

## DONOR MOTIVATION IN COLLEGE SPORT: DOES CONTRIBUTION LEVEL MATTER?

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Collegiate sport in the United States not only provides educational opportunities to student athletes, but also offers excellent entertainment options to stakeholders of universities and their community. For the long-term sustainability of college athletic programs, financial support from individual donors is very important. Our purpose in this study was to identify and compare motives of low- and high-contribution donors to athletic programs. A sample of college sport donors ( $N = 484$ ) completed the Scale of Athletic Donor Motivation, and the data were categorized into low- and high-contribution groups. The results of multigroup structural equation modeling indicated that tangible benefit was a salient predictor of giving intention among the low-contribution group, whereas socialization was significant for the high-contribution group. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

*Keywords:* donor motivation, contribution level, collegiate sport, student athletes, financial support.

The current economic climate has fostered the creation of a worldwide proliferation of charities (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2009), and

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many donor-supported organizations are faced with increased competition for fundraising (Schwinn, 2008). The highly competitive collegiate sport model that exists in the United States of America is not an exception. Because the available financial support from universities is declining, private support from alumni and other boosters for athletic programs are necessary to offset budget shortfalls (Ko, Rhee, Walker, & Lee, 2014; Stinson & Howard, 2007).

Donors help nonprofit organizations through various tangible gifts in response to a particular need. Gifts range in magnitude from a small or token amount to substantial sustained contributions. In the fundraising and donor literature, explaining and predicting giving and helping behavior has received significant scholarly attention. Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi (1996, p. 3) defined such *helping (donor) behavior* as “behavior that enhances the welfare of a needy other, by providing aid or benefit, usually with little or no commensurate reward in return.” They suggested conducting interdisciplinary research to fully explain the complex decision mechanism of helping behavior.

Although prior donor researchers have indicated that donation behavior is influenced by donors’ sociodemographic and economic backgrounds, it is important to understand the fundamental motives underlying donor decisions to give (Bennett & Sargeant, 2005; Ko et al., 2014). To date, numerous donor behavior researchers have attempted to explain why individuals make donations. For example, Smith (1980) summarized a range of donor behaviors on a continuum from altruistic to hedonic, and argued that people tend to be motivated by hedonic conditions, such as self-contentment or self-respect, when they donate to nonprofit organizations. Smith considered donor behavior as an economic activity that engages the individual’s internal beliefs evoked by hedonic satisfaction, rather than social contribution. Similarly, Sojka (1986) classified donor behavior into altruistic and nonaltruistic behavior by focusing on social conditions as well as personal hedonic values. *Altruistic behavior* is provoked by personal values, whereas *nonaltruistic behavior* is categorized as social behavior. For example, behavior provoked by peer pressure and the maintenance of a social status can be considered as nonaltruistic, whereas behavior motivated by philanthropy and self-satisfaction is considered as altruistic. Other researchers have also found that donor motives differ according to demographic characteristics, such as gender (Chrenka, Gutter, & Jasper, 2003; Newman, 2000), age (Reviv, Bar-Tal, & Lewis-Lewis, 1980), geographical location (Jardine, 2003), marital status, and family structure (Schlegelmilch, Diamantopoulos, & Love, 1997).

Fundraising for college athletics programs has received scholarly attention since the mid-1980s. Several scholars focused on donor motivation to gain a clearer understanding of why some people make donations to intercollegiate athletic programs (e.g., Ko et al., 2014; Tsiotsou, 2006; Verner, Hecht, &

Fransler, 1998). Previous researchers have documented that donors are motivated by improving the quality and image of the athletic program, academic success of student athletes, and other benefits, such as priority seating, parking privileges, recognition, and social events.

In spite of the substantial empirical evidence in the donor motivation literature, very little is known about differences in donor motives across the different contribution levels. Currently, research into donors with charitable and philanthropic themes has comprised discussion of the concept of contribution levels from the perspective of financial terms rather than in relation to donors' psychological motives (Harvey & McCrohan, 1988; Shang & Croson, 2009). As a result, a systematic understanding of donor motives based on the varying levels of contribution is lacking.

Accordingly, our purpose in this study was to explore whether donor motives varied based on the contribution level to which the donor was committed. To do so, we employed latent mean and multigroup analyses, which provides for an accurate comparison between different contribution groups. Our aim was to provide some new insights on the following critical questions: What motivates donors to athletic programs, and does contribution level matter? Answering these questions is beneficial for understanding the complex decision-making process of donor behavior and developing effective marketing and communication strategies for the long-term sustainability of college athletics.

## Theoretical Background

### Needs Hierarchy and Existence, Relatedness, and Growth Theory

Needs and motivation are integral dimensions for understanding human behavior. Social psychologists have conceptualized needs and motivation in several different ways. For example, Murray (1938, p. 123), a classical needs-based theorist, explained *need* as "stimulus—a force pushing an individual in a certain direction or to behave in a certain way." In a similar manner, Alderson (1955, p. 6) defined *motivation* as "a conscious experience or subconscious condition, which serves as a factor determining an individual's behavior or social conduct in a situation." Recently, Saal and Knight (1995) considered motivation as a set of energizing, directing, and sustaining particular behaviors.

Several scholars have summarized the body of literature related to psychological motivations and needs (e.g., Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1943). Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy theory was one of the early motivation theories advanced in the literature. The essence of this theory lies in five classes of needs (from physiological, safety, social, esteem, to self-actualization, in order of importance) and the fundamental postulation of the theory is that as each lower level need is satisfied, the next level up becomes the motivating force. However, one of major

limitations of Maslow's theory is that it has been based on an intuitive appeal (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002), which has led to difficulties in providing fluent and consistent empirical evidence for the utility of the theory. Another critical point is that the existence and ordering of the needs has not been well supported by findings reported in the literature (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1997).

To overcome the limitations of the hierarchy of needs model, Alderfer (1969) developed an integrated framework known as the existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory, according to which human needs are sorted into these three categories. *Existence needs* are the basic material needs for well-being, such as food, working conditions, salary, and fringe benefits. These are quite consistent with the physiological needs in Maslow's (1943) model. *Relatedness needs* are consistent with belongingness needs. Self-actualization needs were converged into *growth needs*, that is, the desire to be creative and have opportunities for personal development. When the theoretical underpinnings of the two theories are examined more closely, there are indications that material needs are positioned in both existence and relatedness needs in ERG theory, that is, needs that derive from trust in a relationship. Further, self-esteem can be positioned as belonging to both relatedness and growth in ERG theory. For example, when an individual derives his or her self-esteem from appraisals by others and desires to establish and sustain positive interpersonal relationships, this is considered a relatedness need. In contrast, supposing that an individual regards his or her own intrinsic valuing of the self highly, this need falls into the classification of growth in the ERG theory.

Whereas Maslow (1943) considered that the deprivation of lower order needs could serve as motivation, in the ERG theory it is maintained that multiple needs may function simultaneously with no specific hierarchical ordering of the activation of the needs (Alderfer, 1980). Given the simultaneity of various needs, some researchers have considered ERG theory as a more reasonable explanation of individual motivation than is the needs hierarchy (Robbins, 1998).

### **Model of Athletic Donor Motivation**

Recently, Ko et al. (2014) developed the model of athletic donor motivation (MADOM) by integrating existing athletic donor motivation factors into the ERG framework. Specifically, eight dimensions were divided into the following categories: (a) growth needs—philanthropy, vicarious achievement, and display of commitment; (b) relatedness needs—affiliation and social interaction; and (c) existence needs—public recognition, power, and tangible benefits. The theoretical justifications of this model are addressed below.

**Existence needs.** In the original ERG model, existence needs represent physiological and material needs and are characterized by the desire to obtain material means. In the MADOM, *existence needs* are conceptualized as power,

public recognition, and tangible benefits. Although numerous researchers have suggested that charitable giving behavior can be explained by altruistic motives (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981), a feeling described as a warm glow (Andreoni, 1990; Harbaugh, 1998), and social justice (Radley & Kennedy, 1995), others have provided strong empirical support for the view that not all motives for giving are altruistic (Cialdini et al., 1987). For example, Neuberg et al. (1997) found that when there is a genuine cost to the donor, giving is driven more by self-interest and certain instrumental motives. It is not easy to argue for the existence of true altruism under this supposition. For this reason, economists have viewed charity as a strategic, selfish activity in which altruism is not the motivator, as donors may be deriving some utility from their contributions, such as recognition and praise, or tax incentives (Radley & Kennedy, 1995).

In addition, by applying the social reinforcement theory, Kraut (1973) suggested that charitable individuals would show more charitable behavior than would noncharitable individuals because they have already recognized the benefits of charitable behavior through prior donation experiences. Similarly, Piliavin and Charng (1990) suggested that subjective norms play an important role in the donor decision-making process. Hoyt (2004) also argued that people may give in expectation of reciprocation, or that they are influenced by reinforcement and desire for status. Donors also respond to social obligation to help, or they feel guilt and shame for a failure to help. In sum, either tangible (e.g., tax benefits) or intangible (e.g., power and recognition) benefits become a quick way to induce the existence needs of donors.

**Relatedness needs.** The majority of donors' financial support to charity goes to those organizations with which donors have been personally engaged (Jardine, 2003). *Relatedness needs* are associated with the establishment of reciprocal relationships with significant others. Relatedness needs are quite different from growth and existence needs, as shared and mutual involvement between the individual and the charity is required for relatedness to be generated. In the model developed by Ko et al. (2014), relatedness needs consist of both being part of a social group (affiliation) and social interaction.

Central to social exchange theory, *social interaction* is contingent on a process of mutual reward based on perceived costs and benefits. People appraise their social interactions by their own individual criteria, including obligation, gratitude, and trust levels within the relationship (Blau, 1964). A satisfactory balance between effort (i.e., costs) and perceived value (i.e., benefits) must be reached for a successful social relationship to continue between two parties (Homans, 1974).

Several scholars have utilized social exchange theory in their donor studies. For example, Cook and Lasher (1996) explained the interdependent relationship

that exists between a donor and his/her alma mater using the theory, and found that alumni donate when they understand that their interests align with the needs and interests of the institution. Drezner (2009) also used the theory to explain a promotional mechanism of philanthropic behaviors among African-Americans at historically black private colleges and universities. He found that African-American millennials gave to their alma mater as a tool for developing connections with their institutions, and to achieve racial uplift within the African-American communities. Kelly (2002) proposed the mixed-motive model of giving, in which two levels of donor motivation are described: (a) raising the amount of common good, and (b) receiving some private good in return. These mixed motives, evident in social exchange theory, align with the intrinsic and extrinsic influences of prosocial behaviors among donors and volunteers (Harbaugh, 1998).

**Growth needs.** According to Alderfer (1972), *growth needs* refer to individuals' aspiration to generate productive effects for themselves or for society as a whole. People give to satisfy personal needs and to demonstrate their attachment to an organization (Brady, Noble, Utter, & Smith, 2002). A demonstrated need from an organization can also influence one's inclination to contribute (Merchant, Ford, & Sargeant, 2010). Satisfaction of these needs occurs when individuals engage in problems that call upon them to fully use their resource capacity. The psychological fulfillment the person gains is that of a sense of greater wholeness or fullness as a human being.

People who plan to give have the goal of focusing on a cause to see results, including any benefits or achievements (Andreoni, 1988). In particular, the act of giving to a nonprofit organization tends to be more social than economic in nature (Venable, Rose, Bush, & Gilbert, 2005), and whereas the economic utility of giving may be limited to benefits such as tax incentives and credits, the social benefits of giving can be more important and range from personal gratification and increased self-worth to humanitarianism and spiritualism (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003; Cermak, File, & Prince, 1994). In the MADOM model that is used as the framework in the present study, the growth needs consist of philanthropy, vicarious achievement, and demonstration of commitment.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

The target population was donors to an athletic department in a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Bowl Subdivision university in the United States. We sent email invitations to the donors on the booster club list (approximately 7,500 donors) after receiving approval from the

university's Institutional Review Board and obtaining permission from the athletic department. Among 816 completed responses (approximately 11% response rate), we analyzed data from 484 respondents who reported their contribution level as high or low.

To operationalize the contribution level, we utilized seven existing groups of categorization developed by the athletic department: A = \$100–\$2,099; B = \$2,100–\$2,599; C = \$2,600–\$3,099; D = \$3,100–\$4,799; E = \$4,800–\$8,599; F = \$8,600–\$14,999; and G = \$15,000 +). Only group A ( $n = 335$ ) was classified as the low-contribution group because of the large size of this sample, and E, F, and G groups were considered as the high-contribution group ( $n = 149$ ). We excluded the three other contribution categories (i.e., B, C, and D) from data analysis to create a meaningful difference of contribution level between the two groups being analyzed.

Of the 484 respondents, 75.4% ( $n = 365$ ) were men and the average age was 54.51 years ( $SD = 11.09$ ). There was no significant age difference across the contribution groups: low contribution  $M_{\text{age}} = 54.51$  years, and high contribution  $M_{\text{age}} = 55.84$  years. Of the participants, most were Caucasian (77.7%), followed by Hispanic (20.3%), Native American (1.2%), Asian (0.4%), and others (0.4%). The overall average income level was \$108,910. The average income of the high-contribution group was \$181,146 and \$84,541 for the low-contribution group. There was a significant difference in the average income between the two contribution groups,  $t(32.62) = 3.68, p < .01$ .

## Measures

We used the Scale of Athletic Donor Motivation (SADOM) developed by Ko et al. (2014) to measure donor motives. To measure donors' giving intention we modified Lutz's (1977) three-item 7-point semantic differential scale. We performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the measurement properties. The convergent validity of the scale items was confirmed based on item loadings (standardized regression weights), which ranged from .51 to .97. In terms of discriminant validity, because of a high correlation ( $r = .95$ ) between the factors labeled as affiliation and socialization in the initial CFA, we collapsed all the items originally in the two factors into socialization. Correlation values from the final CFA ranged from .19 (vicarious achievement and recognition) to .63 (philanthropy and display of commitment), which provided empirical evidence of discriminant validity for the measures. The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated to assess reliability of the scale. Results presented in Table 1 provide empirical evidence of the validity and reliability of the measures (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factor Loadings, Reliability Coefficients, Construct Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted

Factors and items	$\gamma$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<i>Vicarious achievement</i>				
I feel proud when the AAA team I support plays well.	.575	.821	.842	.648
I feel a sense of achievement when the AAA team I support does well.	.872			
I feel pride in the success of the program that I support.	.923			
<i>Philanthropy</i>				
I donate because it is the right thing to do.	.782	.812	.836	.630
I donate to help fund scholarships for students.	.745			
I donate to provide educational opportunities for students.	.851			
<i>Display of commitment</i>				
I donate to show my allegiance to the AAA.	.876	.933	.934	.824
I donate to show my devotion to the AAA.	.916			
I donate to show my dedication to the AAA.	.931			
<i>Socialization</i>				
AAA Boosters makes me feel like I belong to a special group.	.834	.875	.879	.646
I feel connected to members of AAA Boosters.	.832			
I enjoy associating with the members of AAA Boosters.	.841			
I appreciate the opportunity to meet people in the athletic department.	.698			
<i>Power</i>				
It is important for me to be able to voice my opinion on department decisions.	.758	.823	.828	.619
It is important for me to have opportunities to shape the direction of the department.	.889			
It is important for me have access to the power structure by being informed on issues surrounding athletics.	.702			
<i>Recognition</i>				
It is important for me to receive recognition for my contribution.	.854	.896	.896	.743
It is important for me to have my name appear in a publication to acknowledge my contribution.	.867			
I feel good about being publicly recognized for my gift.	.864			

Table 1 continued

Factors and items	$\gamma$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<i>Tangible benefits</i>		.714	.751	.434
The access to priority seating is important to me.	.759			
To receive parking privileges is important to me.	.711			
Ability to purchase tickets in advance is important to me.	.626			
Receiving a tax deduction is an important benefit for the donor.	.514			
<i>Giving intention</i>		.961	.963	.896
Possibility	.917			
Likelihood	.948			
Probability	.973			

Note. CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 2. Standardized Total Moderating Effect

Contribution level	Vicarious achievement	Philanthropy	Display of commitment	Socialization benefits	Power	Recognition	Tangible
Low (\$100-\$1,800)	.108 (.064)	-.037 (.483)	.150 **	.093 (.101)	-.011 (.845)	.036 (.559)	.124 *
High (\$4,500+)	.154 (.079)	.158 (.064)	.294 ***	.305 ***	.050 (.564)	.013 (.876)	.117 (.178)

Note. Parentheses represent  $p$  values (\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ).

## Results

### Descriptive Analysis

We performed a descriptive analysis to identify the characteristics of each contribution group. Vicarious achievement and tangible benefits were found to be important motives for both groups, whereas recognition was the factor with the lowest mean for both groups (see Table 3).

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Latent Variables

Latent variables	High			Low (Configural)			Effect size	
	Latent <i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Latent <i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
Achievement	0.296	6.15	0.81	0	5.85	0.97	0.331	.001
Philanthropy	0.587	5.49	0.97	0	4.94	1.17	0.546	.001
Commitment	0.493	5.71	1.05	0	5.22	1.33	0.411	.001
Socialization	0.461	5.26	1.06	0	4.72	1.23	0.401	.001
Power	0.347	4.12	1.26	0	3.73	1.33	0.268	.003
Recognition	0.485	3.69	1.55	0	3.19	1.38	0.331	.001
Tangible benefits	0.983	6.46	0.59	0	5.36	0.99	1.206	.001

### Latent Mean Analysis

We calculated construct mean scores to examine mean differences. The latent mean analysis (LMA) approach is useful for the following reasons: First, LMA enables researchers to assess factor means accurately by controlling for measurement variances and errors (Hong, Malik, & Lee, 2003). Based on structural equation modeling (SEM), LMA is used to test hypotheses with the means of latent constructs instead of the measured variables (Hancock, 1997; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). Second, LMA allows researchers to examine a mean difference between groups even when there is a significant difference in the sample size of two or three groups (Hancock, 1997). Third, lower Type I error rates and relative power of structured means can be tested with LMA, compared to performing a series of analyses of variance (Hancock, Lawrence, & Nevitt, 2000).

### Measurement Invariance Tests

Prior to testing mean differences using LMA, four steps of measurement invariance tests were conducted. A configural model test (Model 1) showed an acceptable model fit. The comparison of a metric invariance model (Model 2) and a configural model manifested item-construct relationships between low- and high-contribution groups. The chi-square difference test result was nonsignificant

in the model fit between the configural and metric models. Therefore, these steps of measurement invariance tests were accepted.

Next, a metric and scalar invariance model (Model 3) was tested to examine the equality of measurement error terms or residual variances in the latent factors (Woo, Gibbons, & Thornton, 2007). Scalar invariance was not acceptable by the difference of chi square between the metric invariance models. This result indicates that the scalar model of this test was a denied model. The final test of a model of metric, scalar, and factor invariance was conducted to examine the variability and relationship among the factors by constraining the intercepts to be equal (Hong et al., 2003). The hypothesized model of the factors was invariant by the difference of chi square between the scalar invariance models (see Table 4). For further substantive analysis, at least one acceptable model difference should meet the test for invariance (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). In particular, mean structures determine partial measurement invariance by testing parameters, given findings of noninvariance at the matrix level (Byrne, Shavelson, & Muthén, 1989). Therefore, LMA was continued on the basis of the metric invariance model.

Table 4. *Measurement Invariance Tests*

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	TLI	RMSEA
Model 1: Configural invariance	855.642	418	< .001	.918	.047
Model 2: Metric invariance	874.795	434	< .001	.920	.046
Model 3: Metric and scalar invariance	940.062	450	< .001	.912	.048
Model 4: Metric, scalar, and factor invariance	1000.691	457	< .001	.907	.050
Model	$\Delta\chi^2$ ( <i>p</i> )	$\Delta df$	<i>p</i>	Result	
Metric invariance: Model 1 vs. Model 2	19.153	16	.261	Supported	
Scalar invariance: Model 2 vs. Model 3	65.267	16	.001	Not supported	
Factor variance invariance: Model 3 vs. Model 4	60.629	7	.001	Not supported	

Note. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index

### Latent Means Comparison

As the assumption of metric invariance was satisfied, we performed LMA using the low-contribution group as the reference group. When compared to the low-contribution group, the latent means for the high-contribution group were significantly higher, as indicated in Table 3. To convert the latent mean difference to familiar matrix, Cohen's *d* effect size index was calculated (Hong, et al., 2003). The *d* index indicates the difference between the means of the two groups divided by common standard deviation. The differences in effect sizes between low- and high-contribution groups ranged from 0.268 (power) to 1.206 (tangible benefits). According to Cohen's (1988) guideline, the effect size could

be small ( $> 0.30$ ), medium (0.30–0.50), or large ( $> 0.50$ ). Therefore, power ( $d = 0.268$ ) was considered as having a small effect, whereas philanthropy ( $d = 0.546$ ) and tangible benefits ( $d = 1.206$ ) were considered as having a large effect. Based on Cohen's guideline, the effect of the other factors was at the medium level: vicarious achievement ( $d = 0.331$ ), display of commitment ( $d = 0.411$ ), socialization ( $d = 0.401$ ), and recognition ( $d = 0.331$ ).

### Multigroup Structural Equation Modeling Analysis Moderated by Contribution Level

Performing a multigroup SEM analysis allowed us to examine the effect of the two conditions (i.e., low- and high-contribution level) on the structural relationship between motivation factors and giving intention of the donors.

### Path Analysis

To examine the direct effects of donor motivations on giving intention, path analysis was conducted using SEM covaried by all latent factors. The suggested model had a good level of fit. Display of commitment and socialization were significant predictors of giving intention (see Table 5).

Table 5. Path Coefficients and Statistical Significance of Variables

Path	Dependent variable	$\beta$	$p$
Achievement	Giving intention	.118	.095
Philanthropy		-.022	.718
Commitment		.174	.021*
Socialization		.142	.037*
Power		.006	.926
Recognition		.014	.838
Tangible benefits		.107	.083

Note. Structural model fit:  $\chi^2/df = 641.814/271 = 2.368$ ; RMSEA = .053; comparative fit index = .956; TLI = .947. \*  $p < .01$ .

### Multigroup Analysis

The result of  $\chi^2$  statistics in a measurement invariance test was invariant ( $\chi^2[17] = 27.90$ ), so the same construct could be measured across high- and low-contribution groups. The result of multigroup analysis indicated that display of commitment and tangible benefits was a significant predictor of giving intention for the low-contribution group of donors. On the other hand, display of commitment and socialization was a significant predictor of giving intention for the high-contribution group. We found it interesting that display of commitment was a significant predictor of giving intention for both contribution groups. However, vicarious achievement, philanthropy, power, and recognition were not significant predictors of giving intention for either contribution group (see Table 2).

## Discussion

### Theoretical Implications

Whereas numerous prior donor motivation researchers have focused on socio-demographic characteristics, we examined donor motivation in the context of college athletics by focusing on the donors' contribution level. The descriptive statistics we obtained provide new insights into the motivations that underlie an individual's donation intentions. First, we found that both high- and low-contribution groups were highly motivated by the growth needs of philanthropy, vicarious achievement, and display of commitment. This result is consistent with those in prior research, in that philanthropy has been identified as one of the primary motives for donations to athletics (Gladden & Mahony, 2005; Verner et al., 1998). In addition, in our study donors tended to believe that their sense of achievement could be fulfilled through the success of the teams they supported with their donations (Robinson & Trail, 2005). Similarly, display of commitment to athletic programs was another strong motivation for donation, which is somewhat related to sport-team identity. This result is consistent with a recent finding that commitment is a key antecedent of donation intention (Ko et al., 2014). We were not surprised that growth-related factors rated highly for both groups, because one of the primary reasons that donors give to college athletics is to support their alma mater and the student players.

The descriptive means also indicated that tangible benefits were an important motivation to give for both groups. Donors placed more priority on the added value that comes from making a donation. From the social exchange theory perspective, donations are considered payments in return for certain tangible benefits received from the athletic department by donors. Our results support findings reported by Cermak et al. (1994) and Arnett et al. (2003), that social approval, respect, and humanitarianism (i.e., social benefits) are far more important than economic benefits are in the context of motivation to give to nonprofit organizations. Considering that receiving tangible benefits was the motive with the highest rating among the high-contribution group and the second most highly rated motive among the low-contribution group, we concluded that the donors in our study who were motivated by nonaltruistic reasons were more likely to be influenced by the tangible benefits offered in exchange for their donations (Sojka, 1986).

In the current study, the results showed that tangible existence needs-related motives (i.e., power and public recognition) were not significant factors in the decision to donate. This result is consistent with the finding by Mahony, Gladden, and Funk (2003) that power is not a realistic motivation for most donors. In reality, donors could not exert political power in the athletic department's main business, such as recruiting coaches and players or developing and implementing policy.

Only a few donors actually hold power. On the other hand, Drezner (2009) found that these existence needs factors became more significant than other benefits for donors in the case of historically black colleges and universities. Accordingly, it will be necessary to further examine donor motives by focusing on this type of institution.

The results of multigroup SEM indicated that display of commitment was an important motivation factor in predicting college athletics donor intention. This result further supports the findings from descriptive statistics already discussed. We found it interesting that tangible benefits were a significant factor in donation intention among the low-contribution group, whereas socialization was a significant predictor of donation intention among the high-contribution group. These findings indicate that the people who donated more than a certain sum of money tended to expect social opportunities to meet and interact with like donors or stakeholders with social status equal to, or higher than, their own (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). Satisfaction and self-sufficiency induced by donation experiences lead to philanthropic behavior (Grusec, Kuczynski, Simutis, & Rushton, 1978).

The results of the LMA test indicated that there were significant mean differences in all motivation factors between the two contribution groups. In particular, the greatest differences were in the factors of philanthropy and tangible benefits, whereas the difference between the two groups was smallest for power and achievement. In sum, these results support the findings in prior studies that both altruistic motives (Andreoni, 1990; Batson et al., 1981; Harbaugh, 1998; Radley & Kennedy, 1995), and self-interest and instrumental motives (Cialdini et al., 1987; Neuberg et al., 1997; Radley & Kennedy, 1995) are important in influencing donors. However, the influence of these factors should be carefully examined to clearly explain and predict future donation behavior among high- and low-donor groups.

### **Managerial Implications**

The exploration of donor motivation based on contribution level has meaningful implications for managers/practitioners working in the field of college donation programs, and also for some other organizations in the nonprofit sector. First, we have helped to increase the understanding of fundamental motives for donor behavior in the context of a college athletic program. In particular, the significance of growth factors implies that vicarious achievement induced by a team's victory could be of foremost importance for college athletic donors. The more reputable and more prominent (big-time) teams are more likely to obtain more donations than are the smaller and less prominent teams, as the team's athletic achievement and reputation become the most fundamental benefit and motivator for college athletic donors.

Second, college donors have high expectations with regard to the tangible benefits that they receive in exchange for their giving. In other words, a perception of deficiency of tangible benefits would lead to feelings of unfairness and dissatisfaction among college donors. Our finding about the importance of tangible benefits to the donors provides some useful insights for managers. They should exert every effort to ensure that tangible benefits are maintained at a level that the donors perceive as acceptable. For example, to solicit donors' continuing contributions, managers should offer a variety of tangible benefits, such as parking passes, special seats, and access to a variety of amenities. Beyond providing tangible benefits, intangible aspects of the benefits of donating, such as socialization, should be highlighted as a key service outcome to satisfy the high-contribution group. This particular donor group might expect to socialize with other donors who have a similar social and economic status and might tend to consider such booster clubs as business gatherings. Providing social events throughout the season on a regular basis would not only reinforce donors' sense of affiliation, but would also generate a perception of exclusiveness and a sense of loyalty among high-contribution donors. Highly customized donor services could also be beneficial for other organizations in the nonprofit sector.

### **Limitations and Future Research Direction Suggestions**

The current study has several limitations that should be considered in further research. First, we focused only on donors to one particular collegiate athletic program, who are not necessarily representative of the university itself or of donors to nonprofit organizations. Therefore, further donor motive research using a broader sample would offer more generalizable results and will lead to implications that are more fruitful. LMA would be a useful statistical tool for this purpose. Second, although we collapsed affiliation and socialization into one factor because we found a high correlation between the two, in the SADOM these dimensions are not representative of same aspects of relatedness needs. Thus, future research is necessary to examine these particular donor motives carefully. Last, we used an existing categorization of the donor contributions to the selected university athletic program. Although we considered it reasonable to form the two categorical groups for data analysis because the sample size was large enough, and although we found meaningful differences between the donation levels of the two groups, use of other categorization methods may yield additional insights.

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