
- *If*
  - *If Were you aware of the earthquake that happened in Turkey prior to this study? Yes Is Selected*
- *Standard: Block 14: Yes- Short- Answer Questions (6 Questions)*

*Branch: New Branch*
- *If*
  - *If Were you aware of the earthquake that happened in Turkey prior to this study? No Is Selected*
- *Block: Block 15: No- Short- Answer Questions (4 Questions)*

*EndSurvey:*

***Appendix B: Introduction & Consent Form***

Introduction

Dear participant,
I, Buse Soysal, invite you to contribute to my research regarding my thesis project for my master's degree of Communication and Information Sciences at Tilburg University. **Please carefully read the information provided below before deciding to participate in the following questionnaire.**

Donations and charitable actions are topics of ongoing discussions as more and more of donation calls are being made via online channels. However, what guarantees a charitable donation and/or what contributes to the amount donated is a rather unexplored topic in the academia. This research aims to locate the cultural and psychological dynamics that contribute to a donation.

**Please only partake in this questionnaire if you are 25 years of age or older.** Participation of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary and you are always free to take a break or end the questionnaire prematurely. In case of an uncompleted data case, the results will be removed for the purposes of this study. Completing the questionnaire will take about 15 minutes. The data collection process in completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to you as a person. The data provided by the participants will be handled with care; it will only be used for academic purposes and stored securely. I ask you to complete the questionnaire truthfully.

Each of the materials used throughout this questionnaire are originally designed by me, the researcher, and they are not organisations that are actually in existence. The design features may include automatic user name and payment information to ensure the flow of the experiment. The designated materials **do not collect any personal information** (email addresses or payment information) nor do not require the participants to provide them. I hope that I have sufficiently informed and thank you immensely for your participation in the study. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at b.soysal@tilburguniversity.edu

Best regards,
Buse Soysal

Consent Question

In confirming your participation, you declare:
- That the introduction has adequately informed you of the nature and method of the study;
- That you are voluntarily participating in the study and that you are aware that you can quit

participating at any time without consequence;
- That you are aware of the anonymous data collection and that upon completion of the study the data will be deleted;
- That you are 18 years of age or older.

o I hereby acknowledge that I have read the introduction and consent to the usage of my responses in this study. (1)

o I hereby decline to participate in this survey. (After selecting this option, the survey will automatically close). (2)

***Appendix C: Demographic Questions***

Q1: Age How old are you?

o 18-24 (1)

o 25-34 (2)

o 35-44 (3)

o 45-59 (4)

o 60+ (5)

Q2: Gender Please select the gender you identify yourself with:

o Male (1)

o Female (2)

o Non-binary / third gender (3)

o Prefer not to say (4)

Q3: Education What is your level of education?

o Did not attend education (1)

o High school degree (2)

o Bachelors' degree (3)

o Masters' degree (4)

o Other (5)

Q4: Nationality Please state your nationality.

***Appendix D: Turkish Currency Questions***

Q5: Online shopping Please indicate approximately how much you spent online shopping in the past year:

o Nothing, I do not buy online. (1)

o 1- 99.99 TL (2)

o 100-999.99 TL (3)

o 1,000-9,999 TL (4)

o More than 10,000 TL (5)

Q6: Charitable giving Please select approximately how much you donated to a charity in the past year:

o None at all (1)

o 1 - 9.99 TL (2)

o 10 - 99.99 TL (3)

o 100 - 999.99 TL (4)

o Over 1, 000 TL (5)

***Appendix E: Non-Turkish Currency Questions***

Q5: Online shopping Please indicate approximately how much you spent online shopping in the past year:

o Nothing, I do not buy online. (1)

o 1- 99.99 EUR (2)

o 100-999.99 EUR (3)

o 1,000-9,999 EUR (4)

o More than 10,000 EUR (5)

Q6: Charitable giving Please select approximately how much you donated to a charity in the past year:

o None at all (1)

o 1 - 9.99 EUR (2)

o 10 - 99.99 EUR (3)

o 100 - 999.99 EUR (4)

o Over 1, 000 EUR (5)

***Appendix F: Propensity to Trust***

Q7: Trust Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My tendency to trust a person/thing is high. (1) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I tend to trust a person/thing, even though I have little knowledge of it. (2) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Trusting someone or something is not difficult. (3) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| It is easy for me to trust a person/thing. (4) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

Q8: Trust Please indicate your response to each of the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | disagree (4) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I trust businesses to act in the public interest. (1) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I trust businesses to ensure that their practices are ethical and honest. (2) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I trust businesses to be well managed and efficient. (3) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Most businesses are trustworthy. (4) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

Q9: Trust Please indicate your response to each of the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I trust charities to act in the public interest. (1) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I trust charities to be well managed and efficient. (2) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I trust charities to ensure that their practices are ethical and honest. (3) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Most charities are trust worthy. (4) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

***Appendix G: Introduction of ShopDrop***

Q10: ShopDrop You will shortly be experiencing a fictional website called "**ShopDrop**". Please read the information regarding ShopDrop below and answer the following questions before you start experiencing the website.

ShopDrop is an international online marketplace brand that contains over 50.000 brands and hundreds of product categories including fashion, technology and home goods. ShopDrop ships internationally and offers a 30 day money back guarantee for all products. It is also very sensitive around social issues and engages with charitable causes often. ShopDrop's main purpose is to provide a smooth shopping experience for its 15 million users.

Please find the home page of ShopDrop below for a better idea of what the website looks like.

Q11: Pre-ShopDrop Please answer the following questions about the brand ShopDrop based on the information you viewed previously.

Please indicate below how you feel about ShopDrop.

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This company is irresponsible. (1) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| This company is honest. (2) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| This company is reliable. (3) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| This company is trustworthy. (4) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

Q12: Pre- ShopDrop Please indicate below how you feel about ShopDrop

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To ensure you are still reading this, please select option 2 (Disagree) (1) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| If my friends recommended their products, I would buy them. (2) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I would go to this company's website. (3) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| If my family bought their products for me, I would use them. (4) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I would shop with them as long as they were comparable to others. (5) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I would buy their product. (6) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

***Appendix H: Introduction of Prototypes***

**Prototype condition 1 (fast/fast)**

FC & CL Timing
First Click (1)

Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**Prototype condition 2 (fast/slow)**

Q13 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**Prototype condition 3 (slow/fast)**

Q14 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

Q15 Timing
**Prototype condition 4 (slow/slow)**
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

***Appendix I: Prior Knowledge Question***

Q18: Prior Knowledge Were you aware of the earthquake that happened in Turkey prior to this study?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

***Appendix J: Questions for the Prior Knowledge of the Earthquake***

Q19 Did you make a donation on the ShopDrop website? Please briefly explain why/why not.

Q20: Affect: Have you, or has someone you know, been affected either physically and/or emotionally by the earthquake in Turkey?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

Q21: Donation Have you previously donated to help the survivors of the earthquake in Turkey?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

***Appendix K: Open- Ended Questions***

Q22: Emotion How do you feel about online businesses taking part in gathering donations for different causes? Please explain in a few words.

Q23: Emotion Please list a few adjectives that describes how you felt towards ShopDrop after facing their donation call.

***Appendix L: Questionnaire Regarding Autonomy***

Q24 Please answer the questions below regarding the donation decision you have made.

| | Not at all true (1) | A bit true (2) | Somewhat true (3) | Mostly true (4) | Completely True (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My decision whether and how much I donate represents my most important values and feelings. (1) | o | o | o | o | o |
| My donation decision was in order to avoid feeling badly about myself. (2) | o | o | o | o | o |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I often reflect on why and how much I choose to donate for different causes. (3) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I strongly identify with the charitable contributions that I do. (4) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I am deeply curious when I react with fear or anxiety to events in people's lives that I can have a hand in helping. (5) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I donate to avoid feeling ashamed. (6) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I try to manipulate myself into making a donation decision. (7) | o | o | o | o | o |
| My actions toward a donation call is congruent with who I really am. (8) | o | o | o | o | o |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am interested in understanding the reasons for my charitable actions. (9) | o | o | o | o | o |
| My whole self stands behind the important donation decisions I make. (10) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I believe in certain charitable causes so that others will like me. (11) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I am interested in why I act the way I do towards a donation call. (12) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I like to investigate my feelings around charitable causes. (13) | o | o | o | o | o |
| I often pressure myself into donating. (14) | o | o | o | o | o |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My donation decisions are steadily informed by things I want or care about. (15) | o | o | o | o | o |

***Appendix M: Validity of Autonomy Questionnaire***

**Scale: Authorship_Self_Reconfigurance**

**Case Processing Summary**

| | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cases | Valid | 56 | 94.9 |
| | Excluded[a] | 3 | 5.1 |
| | Total | 59 | 100.0 |

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| .754 | .751 | 5 |

**Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| AuthorshipSelfConfigurance2 | 2.82 | 1.323 | 56 |
| AuthorshipSelfConfigurance1 | 3.04 | 1.175 | 56 |
| AuthorshipSelfConfigurance3 | 2.95 | 1.257 | 56 |
| AuthorshipSelfConfigurance4 | 2.61 | 1.317 | 56 |
| AuthorshipSelfConfigurance5 | 3.21 | 1.155 | 56 |

**Summary Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Maximum / Minimum | Variance | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 2.925 | 2.607 | 3.214 | .607 | 1.233 | .052 | 5 |
| Inter-Item Correlations | .376 | .152 | .596 | .444 | 3.921 | .023 | 5 |

**Scale Statistics**

| Mean | Variance | Std. Deviation | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14.63 | 19.620 | 4.429 | 5 |

**Scale: Reliability_Susceptibility_To_Control**

**Case Processing Summary**

| | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cases | Valid | 58 | 98.3 |
| | Excluded[a] | 1 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 59 | 100.0 |

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| .821 | .812 | 5 |

**Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| SusceptibilityToControl1 | 3.90 | 1.180 | 58 |
| SusceptibilityToControl2 | 4.22 | 1.170 | 58 |
| SusceptibilityToControl3 | 4.36 | 1.003 | 58 |
| SusceptibilityToControl4 | 4.55 | .882 | 58 |
| SusceptibilityToControl5 | 4.33 | .998 | 58 |

**Summary Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Maximum / Minimum | Variance | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 4.272 | 3.897 | 4.552 | .655 | 1.168 | .058 | 5 |
| Inter-Item Correlations | .464 | .170 | .754 | .584 | 4.441 | .038 | 5 |

**Scale Statistics**

| Mean | Variance | Std. Deviation | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21.36 | 16.165 | 4.021 | 5 |

**Scale: Reliability_Susceptibility_To_Control**

**Case Processing Summary**

| | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cases | Valid | 58 | 98.3 |
| | Excluded[a] | 1 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 59 | 100.0 |

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| .788 | .787 | 5 |

**Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| InterestTaking1 | 2.78 | 1.140 | 58 |
| InterestTaking2 | 3.07 | 1.168 | 58 |
| InterestTaking3 | 2.91 | 1.174 | 58 |
| InterestTaking4 | 2.52 | 1.274 | 58 |
| InterestTaking5 | 2.45 | 1.187 | 58 |

**Summary Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Maximum / Minimum | Variance | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 2.745 | 2.448 | 3.069 | .621 | 1.254 | .069 | 5 |
| Inter-Item Correlations | .424 | .238 | .668 | .429 | 2.802 | .019 | 5 |

**Scale Statistics**

| Mean | Variance | Std. Deviation | N of Items |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13.72 | 19.151 | 4.376 | 5 |

***Appendix N: Validity of Trust Questionnaire***

**Case Processing Summary**

| | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cases | Valid | 104 | 98.1 |
| | Excluded[a] | 2 | 1.9 |
| | Total | 106 | 100.0 |

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|
| .811 | 20 |

**Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_1 | 3.45 | .994 | 104 |
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_2 | 4.13 | .725 | 104 |
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_3 | 4.29 | .809 | 104 |
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_4 | 4.11 | .762 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_1 | 2.00 | .000 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_2 | 5.20 | .999 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_3 | 4.79 | 1.085 | 104 |

**Item Statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_1 | 3.45 | .994 | 104 |
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_2 | 4.13 | .725 | 104 |
| Q11: Pre-ShopDrop_3 | 4.29 | .809 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_4 | 5.59 | .866 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_5 | 5.18 | 1.012 | 104 |
| Q12: Pre- ShopDrop_6 | 4.60 | .898 | 104 |
| Q13: Post- ShopDrop_1 | 3.13 | 1.259 | 104 |
| Q13: Post- ShopDrop_2 | 4.62 | .988 | 104 |
| Q13: Post- ShopDrop_3 | 4.69 | .956 | 104 |
| Q13: Post- ShopDrop_4 | 4.59 | .931 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_1 | 2.00 | .000 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_2 | 5.36 | .994 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_3 | 5.09 | 1.098 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_4 | 5.69 | .860 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_5 | 5.39 | 1.083 | 104 |
| Q14: Post- ShopDrop_6 | 5.02 | 1.079 | 104 |