

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly

Examining Personal Values and Regulatory Fit in Poverty Alleviation Appeals: Impact on Appeal Evaluations, Campaign Interest, and Donations

Journal:	<i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>
Manuscript ID	NVSQ-AR-23-0365.R2
Manuscript Type:	Articles
Keywords:	personal values, regulatory fit, universalism-concern, donations, poverty alleviation

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Abstract

Self-regulatory focus affects responses to persuasive messages and personal values influence charity donation decisions. We examined joint effects by measuring participants’ (a) promotion focus on aspirations/gains versus prevention focus on obligations/losses and (b) prioritization of the refined universalism-concern value. Participants read a promotion- or prevention-framed appeal to act on poverty, emphasizing universalism-concern by highlighting poverty related inequality. They evaluated the appeal, stated whether they wanted to receive campaign materials, and could donate part of their remuneration to charities targeting poverty alleviation or other causes. Participants not reporting recent financial hardship and prioritizing universalism-concern evaluated the promotion-framed appeal more favorably the stronger their promotion focus was, but this fit effect did not emerge when including participants who would personally benefit from the campaign’s success. Moreover, only universalism-concern value prioritization predicted interest in campaign materials and donations. Overall, when advocating for poverty alleviation, emphasizing universalism-concern values seems advisable.

Keywords: personal values, regulatory fit, universalism-concern, donations, poverty alleviation

Data availability statement: The data and codes that produce the findings reported in this article, as well as supporting information and materials, are available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/5d92p/?view_only=0c2b53292211466d9362121a35f191b2

Charities supporting various social and environmental causes face strong competition in attracting and retaining individual donors. To illustrate, while Australians gave more than \$13.4 billion to charity in 2021, this amount was divided among almost 60,000 organizations (ACNC, 2023). Similar patterns of competition for donations are found in the USA (Giving USA Foundation, 2023) and the United Kingdom (Charity Commission, 2023). Therefore, it is not surprising that a typical charity will spend 5-25% of donations received on fundraising campaigns (Andreoni & Payne, 2011).

Relatively high levels of expenditure on fundraising in the charity sector can be problematic as prospective donors are sensitive to fundraising cost ratios (Gneezy et al., 2014; Newman et al., 2019). Further, many fundraising campaigns fail to show desired results (Helmig et al., 2004; Levis et al., 2018), making it critical that charitable organizations enhance both the effectiveness and efficiency of their fundraising campaigns. To this end, research has generally focused on examining the role of donor characteristics (e.g., Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a; Konrath & Handy, 2018; Kumar & Chakrabarti, 2023; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012) and different message frames (e.g., gain/loss: Xu & Huang, 2020; emotions: Goenka et al., 2019; Yousef et al., 2022) in eliciting donations. Far fewer studies examined what kind of message frame works best with different types of potential donor characteristics (e.g., gain/loss frames with independent/interdependent self-construal: Xu, 2019; altruistic/egoist frames with female/male gender: Chang & Lee, 2011) regarding charitable donations.

Recent meta-analytic findings suggest that one variant of this latter option, namely matching message frames to individuals' *motivational* characteristics, is effective in changing attitudes, intentions, and behavior, than other matching approaches (Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2022). Building on this work, we focus on *two* motivational characteristics that have been

associated with donating behavior: personal values and self-regulatory focus orientation in goal pursuit. We explore the joint impact of these motivational characteristics when people are faced with appeals that (mis)match their regulatory focus while expressing the motivational content of values that people prioritize (or not) and that are aligned with a target charitable cause. Specifically, we draw on the literature regarding regulatory fit (Higgins, 2005), showing that matching message framing to people’s regulatory promotion versus prevention focus (i.e., goal pursuit motivated by growth and advancement in attaining ideals/gains versus by security and safety in ensuring oughts/non-losses) increases not only the persuasiveness and liking of messages (Cesario et al., 2008, 2013), but also interest in willingness to help and donate to charities (Fransen et al., 2011). We also build on research showing that people’s value priorities are associated with their donation behavior and choice of charitable cause (Sneddon et al., 2020; see also Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011b). Specifically, we focus on values that emphasize a commitment to equality, justice, and the protection of all people (i.e., universalism-concern; Schwartz et al., 2012), as this study was part of a larger research project focusing on fostering public support for increasing unemployment payments in Australia, with the aim of alleviating poverty. Given that specific values influence attitudes towards information and objects, to the extent that they have relevant consequences for the attainment of that value (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995), we expected that people who prioritize universalism-concern should be especially receptive of appeals that highlight the attainment of this value. Further, this receptivity should increase when such appeals additionally correspond with their regulatory focus. We thus examine relations between people’s universalism-concern values, their chronic regulatory focus, attitudes towards value-expressive appeals that are promotion- or prevention-framed, and behavioral outcomes.

Personal Values

Personal values (e.g., security, benevolence) are defined as motivational goals that function as guiding principles in life (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Values can be distinguished from other related individual attributes (such as needs or motives) on several grounds (see Sagiv & Schwartz, 2020). The most widely cited approach to the study of personal values is Schwartz's (1992) theory of human values (e.g., Maio, 2010; Wolf et al., 2020). Schwartz (1992) proposed a circular structure of 10 basic values, based on an underlying motivational continuum. In this circular structure (see Figure 1), neighboring values (e.g., universalism and benevolence) have compatible motivations, in that an individual can often pursue these goals with similar actions. Values that oppose each other in the circle (e.g., universalism and power) have conflicting motivations, in that the pursuit of one value can thwart the attainment of the other. The circular structure of basic values has been confirmed in hundreds of samples from over 80 countries (Sagiv et al., 2017) and the cross-cultural equivalence of values' meaning has been established in almost 50 cultural groups (Schwartz & Cieciuch, 2022).

The circular structure of basic values can be summarized along two higher order dimensions (see Figure 1). The first dimension contrasts openness-to-change with conservation values, reflecting the conflict between the pursuit of novelty in ideas and actions over self-restriction and avoiding change. The second dimension contrasts self-enhancement with self-transcendence values, reflecting the conflict between the pursuit of self-interests over transcending self-interests for the sake of others. The structure of basic values has been further partitioned into 19 and then 20 refined values (see Figure 1; for definitions see Supplemental Material, S1), affording researchers a more fine-grained set of values to examine, with the aim of

providing greater predictive power than basic values (J. A. Lee et al., 2019b; Schwartz et al., 2012).

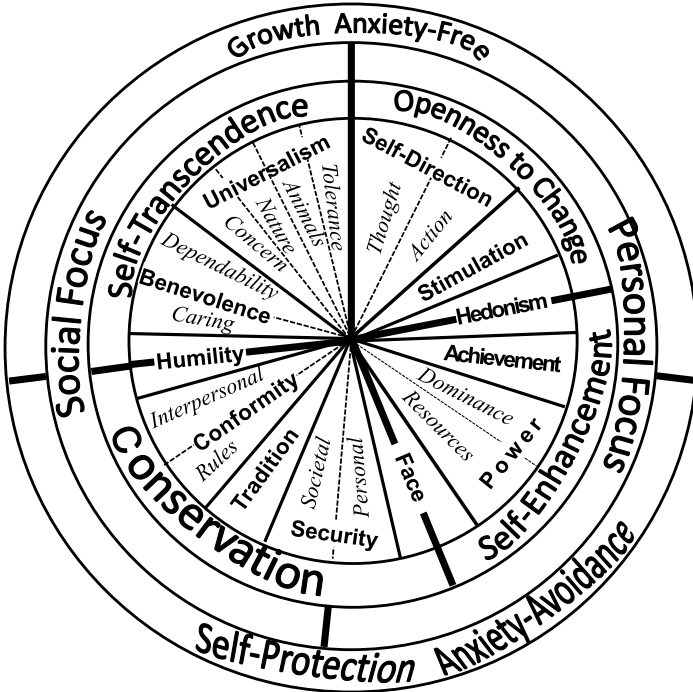


Figure 1. The 20 refined values (adapted from J. A. Lee et al., 2019b).

While people across cultures have been found to share the near universal set of values shown in Figure 1, people differ in the importance they place on specific values (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2020; Schwartz, 1992). This hierarchy of importance expresses a person’s value priorities. The importance of each value to an individual reflects its *relative* importance within an individual’s values system. For instance, when asked how important universalism values are to them, people consider this in relation to all other values (J. A. Lee et al., 2019b). The higher the relative importance of a value, the more likely it is to inform a person’s attitudes and behaviors (J. A. Lee et al., 2022; Sagiv & Roccas, 2021).

Values and Pro-social Behavior

Values have been associated with a wide range of behaviors including helping (Lönngqvist et al., 2013), voting (Caprara et al., 2017), and political activism (Vecchione et al., 2015). Of interest to the current study are associations between values and prosocial actions. According to Schwartz (2010), prosocial behaviors affirm a good and moral identity in people who prioritize self-transcendence values. Indeed, self-transcendence values are not only associated with prosocial behaviors across cultures (Sagiv & Roccas, 2021), but causal effects of these values on prosocial behavior have also been demonstrated (for a review, see Arieli et al., 2020).

In the context of charitable donations, the universalism and benevolence values have been positively associated with donation decisions in general (Todd & Lawson, 1999), as well as intentions or decisions to donate to specific causes (e.g., cancer research, Maio & Olson, 1995; humanitarian issues, Schwartz, 2010; human rights, Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Two studies, using a more refined set of values, have shown even greater clarity in predicting support for donations to specific causes. J. A. Lee et al. (2019b) found that donating to animal welfare organizations was more strongly associated with universalism-*animals* than universalism-*nature* values, and that these associations were reversed for donations to environmental organizations. Further, Sneddon et al. (2020) showed that universalism-*concern* values were positively associated with donating to international aid charities and that of all four refined universalism values (i.e., -concern, -nature, -animals, and -tolerance), only universalism-*concern* was consistently correlated with self-reported donations to these charities across studies. They also showed that the relative importance of universalism-concern matters in predicting donations, finding that as the relative importance of value increased, so too did the likelihood of donating to international aid charities. Likewise, a recent study, employing novel quantile techniques, reports

that the proportion of monthly spending on donations is only associated with universalism values above the 70th percentile of the distribution of value importance (Lake et al., 2024). However, while value importance appears to play a key role in predicting donations, little is known about the role of value importance in response to value expressive appeals.

Thus, we examine the unique relations between people’s relative prioritization of universalism-concern and their support for charitable organizations focused on poverty alleviation, in response to appeals expressing the content of this value (i.e., justice, equality, and protection of all people). As such, we seek to extend our current understanding of the role of refined values in self-reported donating behavior (Sneddon et al., 2020) to campaign support and actual donations. We also explore whether framing these appeals to align with people’s regulatory focus (see below) further increases their effectiveness.

Regulatory Focus, Regulatory Fit, and Persuasion from “Feeling Right”

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) proposes two different orientations that regulate judgments and behavior: promotion and prevention focus. People adopting a promotion focus are concerned with how they ideally would want to be, stress advancement needs, and are sensitive to the presence or absence of positive outcomes. This prompts the use of eager strategies in the pursuit of wishes, hopes, and aspirations. Conversely, people adopting a prevention focus are concerned with how they ought to be, stress safety needs, and are sensitive to the presence or absence of negative outcomes. This prompts the use of vigilant strategies in the pursuit of duties, responsibilities, and obligations. These self-regulatory orientations are conceptualized to be independent of each other and can co-exist simultaneously (e.g., Higgins et al., 2001). While people tend to have a chronic predominant orientation that they rely on in most situations, promotion or prevention focus can also be momentarily activated (Higgins et al., 2001).

People experience so-called regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000, 2005) when their way of engaging in an activity sustains their regulatory focus, for example by using goal pursuit strategies that match their regulatory focus. The experience of regulatory fit makes people engage more strongly with what they are doing, and they “feel right” about this. Thus, fit influences how strongly or badly one feels about something. For example, individuals with a promotion (vs. prevention) focus exhibit higher motivation and improved performance when employing eager (vs. vigilant) goal pursuit strategies directed towards achieving positive (vs. averting negative) outcomes (Shah et al., 1998; Spiegel et al., 2004). Regulatory fit also enhances the effectiveness of efforts to modify attitudes and behaviors by inducing recipients to undergo an “it-just-feels-right experience” while processing messages (Aaker & Lee, 2006, p. 15). When the content and/or presentation of a message aligns with individuals’ chronic or situational regulatory focus, this fit experience intensifies their message engagement, enhances processing fluency, and fosters more favorable attitudes towards the message, as well as promoting compliance with the promoted products or advocated actions (see Cesario et al., 2008; A. Y. Lee & Aaker, 2004; A. Y. Lee & Higgins, 2009). Regulatory fit influences people in domains such as health and consumer psychology (for reviews, see Ludolph & Schultz, 2015; Motyka et al., 2014).

Regulatory fit can be understood as an example of consequence-based argumentation (O’Keefe, 2013), as messages are more effective when they highlight consequences fitting recipients’ regulatory focus concerns (Cesario et al., 2013). At the same time, it is an example of motivational message matching (Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2022), as it seeks to enhance persuasion by aligning message features (e.g., emphasized outcomes) with target audience characteristics (e.g., their regulatory focus). To illustrate, promotion-focused participants preferred messages

regarding climate change related policies when they focused on the achievement of positive, growth-related outcomes, whereas prevention-focused participants preferred messages focusing on the avoidance of negative, security-related outcomes (Bertolotti & Catellani, 2014).

Regarding charitable giving, participants induced with a global rather than local processing style – akin to promotion rather than prevention focus – were found to be more willing to donate to an educational charity when it stressed its aim to ensure literacy so children can “realize their ambition and dreams” rather than to prevent illiteracy so as to avoid “a lack of education, thus reducing unemployment” (Mukherjee et al., 2014). Fransen et al. (2011) presented participants with similar promotion- or prevention-based advertising slogans of an existing but unfamiliar charity expressing its goals either in eager terms, aimed at realizing desirable outcomes, or in vigilant terms, aimed at avoiding failure. Albeit moderated by private self-focus, participants were willing to offer more help when the charity’s goals were stated in a manner that fit their induced regulatory focus (Study1). More importantly, participants who were asked to give whatever amount they wanted (but also assured they could abstain from donating), freely donated more of their own money when expressed charity goals fit their measured, chronic regulatory focus (Study 2). Similar effects have been demonstrated in research on integral regulatory fit (Cesario et al., 2008) that aligned regulatory focus goals and means to elicit actual donations (Shaw et al. 2017; see also Cao, 2015), or outcomes and visual imagery in terms of regulatory focus to increase donation intentions (Zemack-Rugar & Klucavora-Travani, 2018).

However, work specifically focusing on downstream consequences of regulatory fit in the context of charitable donations is limited, especially when it comes to the consideration of people’s chronic regulatory focus. Moreover, none of the above research considered people’s values, despite evidence in the persuasion literature that messages containing content aligned

with recipients' attitudes and beliefs are more persuasive (e.g., Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010). Therefore, it stands to reason that when values are emphasized in differently framed messages, fit effects should be moderated by the extent to which people prioritize the value expressed in the message. Woltin et al. (2022) examined whether people's nature values and chronic regulatory focus were associated with evaluations of prevention and promotion framed texts and donations to environmental charities. However, while they found that nature values predicted donations, they did not examine the role of value-expression in text framing. In the current study, we address this gap by assessing fit in terms of both regulatory focus and value-expression.

The current research

In the current study, we seek to fill the gaps in the literature on values, regulatory focus, message framing and persuasion, in the context of charitable donations and campaign interest, by examining relations between people's (a) refined value priorities, (b) regulatory focus, (c) attitudes towards value-expressive appeals that are promotion- or prevention-framed, and (d) behavioral outcomes in terms of donations and campaign interest. We employ differently framed appeals, crafted to express not only the motivational goal of universalism-concern explicitly, but also the motivational goals underlying other values (i.e., achievement, self-direction-action, and security-societal), with the aim of calling for action to alleviate poverty. This was done in order to render our research questions linked specifically to universalism-concern less obvious.

Past work has shown that appeals are more effective when they match individuals' motivational characteristics in general (Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2022), and their regulatory focus in particular (Cesario et al., 2008). Appeals have also been shown to be effective when they are put forth by charities working towards attaining values people strongly prioritize (e.g., J. A. Lee et al., 2019b; Sneddon et al., 2020). Taken together, we expected that people who prioritize

universalism-concern should be receptive of appeals regarding poverty alleviation and poverty related inequalities that highlight the attainment of this value, and especially so when the appeal is framed to fit their regulatory focus. Specifically, we hypothesize that:

- H1a – Under promotion framing, for people who place relatively high versus relatively low importance on universalism-concern values, we expect that the stronger their promotion focus is, the stronger effects on appeal evaluation and behavioral outcomes will be.
- H1b – Under prevention framing, for people who place relatively high versus relatively low importance on universalism-concern values, we expect that the stronger their prevention focus is, the stronger effects on appeal evaluations and behavioral outcomes will be.

Method

The current study was part of a larger project that examined factors influencing support for an increase in unemployment payments in Australia.¹ The data, data-analysis script, and supplemental information, including materials used in this study and the larger project, are available via the Open Science Framework (OSF) at https://osf.io/5d92p/?view_only=0c2b53292211466d9362121a35f191b2. All data were collected in accordance with the guidelines and approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the [Name of University].

Participants

Because we could not base our power analysis for a linear multiple regression using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) on an effect size from previous work, we instead based it on our smallest effect size of interest (i.e., $f^2 = 0.03$), which is the smallest effect size we would consider theoretically or practically useful (Lakens, 2022). We set $\alpha = .05$, power $(1 - \beta)$ at 80%, and the

number of regression predictors at 15 (i.e., including all interactions). This indicated that we would need 640 participants. To account for exclusions (see below), we recruited a total of 940 participants from a commercial panel, 849 of whom completed our study and were compensated with AUS \$1.50 for their participation.

We conduct analyses both including (in what follows: sample A) and excluding (in what follows: sample B) participants who reported that they had experienced financial hardship in the last three months ($n = 143$).² We explore results also when excluding these participants (sample B), as they may (a) currently or in the future directly benefit from an increase in unemployment payments and (b) as people who are personally affected by a specific issue (i.e., potential beneficiaries; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) are more likely to care about it and engage in cause-supportive action (e.g., Klandermans et al., 2015; Ratner et al., 2011). In other words, we wanted to also examine results when reducing self-interest as a primary motivation, by focusing on those for whom potential motivations are more likely to be altruistic (i.e., conscious constituents; McCarthy & Zald, 1977).³ Indeed, although – presumably because of their financial hardship – participants reporting recent financial hardship did not differ from other participants in terms of donations made, they were more interested in receiving campaign materials (40%) than those not reporting such hardship (22.3%), $\chi^2(1) = 19.42, p < .001$. In all analyses we removed one participant who failed two embedded attention checks.

The samples thus comprised 848 participants in sample A and 705 participants in sample B ($M_{age} = 49.76 [49.43]$ years, $SD_{age} = 15.52 [15.60]$; 449 [393] females, 345 [310] males, 2 [2] preferred not to answer, 2 preferred to self-describe). Most participants were in paid employment or self-employed (58.5% [63.1%]), followed by those who were retired (21.9% [23.4%]) or not working (18.8% [12.4%]; 0.8% [1%] preferred not to answer). Most respondents had a technical

or further education certificate (33.4% [32.9%]) or an undergraduate degree (23.7% [25.5%]), and the rest either a postgraduate degree (12.4 [13.8%]) or education up to year 12 (16.3 % [14.9%]) or less than year 12 (14.3 % [12.9%]).

Procedures and Measures

After giving informed consent, participants first provided basic demographic information (gender and age). We then measured their values with the Best-Worst Values refined instrument (BWVr; J. A. Lee et al., 2019b), in which participants are asked to choose the most and least important value item from a total of 21 sets of five value items, derived from a Youden balanced incomplete block experimental design. In this design, each of the 21 value items appear five times and every pair of items appears together once across all sets. The simple count method (see Louviere et al., 2015) was used to score values, resulting in scores on a scale of -1 (least relative value importance) to +1 (greatest relative value importance). The value of interest, universalism-concern, was relatively important at the sample level (sample A: $M = 0.25$, $SD = .37$; sample B: $M = 0.23$, $SD = .38$; means and standard deviations for all refined values are reported in the Supplemental Material, S1).

Subsequently, participants' regulatory focus was measured with the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al., 2001). The RFQ consists of six promotion focus subscale items (sample A: $M = 3.35$, $SD = .60$, $\alpha = .66$; sample B: $M = 3.40$, $SD = .57$, $\alpha = .62$; e.g. "How often have you accomplished things that got you psyched to try even harder?") and five prevention focus subscale items (sample A: $M = 3.29$, $SD = .80$, $\alpha = .80$; sample B: $M = 3.33$, $SD = .78$, $\alpha = .80$; e.g. "Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times"; reverse scored) to which participants respond on 5-point scales (1 = *never or seldom/certainly false*; 5 = *very often/certainly true*).

Participants were randomly assigned to either a promotion or prevention appeal framing condition and presented with appeals designed to express the universalism-concern value. In the *promotion framing condition* the appeal read:

“In Australia many people still do not live above the poverty line. This is not fair. As Australians, we embrace equality. We get active when it comes to ensuring justice. Let’s raise income support to promote peoples' equality.”

In the *prevention framing condition* the appeal read:

“In Australia many people still live below the poverty line. This is unfair. As Australians, we reject inequality. We do not sit idle when it comes to averting injustice. Let’s raise income support to prevent peoples' inequality.”

To conceal our research question, the respective promotion- or prevention-framed appeal was randomly presented among three other promotion- or prevention-framed appeals expressing achievement, self-direction-action, and security-societal values. Exploratory analyses for these appeals and respective values can be found in the Supplemental Material S2-S4 (there were no regulatory fit by value 3-way interactions for any of these appeals and values) .

Participants evaluated appeals using 7-point scales (1 = *not at all/do not like at all/very favorably*; 7 = *very much/very much like/very favorably*), indicating to what extent they found each appeal convincing, persuasive, liked it, and had an overall favorable impression of it. Reassuringly, these evaluations did not differ depending on framing (sample A: $t[846] = -.24, p = .809$; promotion frame: $M = 4.54, SD = 1.57, \alpha = .97$; prevention frame: $M = 4.51, SD = 1.56, \alpha = .97$; sample B: $t[703] = -.26, p = .792$; promotion frame: $M = 4.47, SD = 1.54, \alpha = .97$; prevention frame: $M = 4.44, SD = 1.55, \alpha = .97$).

With the aim of concealing the research question, participants next engaged in two distractor tasks, first replying to two short questions about a scenario involving counterfactual thinking and then responding to the sense of power scale (Anderson et al., 2012). Participants were then asked whether they would like to donate a portion (AUS \$0.50) of their remuneration to a charitable organization of their choice and were presented with eight well-known charities,⁴ as well as an option not to donate, in a random order. Two charities were concerned with conservation and animal welfare (i.e., RSPCA; World Wildlife Fund), two with environmental protection (i.e., Clean up Australia; Australian Conservation Foundation), two with mental health support (i.e., Headspace; Beyond Blue), and – of interest here – two with poverty alleviation (i.e., Salvation Army Australia; St Vincent de Paul/Vinnies). As a further behavioral measure, participants were then asked if they would like to learn more about campaigning to raise the rate of unemployment payments in Australia (yes/no), with participants believing they would receive campaigning materials if they selected ‘yes’. Finally, participants provided socio-demographic information before being debriefed, thanked, and paid.

Results

Universalism-concern appeal evaluation. We regressed participants’ universalism-concern appeal evaluation on the framing condition (-0.5 prevention-framing, +0.5 promotion-framing), their promotion and prevention focus, as well as their universalism-concern score (all mean-centered), all 2-way and 3-way interactions, and the 4-way interaction between these variables. While we were only interested in the regulatory fit (i.e., appeal framing by regulatory focus) by universalism-concern value 3-way interactions, we followed guidelines by including all possible interactions in our regression analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) and excluded outliers

(studentized residuals $> |2.5|$, Cook's distance; Cohen et al., 2003; Judd et al., 2011). Tables 1A and 1B provide an overview of the results.

For both samples, a main effect of universalism-concern emerged: the more important universalism-concern was to participants, the more positively they evaluated the appeal. The expected appeal framing by promotion focus by universalism-concern 3-way interaction qualifying this main effect emerged only for sample B. Apart from an unexpected promotion by prevention by universalism-concern 3-way interaction in sample B, which is not of interest here, no other effects emerged.

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Table 1A. Results for sample A of the multiple regression analysis testing for effects of predictors on universalism-concern appeal evaluation when including participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months ($n = 840$, 8 outliers excluded).

Predictor	Universalism-concern appeal evaluation				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>CI</i> ₉₅ (<i>B</i>)
Framing	-.032	.102	-.317	.752	[-.23, .17]
Universalism-concern	1.434	.139	10.284	<.001	[1.16, 1.71]
Promotion	.119	.085	1.398	.162	[-.05, .29]
Prevention	.094	.064	1.467	.143	[-.03, .22]
Promotion x Framing	.011	.170	.067	.946	[-.32, .34]
Prevention x Framing	-.004	.128	-.027	.978	[-.26, .25]
Universalism-concern x Framing	-.011	.279	-.039	.969	[-.56, .54]
Universalism-concern x Promotion	-.175	.226	-.775	.439	[-.62, .27]
Universalism-concern x Prevention	-.151	.176	-.857	.392	[-.50, .20]
Prevention x Promotion	.013	.100	.128	.898	[-.18, .21]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing	.210	.200	1.049	.295	[-.18, .60]
Promotion x Prevention x Universalism-concern	.169	.293	.579	.563	[-.41, .74]
Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	.584	.353	1.657	.098	[-.11, 1.28]
Promotion x Framing x Universalism-concern	.243	.452	.537	.591	[-.64, 1.13]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	-.160	.585	-.274	.784	[-1.31, .99]

Note. *CI*₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for unstandardized beta (*B*).

Table 1B. Results for sample B of the multiple regression analysis testing for effects of predictors on universalism-concern appeal evaluation when excluding participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months ($n = 700$, 5 outliers excluded).

Predictor	Universalism-concern appeal evaluation				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI ₉₅ (<i>B</i>)
Framing	-.003	.110	-.029	.977	[-.22, .21]
Universalism-concern	1.343	.148	9.065	<.001	[1.05, 1.63]
Promotion	.172	.098	1.757	.079	[-.02, .36]
Prevention	.123	.072	1.717	.086	[-.02, .26]
Promotion x Framing	.027	.196	.140	.889	[-.36, .41]
Prevention x Framing	.020	.143	.141	.888	[-.26, .30]
Universalism-concern x Framing	-.104	.296	-.352	.725	[-.69, .48]
Universalism-concern x Promotion	.079	.257	.306	.760	[-.43, .58]
Universalism-concern x Prevention	-.309	.191	-1.618	.106	[-.68, .07]
Prevention x Promotion	-.015	.122	-.123	.902	[-.25, .22]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing	.073	.243	.299	.765	[-.41, .55]
Promotion x Prevention x Universalism-concern	.783	.327	2.393	.017	[.14, 1.43]
Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	.540	.381	1.416	.157	[-.21, 1.29]
Promotion x Framing x Universalism-concern	1.091	.514	2.121	.034	[.08, 2.10]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	-.169	.655	-.258	.797	[-1.45, 1.12]

Note. CI₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for unstandardized beta (*B*).

We decomposed the appeal framing by promotion focus by universalism-concern 3-way interaction of interest that emerged for sample B (i.e., excluding potential beneficiaries of the campaign’s success; see McCarthy & Zald, 1977). As expected, in the promotion appeal framing condition, the promotion focus by universalism-concern interaction was positive, albeit marginally so, $B = .624, SE = .358, t = 1.744, p = .082, CI_{95\%} [-.08, 1.33]$; and in the prevention appeal framing condition it was negative and non-significant, $B = -.467, SE = .369, t = -1.263, p = .207, CI_{95\%} [-1.19, .26]$. Further decomposing the former interaction in the promotion framing condition showed, as expected, that participants who relatively strongly prioritize universalism-concern (value score +1SD) evaluated the promotion-framed appeal more positively the stronger their promotion focus was, $B = .419, SE = .178, t = 2.356, p = .019, CI_{95\%} [.07, .77]$. This was not the case for those with relatively low universalism-concern value scores (-1 SD): if anything, results indicated a non-significant more negative appeal evaluation with stronger promotion focus, $B = -.048, SE = .212, t = -0.228, p = .819, CI_{95\%} [-.46, .37]$.

Overall, these results indicate a promotion fit effect for those strongly, rather than weakly, prioritizing universalism-concern, in that the promotion framed appeal expressing universalism-concern was evaluated more positively by participants, the stronger their promotion focus was. This was limited to sample B, in which participants reporting recent financial hardship, and thus potential beneficiaries of the campaign who presumably would find any type of appeal convincing and likeable, were excluded.

Donations to charities. We used a logistic regression to regress participants’ donation choices on the same predictors as before (but with appeal framing condition coded 0 = prevention-framing, 1 = promotion-framing). Specifically, the regression contrasted whether participants made donations to charities focusing on poverty alleviation (i.e., the Salvation Army

Australia and St Vincent de Paul; coded 1) vs. other charities or not donating at all (coded 0).

Thus, we compared targeted donations to all other options.⁵

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test was not significant (sample A: $p = .217$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .055$; sample B: $p = .203$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .056$). As shown in Tables 2A and 2B, a main effect of universalism-concern emerged in both samples. Regardless of regulatory fit, regulatory focus or appeal framing, the more participants' prioritized universalism-concern, the more likely they were to donate to charities focusing on poverty alleviation (sample A: OR of 2.58; sample B: OR of 3.01). An effect of framing condition emerged in sample A (OR of 1.53), but not in sample B (OR of 1.54). No other effects emerged (see Tables 2A and 2B).

Table 2A. Results for sample A of logistic regression analyses testing for effects of predictors of monetary donations to charities focusing on poverty alleviation versus other charities or not donating ($n = 844$, 4 outliers excluded) or versus other charities ($n = 510$, 4 outliers excluded) when including participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months.

Predictor	Donations to charities focusing on support for the poor					Donations to charities focusing on support for the				
	(1) vs. to other charities or no donations made (0)					poor (1) vs. to other charities (0)				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)
Framing (Fr)	.422	.208	4.128	.042	1.53 [1.02, 2.29]	.508	.221	5.285	.022	1.66 [1.08, 2.56]
Universalism-concern	.948	.379	6.255	.012	2.58 [1.23, 5.43]	.791	.421	3.537	.060	2.21 [.97, 5.03]
Promotion (Prom)	.148	.230	.411	.522	1.16 [.74, 1.82]	.071	.267	.071	.790	1.07 [.64, 1.81]
Prevention (Prev)	.121	.174	.485	.486	1.13 [.80, 1.59]	.118	.185	.409	.522	1.13 [.78, 1.62]
Prom x Fr	-.181	.359	.254	.614	.84 [.41, 1.69]	-.193	.406	.227	.634	.82 [.37, 1.83]
Prev x Fr	-.094	.267	.125	.724	.91 [.54, 1.54]	-.088	.292	.092	.762	.92 [.52, 1.62]
Un-c x Fr	.070	.558	.016	.900	1.07 [.36, 3.20]	-.233	.609	.146	.703	.79 [.24, 2.61]
Un-c x Prom	.295	.657	.201	.654	1.34 [.37, 4.87]	-.265	.758	.122	.726	.77 [.17, 3.39]
Un-c x Prev	-.248	.464	.286	.593	.78 [.31, 1.94]	.131	.500	.069	.793	1.14 [.43, 3.04]
Prev x Prom	-.076	.266	.081	.776	.93 [.55, 1.56]	-.157	.298	.278	.598	.86 [.48, 1.53]
Prom x Prev x Fr	-.064	.446	.021	.885	.94 [.39, 2.25]	-.085	.547	.024	.877	.92 [.31, 2.69]
Prom x Prev x Un-c	-.656	.751	.764	.382	.52 [.12, 2.26]	-.519	.968	.287	.592	.60 [.09, 3.97]
Prev x Fr x Un-c	-.154	.693	.050	.824	.86 [.22, 3.33]	-.543	.758	.513	.474	.58 [.13, 2.57]
Prom x Fr x Un-c	-.052	.961	.003	.957	.95 [.14, 6.24]	.598	1.130	.280	.597	1.82 [.20, 16.68]
Prom x Prev x Fr x Un-c	.496	1.263	.154	.695	1.64 [.14, 19.51]	.835	1.571	.282	.595	2.30 [.11, 50.04]

Note. Un-c = Universalism-concern; OR = Odds ratio; CI₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for odds ratio.

Table 2B. Results for sample B of logistic regression analyses testing for effects of predictors of monetary donations to charities focusing on poverty alleviation versus other charities or not donating ($n = 700$, 5 outliers excluded) or versus other charities ($n = 431$, 3 outliers excluded) when excluding participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months.

Predictor	Donations to charities focusing on support for the poor (1) vs. to other charities or no donations made (0)					Donations to charities focusing on support for the poor (1) vs. to other charities (0)				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)
Framing (Fr)	.429	.228	3.551	.060	1.54 [.98, 2.40]	.502	.240	4.363	.037	1.65 [1.03, 2.65]
Universalism-concern	1.101	.406	7.374	.007	3.01 [1.36, 6.66]	.996	.469	4.51	.034	2.71 [1.08, 6.79]
Promotion (Prom)	.008	.256	.001	.976	1.01 [.61, 1.66]	.088	.280	.099	.753	1.09 [.63, 1.89]
Prevention (Prev)	.165	.201	.677	.411	1.18 [.80, 1.75]	.161	.217	.554	.457	1.18 [.77, 1.80]
Prom x Fr	.235	.416	.319	.572	1.27 [.56, 2.86]	.069	.450	.024	.878	1.07 [.44, 2.59]
Prev x Fr	-.179	.302	.351	.553	.84 [.46, 1.51]	-.141	.328	.184	.668	.87 [.46, 1.65]
Un-c x Fr	-.143	.601	.057	.812	.87 [.27, 2.81]	-.477	.655	.530	.467	.62 [.17, 2.24]
Un-c x Prom	-.263	.731	.129	.719	.77 [.18, 3.22]	-1.24	.801	2.378	.123	.29 [.06, 1.40]
Un-c x Prev	.081	.530	.023	.878	1.08 [.38, 3.07]	.509	.601	.718	.397	1.66 [.51, 5.41]
Prev x Prom	-.005	.307	.000	.988	1.00 [.55, 1.81]	-.158	.339	.215	.643	.85 [.44, 1.66]
Prom x Prev x Fr	.064	.539	.014	.905	1.07 [.37, 3.07]	-.164	.601	.074	.785	.85 [.26, 2.75]
Prom x Prev x Un-c	-.923	.879	1.102	.294	.40 [.07, 2.23]	-.585	1.113	.277	.599	.56 [.06, 4.93]
Prev x Fr x Un-c	-.361	.768	.221	.638	.70 [.16, 3.14]	-.743	.839	.784	.376	.48 [.09, 2.46]
Prom x Fr x Un-c	.766	1.079	.504	.478	2.15 [.26, 17.82]	1.761	1.187	2.201	.138	5.82 [.57, 59.65]
Prom x Prev x Fr x Un-c	.220	1.432	.024	.878	1.25 [.08, 20.63]	.133	1.678	.006	.937	1.14 [.4, 30.64]

Note. Un-c = Universalism-concern; OR = Odds ratio; CI₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for odds ratio.

Interest in campaigning. We used the same logistic regression as with donations to regress participants' interest in learning more about campaigning to raise the rate of unemployment payments in Australia. This regression contrasted whether participants wanted to receive further information (coded 1) or not (coded 0). The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test was not significant (sample A: $p = .156$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .061$; sample B: $p = .865$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .075$). Only a strong main effect of universalism-concern emerged, indicating that the more participants prioritized universalism-concern, the more they were interested in receiving campaign information (sample A: OR of 3.17; sample B: OR of 3.15). No other effects emerged (see Tables 3A and 3B).

In summary, the results show that H1a was partially supported for appeal evaluation only in sample B, but not for behavioral outcomes in either sample; and that H1b was not supported for appeal evaluation or behavioral outcomes in either sample.

Table 3A. Results for sample A of the logistic regression analysis testing for effects of predictors of wanting versus not wanting to learn more about campaigning to raise the rate of unemployment payments in Australia when including participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months ($n = 848$, no outliers).

Predictor	Interest in learning more about campaigning to raise the rate of income support payments in Australia (1) vs. no interest (0)				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)
Framing	.046	.169	.074	.786	1.05 [.75, 1.46]
Universalism-concern	1.153	.336	11.780	<.001	3.17 [1.64, 6.12]
Promotion	.166	.191	.760	.383	1.18 [.81, 1.72]
Prevention	-.038	.152	.064	.801	.96 [.72, 1.30]
Promotion x Framing	.089	.283	.099	.753	1.09 [.63, 1.91]
Prevention x Framing	-.135	.215	.394	.530	.87 [.57, 1.33]
Universalism-concern x Framing	-.180	.464	.151	.698	.84 [.34, 2.07]
Universalism-concern x Promotion	-.589	.516	1.305	.253	.56 [.20, 1.53]
Universalism-concern x Prevention	-.116	.408	.081	.776	.89 [.40, 1.98]
Prevention x Promotion	-.006	.216	.001	.978	.99 [.65, 1.52]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing	-.174	.338	.266	.606	.84 [.43, 1.63]
Promotion x Prevention x Universalism-concern	.242	.573	.179	.672	1.27 [.42, 3.92]
Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	-.312	.574	.296	.586	.73 [.24, 2.25]
Promotion x Framing x Universalism-concern	.427	.747	.327	.568	1.53 [.36, 6.62]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	.490	.952	.265	.607	1.63 [.25, 10.56]

Note. OR = Odds ratio; CI₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for odds ratio.

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Table 3B. Results for sample B of the logistic regression analysis testing for effects of predictors of wanting versus not wanting to learn more about campaigning to raise the rate of unemployment payments in Australia when including participants reporting financial hardship in the last 3 months ($n = 700$, 5 outliers).

Predictor	Interest in learning more about campaigning to raise the rate of income support payments in Australia (1) vs. no interest (0)				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	OR, CI ₉₅ (OR)
Framing	-.032	.199	.026	.873	.97 [.66, 1.43]
Universalism-concern	1.146	.386	8.803	.003	3.15 [1.47, 6.71]
Promotion	.089	.232	.148	.701	1.09 [.69, 1.72]
Prevention	.018	.186	.010	.922	1.02 [.71, 1.47]
Promotion x Framing	.423	.353	1.430	.232	1.53 [.76, 3.05]
Prevention x Framing	-.303	.261	1.346	.246	.74 [.44, 1.23]
Universalism-concern x Framing	.078	.534	.021	.885	1.08 [.38, 3.08]
Universalism-concern x Promotion	-.580	.656	.780	.377	.56 [.16, 2.03]
Universalism-concern x Prevention	-.038	.489	.006	.938	.96 [.37, 2.51]
Prevention x Promotion	.095	.263	.130	.718	1.10 [.66, 1.84]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing	-.167	.442	.142	.706	.85 [.36, 2.01]
Promotion x Prevention x Universalism-concern	.334	.707	.223	.637	1.40 [.35, 5.58]
Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	-.616	.679	.823	.364	.54 [.14, 2.04]
Promotion x Framing x Universalism-concern	.361	.920	.154	.695	1.43 [.24, 8.70]
Promotion x Prevention x Framing x Universalism-concern	.535	1.163	.212	.645	1.71 [.18, 16.68]

Note. OR = Odds ratio; CI₉₅ = 95% confidence interval for odds ratio.

Discussion

Our results show that, in the context of increasing unemployment payments to alleviate poverty, crafting appeals designed to express the universalism-concern value in a manner that fits people's regulatory focus, can positively impact appeal persuasiveness and evaluation. However, this was effective only in sample B for those who prioritize universalism-concern (defined as commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people; Schwartz et al., 2012) and had no bearing when also considering participants already facing financial hardship (sample A). Moreover, regulatory fit (Cesario et al., 2008; Higgins, 2000, 2005) did not have an effect on donations to poverty alleviation charities or interest in campaign materials about raising the rate of unemployment payments. These behaviors were predicted solely by people's relative prioritization of the universalism-concern value.

The diverging effects for self-reported attitudes and observed behaviors towards poverty alleviation in sample B, highlight the need for donation research to consider people's actual behavior. At the same time, for both samples they underscore the limited work highlighting the importance of universalism-concern in predicting self-reported donating to charities aligned with the content of this value, such as international aid charities (e.g., Sneddon et al., 2020). They also dovetail with work showing universalism-concern to be associated with activism (Vecchione et al. 2015), support for economic redistribution (Abdallah, 2022), and prosocial behavior (Arieli et al., 2020).

We found an asymmetric regulatory fit effect for differently framed appeals when not considering participants facing financial hardship (sample B). Participants prioritizing universalism-concern evaluated a promotion-framed appeal more favorably the stronger their promotion focus was. However, similar effects did not emerge regarding prevention-framed

appeals and people’s prevention focus. This asymmetry reflects meta-analytic findings regarding evaluations in general (Motyka et al., 2014). Moreover, it mirrors similar asymmetric promotion fit effects regarding appeals’ integral fit for the effectiveness of cause-related marketing (Coleman et al., 2020; see also Cornelis et al., 2014), donation intentions (Mukherjee et al., 2014; Zemack-Rugar & Klucarova-Travani, 2018), and altruistic behavior (Baek & Reid, 2018).

We can only speculate on reasons for promotion having an advantage over prevention fit in these contexts. First, charitable appeals generally employ abstract rather than concrete language and promotion focus fits abstractness more than prevention focus (Semin et al., 2005). Future research could consider systematically varying the level of appeal abstraction to gain further insight. Second, values are defined as *desirable* trans-situational ideal end-states (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). As promotion (prevention) focus entails a concern with ensuring positive/desirable (averting negative/undesirable) outcomes (Higgins, 1997), expressing values in communication might constitute a further advantage for asymmetric promotion fit (Wolfin & Bardi, 2018).

Regulatory fit in appeal evaluations among people not facing financial hardship who prioritize universalism-concern did not extend to donations made to charities alleviating poverty. For this behavioral outcome, in both samples only the prioritization of universalism-concern emerged as a predictor, regardless of whether participants facing financial hardship were included or not. This corroborates research demonstrating that universalism-concern is one of the values most strongly correlated with associated behaviors (J. A. Lee et al., 2022; Schwartz & Butenko, 2014) and resonates with research showing that the principle of care – closely related to universalism-concern – is consistently related to charitable giving, regardless of framing of appeals (Bekkers et al., 2015). People who prioritize universalism-concern should arguably have

a strong motivation to support actions that have positive consequences for its attainment (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). As such, they can be assumed to have a strong motivation to donate to charities that reflect their value priorities; our findings suggest that this motivation is not further amplified by fit. In such contexts fit might serve “as a magnifier [rather] than as an enhancer” of already existing positive attitudes (A.Y. Lee & Higgins, 2009, p. 329).

Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, our work contributes to a better understanding of the interplay between motivational content and processes. To the best of our knowledge, only two studies considered the joint influence of personal values and regulatory focus. After terminating an initial study, participants in Leikas et al. (2009; Study 2) were confronted with promotion-framed (“Your chance to easily participate in a fun experiment!”) or prevention-framed (“Fulfill your duty toward science”) taglines asking them to participate in a further experiment. Participants scoring high on the values of achievement, self-direction or stimulation, and low on the value of conformity, were more likely to comply with a request when it was framed in promotion (vs. prevention) terms. However, this work considered certain basic (but not refined) personal values and participants chronic regulatory focus was not considered. Moreover, compliance with the request in Leikas et al.’s (2009) study did not entail charitable giving.

Participants who prioritized the universalism-nature value in Woltin et al. (2022), judged a text stressing the need to ensure the environment’s welfare more favorably the stronger their promotion focus was. No effects emerged for prevention focus and a text stressing the need to avoid the environment’s destruction, and only universalism-nature values predicted donations to environmental charities. However, the employed texts did not include a call to action (participants were told they were evaluating texts written by a journalism student). Nonetheless,

taken together this limited work suggests that research interested in increasing the liking of appeals might benefit from jointly considering motivational content (i.e., values), as well as people’s inclination towards motivational strategies in goal pursuit (i.e., regulatory focus; although in light of the present asymmetrical effect that only held when excluding people facing financial hardship, more work is needed). Future work could more systematically explore to what extent being a potential beneficiary of a promoted action or having *a priori* strong convictions regarding issues or topics at stake constitutes a boundary condition of fit effects.

Seeking to enhance persuasion by matching appeals to differences in motivational characteristics, such as salient goals, needs and values, has been found to have an effect on attitudes, intentions, as well as self-reported and observed behavior that is larger than those observed for other message matching approaches in meta-analytic work (e.g., Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2022). At the same time, a recent meta-analyses regarding the effectiveness of gain-framed (fitting promotion) and loss-framed (fitting prevention) messages, specifically in charity advertising overall, attests to inconsistent results (Xu & Huang, 2020). This inconsistency might – at least in part – be explained by considering the specific values conveyed and the extent to which they are compatible with gain or loss frames.

Managerial Implications

Recent work showed that promotion-framed charity campaigns are generally more effective than those highlighting prevention-framed goals (Sekścińska et al., 2023) and that charities promoting a cause are more likely to achieve support, compared to those who advance fighting against something (Botner et al., 2015). This would suggest favoring promotion- rather than prevention-framing in charitable appeals. However, we do not find strong support for this in the current study. Instead, campaigns seeking to alleviate poverty by expressing the

universalism-concern value appear to hold some promise. Previous studies showed associations between this value and individuals' self-reported donating behavior (Sneddon et al., 2020). Combined with our results, campaigns expressing universalism-concern should more likely result in actual donations for charities working towards the attainment of this value. More work is needed to empirically corroborate this.

People's readiness to receive campaign information, as well as their donations to relevant charities, were predicted only by the universalism-concern value. This suggests that organizations can target populations likely to prioritize universalism-concern values (e.g., older people, J. A. Lee et al., 2019a; people with high trait agreeableness, Vecchione, 2023). Another avenue to promote further engagement are initiatives aimed at making universalism-concern values more accessible in a target population. Studies of value-behavior relations show that priming a value to increase its accessibility can result in an increase in behavior consistent with it (e.g., universalism values and pro-environmental consumption; or volunteering; Verplanken & Holland, 2002; Maio et al., 2009). Simply reflecting on one's values or reasons for them being important (Maio et al., 2001) also increases values' accessibility and, in turn, their impact on behavior. As universalism values tend to be important, on average and across cultures (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Schwartz & Cieciuch, 2022), future research might test methods to make them more accessible in target populations and examine how this impacts support for charitable appeals and donations.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present work is limited in that more research is needed to gauge its generalizability beyond the specific cultural sample considered (Einolf, 2017), including non-WEIRD participants (Henrich et al., 2010). Given the universal nature of Schwartz's (1992) theory of

human values one could expect comparable associations. At the same time, despite value hierarchies being remarkably similar across cultures, cross-cultural differences in value priorities (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001) as well as in regulatory focus (Higgins, 2008; A. Y. Lee et al., 2000) call for research relying on diverse samples. Such future research would also be advised to include other measures of regulatory focus. The Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (Higgins et al., 2001) centers on the self-guided definition of regulatory focus (e.g., promotion guided by ideals and aspirations and prevention guided by oughts and duties), whilst the General Regulatory Focus Measure (Lookwood et al., 2002) centers more on the reference-point definition (e.g., regulation based on positive versus negative reference points); other less frequently used scales focus on yet further facets (e.g., strategies; Sassenberg et al., 2012).

The differently framed appeals in this study conveyed only the essence of universalism-concern to encourage people to act on raising income support as a means to alleviate poverty – without an explicit call to this end. This procedure reduced the likelihood of participants linking the appeal to the behaviors being studied, mitigating demand effects, but it might have contributed to the rather weak regulatory fit effect. The only research we are aware of looking at charitable donations as a function of both people’s chronic regulatory focus and appeal regulatory focus framing found some effects to be moderated by private self-focus (Fransen et al., 2011). Other work found donating behavior congruent with value centrality as the result of enhanced self-focus (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Future research and practitioners thus might benefit from incorporating elements in appeals known to increase people’s self-focus. Alternatively, regulatory fit of appeals can be strengthened by including several levels at which they are framed. For example, by simultaneously describing the pleasures of adhering versus the

pains of not adhering to the recommended action (Cesario et al., 2013), using abstract versus concrete imagery (Naletelich et al., 2022), and language (Semin et al., 2005).

Finally, our research goes beyond previous findings regarding self-reported donations (e.g., Sneddon et al., 2020) as we considered people's choices to actually donate part of their remuneration. This is a strength as most research relies on people's donation *intentions* (see Wymer & Gross, 2021). However, a caveat is that research has shown people deal somewhat differently with money they receive in laboratory studies (so-called "windfall money") compared to money they personally earned (Carlsson et al., 2013; Li et al., 2019). Also, both charities focused on poverty alleviation proposed as donation recipients in this study (i.e., the Salvation Army Australia; St Vincent de Paul) have religious origins and the other proposed charities focus on concerns aligned with the content of universalism values (e.g., universalism-nature: the World Wildlife Fund; Clean up Australia); this might have mitigated some effects.

Notwithstanding the above shortcomings, our results show that people not facing financial hardship themselves and prioritizing universalism-concern were inclined to deem an appeal to act on poverty by raising income support as more convincing and persuasive, and to have a more favorable impression of it, when it was crafted to fit their own promotion focus. Whilst this appeal matching effect did not extend to our behavioral outcomes, and also did not emerge when including potential beneficiaries of the campaign (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), results clearly show that the universalism-concern value is a strong predictor of charitable giving and interest in campaign information regarding poverty alleviation. Testing how this value might combine with other message matching attempts based on similar or different motivational characteristics of people (Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2022), including their motives to donate (Konrath & Handy, 2018), is important. Such efforts will help researchers gain a more fine-

grained understanding of message matching and support professionals in enhancing donor engagement.

For Peer Review

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Endnotes

¹ As mentioned, this study was part of a larger research project focusing on fostering public support for increasing unemployment payments in Australia, with the aim of alleviating poverty. Therefore, several measures not of relevance in the context of the current study were also assessed: participants' postcode, their social and relational mobility experiences and expectations (including their self-reported social class), their preference for statements about income support, their attitudes towards poverty, their perceptions of the level of unemployment payments in Australia, their religiosity, their voting preference, and their own as well as their perception of other Australians' support for increasing unemployment payments. Information on these measures is provided on the OSF in Supplemental Material, S5.

² To assess experience of financial hardship, participants reported whether in the last 3 months they had received any types of Australian Government support payments (JobSeeker, Age Pension, Concession or Healthcare Cards, Disability Support Pension, Youth Allowance, Carer Allowance, Parenting Payment; yes/no), and whether they had experienced a situation in which they could not afford to pay for any of 10 different necessities (insurance, utilities, clothing, food, housing, transport, telephone, medication, internet, furniture; yes/no).

³ McCarthy and Zald (1977) define potential beneficiaries as those individuals who would directly benefit from a social movement organization achieving their goals, as opposed to potential conscious constituents, who they define as supporters who will not directly benefit from a social movement organization achieving their goals.

⁴ We limited potential donations to a fixed amount as decisions regarding how much to donate are impacted by multiple factors (Dickert et al., 2011; Fajardo et al., 2018); we considered charities that operate in Australia and globally.

⁵ Alternatively, contrasting whether participants made donations to charities focusing on the poor (coded 1) vs. other charities (coded 0) – and thus excluding participants who decided not to donate from analyses – led to similar results (see Tables 2A and 2B, right columns).

For Peer Review

Second Revision – NVSQ-AR-23-0365.R1**Examining Personal Values and Regulatory Fit in Poverty Alleviation Appeals: Impact on Appeal Evaluations, Campaign Interest, and Donations**

25 November 2024

Dear Dr. Piatak,

We would first and foremost like to thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript.

We were naturally very pleased that **referee #1** stated: “Thank you for responding effectively to my original review in this revision. Well done.” Moreover, it transpires that despite having seen the other two reviews, referee #1 did not request further changes, such as suggested by referee #2. In what follows we thus concentrate on the points raised by **referee #2**, first restating them and then detailing how we addressed them (*in italics*).

Unfortunately, we again were not able to access the analyses run and mentioned by referee #2. Regarding our additional analyses mentioned in this response letter: We have updated all documents (data and syntax, supplemental material) on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/5d92p/?view_only=0c2b53292211466d9362121a35f191b2.

Referee #2

[1] I appreciate the changes in the manuscript with respect to the description of the power analysis [3], and citation of previous research likely to be based on questionable research practices [5]. Also I appreciate the discussion of alternative measures for regulatory focus [4]. I particularly appreciate the response to [10]. This manuscript reports null-findings for an established theory. As I will show below, the data are even less supportive of the theoretical framework than the findings reported in the revised manuscript. Because the experiment was well-powered, and well-designed, it is important that the manuscript gets published after a further revision.

We are pleased to read that the reviewer is satisfied with our responses to the mentioned points. Moreover, we had already stated in our previous response letter regarding our first revision that we fully agree that null findings of well-powered studies should be published; and that overall there was no strong support for an appeal framing fit effect.

At the same time, and as we detail below, we continue to believe there is reason to also explore findings regarding appeal framing fit effects when excluding participants to whom appeals should appeal regardless of their framing or other variables used to increase liking, persuasive power, or other outcomes because of self-interest.

Nonetheless, we have now moved all analyses that include participants who reported having recently experienced financial hardship and that pertain to our three dependent variables previously reported in the Supplemental Material document to the main text (i.e., the manuscript); we consistently always first refer to the sample including participants having reported recent financial hardship (referred to as sample A) and only subsequently to the sample excluding them (referred to as sample B); we always present results for sample A first; and we nuanced the discussion even more strongly in terms of differences between these samples (see below).

[2] However, some of the claims in the manuscript deserve qualification or should be deleted altogether. A sentence that should be deleted is the addition in response to [9] on page 26 of the manuscript, “This resonates with our finding that participants donated more under promotion framing.” This claim does not have a solid empirical foundation in the data.

I think I understand where this statement comes from. It aligns with some previous research, and it seems to be consistent with the positive associations reported in Table 2 between the variable “Framing (Fr)” and donations to charities focusing on support for the poor (1) vs. donations to other charities or no donations made (the 0 category in the left side of the table) and donations to other charities (the 0 category in the right side of the table) that a promotion focus encourages donations.

However, these coefficients cannot be interpreted as evidence in favor of a positive main effect of framing on donations to charities focusing on support for the poor. These associations may be positive, but they emerge from regression analyses that exclude persons reporting financial hardship, that exclude outliers, and that include all possible interactions. In such an analysis, the main effect of promotion focus cannot be interpreted straightforwardly – see Hayes et al. (2012).

In a more straightforward analysis, an entirely different conclusion emerges. A cross-tabulation of the condition participants were assigned to and their donation behavior shows that the framing of the appeal as preventing inequality or promoting equality did not affect the proportion of participants donating. In response to the prevention appeal, 59% gave, while 62% gave in response to the promotion appeal. The Chi Square of 0.66 indicates that the difference is not significant ($p = .417$). This is evident from the cross-tabulation below, produced by line 19 of the attached do-file. [Table on donations 0 / 1 left our here, but for full sample: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.6574$, $Pr = 0.417$].

These proportions are lower among those reporting financial hardship, but not different between conditions, as the following tables show, produced by line 29 of the attached do-file. [Tables on donations 0 / 1 left our here, but for Afford_GovPay yes: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.0007$, $Pr = 0.979$; for Afford_GovPay no: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.6833$, $Pr = 0.408$].

We thank the reviewer for drawing our attention to the Hayes et al. (2012) paper. In preparing to run regression analysis as suggested, we spotted a small error in the logistic regression syntax that we rectified (results for donations or campaign interest were not effected in any meaningful way, with all previously reported non-significant effects remaining non-significant, all previously reported significant effects remaining significant, and no other significant effects emerging; we double checked all results and they are correctly reported in this revision).

Running a regression analysis as in Model 1 in Hayes et al. (2012), that is only including main effects (of framing, universalism-concern, promotion focus, prevention focus) but no interaction terms (see the syntax on OSF, section “Regression analyses excluding interaction terms”) did not change results in a meaningful way.

When doing this, results reported in what now is Table 2B (i.e., excluding those reporting having experienced financial hardship, the person having failed two attention checks, and outliers) regarding “Donations to charities focusing on support for the poor (1) vs. to other charities or no donations made (0)” (the left hand column, which we focus on in the manuscript) the non-significant effect of framing reported in Table 2B at $p = .060$ ($OR = 1.54$; $CI95 [1.98, 2.40]$) remains non-significant at $p = .058$ ($OR = 1.51$; $CI95 [1.99, 2.32]$). When doing this for the same dependent variable, as detailed and as done for the results reported in what is now Table 2A (i.e., not excluding those reporting having experienced financial hardship, but only the person having failed two attention checks as well as outliers), the significant effect of reported in Table 2A at $p = .042$ ($OR = 1.53$; $CI95 [1.02, 2.29]$) emerges at $p = .045$ ($OR = 1.49$; $CI95 [1.01, 2.19]$).

In line with the reviewers suggestions, and light of (a) effects not being consistently significant, and (b) the cross-tabulation analyses the reviewer put forward, as well as (c) main effects of framing – or the lack thereof – not being pertinent in the context of our work (i.e., we did not predict this), we refrain from interpreting this in our current revision. Consequently, we have removed any previous interpretations of this main effect. Of course this also includes the sentence mentioned by the reviewer.

On p. 1 in the abstract we changed the last sentence “Our findings suggest that when advocating for poverty alleviation, employing promotion framed messages is advisable, but even more is the emphasis of universalism-concern values” to “Overall, when advocating for poverty alleviation, emphasizing universalism-concern values seems advisable.”

On p. 20 we changed “Apart from a marginal effect of framing condition, indicating that participants tended to be more likely to donate with promotion framing, there were no other effects” to “An effect of framing condition emerged in sample A (OR of 1.53), but not in sample B (OR of 1.54). No other effects emerged (see Tables 2A and 2B).”

On p. 26 we deleted “(...), and for donations additionally by promotion appeal framing” from the sentence “These behaviors were predicted solely by people’s relative prioritization of the universalism-concern value, and for donations additionally by promotion appeal framing.”

On p. 27 we deleted “(and promotion appeal framing)” from the sentence “For this behavioral outcome, [now added: in both samples] only the prioritization of universalism-concern (and promotion appeal framing) emerged as predictor.”

On p. 29 we deleted “(...), despite a tendency pointing to a slight advantage of promotion appeals (as in the current work)” from the end of the sentence “At the same time, a recent meta-analyses regarding the effectiveness of gain-framed (fitting promotion) and loss-framed (fitting prevention) messages, specifically in charity advertising overall, attests to inconsistent results (Xu & Huang, 2020).”

On pp. 29-30, we changed “Recent work showed that promotion-framed charity campaigns are generally more effective than those highlighting prevention-framed goals (Sekścińska et al., 2023) and that charities promoting a cause are more likely to achieve support, compared to those who advance fighting against something (Botner et al., 2015). This resonates with our finding that participants donated more under promotion framing. Overall, favoring promotion- rather than prevention-framing in charitable appeals thus seems advisable. More importantly, campaigns expressing the universalism-care value appear to hold some promise.” This section now reads: “Recent work showed that promotion-framed charity campaigns are generally more effective than those highlighting prevention-framed goals (Sekścińska et al., 2023) and that charities promoting a cause are more likely to achieve support, compared to those who advance fighting against something (Botner et al., 2015). This would suggest favoring promotion- rather than prevention-framing in charitable appeals. However, we do not find strong support for this in the context of the current study. Instead, campaigns seeking to alleviate poverty by expressing the universalism-concern value appear to hold some promise.”

[3] My main concern about the original manuscript – that the results are not robust with respect to arbitrary choices in scale construction and sample selection – has not diminished. The sample selection effects are strong. Among respondents reporting financial hardship the results are entirely different from the results reported in the manuscript, but not in the way the authors argue. The scale construction effects are somewhat smaller, but still problematic.

Sample selection effects, [2] and [8]

The authors justify the exclusion of participants who “received government payments / had affordability crisis” with the argument that “people who are personally affected by a specific issue are more likely to care about it and engage in cause-supportive action”, supported by two references. Though intuition would perhaps support the idea that having received government assistance and having trouble paying for basic needs creates a self-interested motivation to support charities exclusion of participants, it does not apply in the current case.

The output below, generated by the command on line 18 of the do-file, is a cross-tabulation of the variable “Affordability issues and gov payments combined” with donations participants made in the experiment. It shows that among those who had affordability issues and received government payments 56% donated, while among those who did not have affordability issues and received government payments 62% donated. The difference is not significant (Chi square 1.60, $p = .21$), but if anything, those with a self-interest to donate were less likely rather than more likely to donate in the experiment. [Table on donations 0/1 left out here, but: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 1.6024$, $Pr = 0.206$]

Among the 515 participants who made donations, financial hardship is also not related to donating to poverty related charities. This is evident from the cross-tabulation on line 37. Both among those reporting financial hardship and those not reporting financial hardship about one quarter of donors gave to poverty related charities.

In sum, the manuscript justifies the exclusion of participants reporting financial hardship with the assumption that financial hardship creates more support for charities, and that it does so regardless of message framing. Both assumptions are rejected by the data.

We continue to believe that exploring the data excluding the above-mentioned participants who report having recently had affordability issues is warranted and is not “arbitrary”. We follow the work of McCarthy and Zald (1977) in this regard, who argue that campaign ‘beneficiaries’ (in this case, people who would benefit for an increase in income support that the campaign is centered on) have different motivations and levels of engagement with social movement campaigns than ‘conscience constituents’ (i.e., those who are not direct beneficiaries of the campaign). This work is well cited in the sociology and political science literature and strongly supported by empirical evidence.

Moreover, our considerations were not based on assuming these excluded participants would donate more. As a matter of fact, if anything they could be expected to donate less, in light of them reporting that they had recently not been able to pay for basic necessities (e.g., medication, electricity, etc.) – a descriptive pattern the reviewer also reports.

However, supporting the campaign in other ways than financially (i.e., via donations) was also assessed – namely in terms of interest in receiving campaign material. For this variable, there is a significant difference, such that those who report having faced affordability issues are more interested in receiving materials (40.0 %) than those who do not report having faced such issues (22.3 %), Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 19.42$, $p < .001$ (see the syntax on OSF, section “Differences between participants reporting financial hardship vs. not regarding interest in campaign material”).

This supports our argument that these participants should be “more likely to care about it [the issue of the campaign] and engage in cause-supportive action.” We therefore deem it important and legitimate to report effects also when excluding these participants.

To further clarify the above points in the manuscript, we changed the last two paragraphs of the ‘participants’ section (see pp. 12–13), which now reads:

“We conduct analyses both including (in what follows: sample A) and excluding (in what follows: sample B) participants who reported that they had experienced financial hardship in the last three months ($n = 143$)². We explore results also when excluding these participants (sample B), as they may (a) currently or in the future directly benefit from an increase in unemployment payments and (b) as people who are personally affected by a specific issue (i.e., potential beneficiaries; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) are more likely to care about it and engage in cause-supportive action (e.g., Klandermans et al., 2015; Ratner et al., 2011). In other words, we wanted to also examine results when reducing self-interest as a primary motivation, by focusing on those for whom potential motivations are more likely to be altruistic (i.e., conscious constituents; McCarthy & Zald, 1977)³. Indeed, although – presumably because of their financial hardship – participants reporting recent financial hardship did not differ from other participants in terms of donations made, they were more interested in receiving campaign materials (40%) than those

not reporting such hardship (22.3%), $\chi^2(1) = 19.42, p < .001$. In all analyses we removed one participant who failed two embedded attention checks.

The samples thus comprised 848 participants in sample A and 705 participants in sample B ($M_{age} = 49.76 [49.43]$ years, $SD_{age} = 15.52 [15.60]$; 449 [393] females, 345 [310] males, 2 [2] preferred not to answer, 2 preferred to self-describe). Most participants were in paid employment or self-employed (58.5% [63.1%]), followed by those who were retired (21.9% [23.4%]) or not working (18.8% [12.4%]; 0.8% [1%] preferred not to answer). Most respondents had a technical or further education certificate (33.4% [32.9%]) or an undergraduate degree (23.7% [25.5%]), and the rest either a postgraduate degree (12.4% [13.8%]) or education up to year 12 (16.3% [14.9%]) or less than year 12 (14.3% [12.9%]).

The new endnote #3 reads: “McCarthy and Zald (1977) define potential beneficiaries as those individuals who would directly benefit from a social movement organization achieving their goals, as opposed to potential conscious constituents, who they define as supporters who will not directly benefit from a social movement organization achieving their goals.”

As already stated in our previous response letter, presenting results also when excluding those reporting recent financial hardship (sample B) does not in any way change the article’s main message that only the prioritization of the universalism-concern value – but not regulatory fit – predicts the behavioural variables considered (donations, willingness to receive campaign materials) – which we would argue are more important than mere appeal evaluations. Indeed, we always stated that we are interested first and foremost in behavioral outcomes (e.g., p. 2, p. 10).

Nevertheless, some effects being different for what we now refer to as sample B suggests that regulatory fit effects might be contingent on people not having an a priori strong opinions, attitudes, or convictions regarding the issue, object or topic at stake. To illustrate, framing a message (in whatever way) seeking to convince US citizens to vote a candidate of the Democrats will very unlikely impact a hard-core Republican supporter, nor increase further existing voting intentions of a registered Democrat. And this – a boundary condition to explore – is worth reporting, as it is of interest for future work in this domain. We thus included a sentence on p. 29: “Future work could more systematically explore to what extent being a potential beneficiary of a promoted action or having a priori strong convictions regarding issues or topics at stake constitutes a boundary condition of fit effects.”

We agree with the reviewer that reporting results for what we now refer to as sample A is important. Indeed, we had already reported in the first revision results for any effect found regarding what we now refer to as sample B – albeit for the latter only in the text, with full results detailed in tables in the Supplemental Materials document on the OSF. As already mentioned, we now report all results (i.e., results when including and excluding the financial hardship participants) in tables (labelled “A” when including them – sample A; labelled “B” when excluding them – sample B) as well as in the text, and we consistently report results for sample A first.

We also clearly point out that the effect for message framing is limited to sample B, for example on p. 19 “This was limited to sample B, in which participants reporting recent financial hardship, and thus potential beneficiaries of the campaign who presumably would find any type of appeal convincing and likeable, were excluded.”

On p. 23 we added (underlined here) to our previous sentence “In summary, the results show that H1a was partially supported for appeal evaluation only in sample B, but not for behavioral outcomes in either sample; and that H1b was not supported for appeal evaluation or behavioral outcomes in either sample.”

As a further example on pp. 27-28 we stated and still state “People who prioritize universalism-concern should arguably have a strong motivation to support actions that have positive consequences for its attainment (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). As such, they can be assumed to have a strong motivation to donate to charities that reflect their value priorities; our findings suggest that this motivation is not further amplified by fit.”

On p. 29 we stated and still state “(...) although in light of the present asymmetrical effect that only held when excluding people facing financial hardship, more work is needed.”

On p. 32 we added (underlined here) “Whilst this appeal matching effect did not extend to our behavioral outcomes, and also did not emerge when including potential beneficiaries of the campaign (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), results clearly show that the universalism-concern value is a strong predictor of charitable giving and interest in campaign information regarding attempts to alleviate poverty.”

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226464>

[4] Scale construction effects [6]

I conducted a robustness analysis by removing item RF11 from the factor analysis in the command on line 50. The item is not a good indicator of promotion focus, because it reduced the reliability of the promotion focus scale. This is evident from the output below, generated by line 47. [Table on reliability analyses left out here, but: the alpha of the promotion scale is .66 when including item RF 11; were this item dropped the alpha would be .68]

By removing it the reliability of the ‘RF Promotion focus’ scale improves from .66 to .68. This should not matter substantially for the results. If anything, because of the improved reliability, the results should become somewhat stronger.

However, the results of the robustness analysis produced by the command on line 243 reveal quite the opposite. In analyses with scales for prevention and promotion focus constructed from a factor analysis without item 11, but with all the same data exclusions as in the original manuscript, the results are different. In the regression of appeal evaluations, two interactions flipped signs: the Universalism-concern x Prevention interaction that was negative but not significantly so ($p = .109$) in Table 1 became positive ($p = .028$); the interaction between promotion focus, prevention focus, and universalism that was positive ($p = .017$) in Table 1 became negative ($p = .034$), and the Promotion x Framing x Universalism-concern interaction that was significant in Table 1 ($p = .034$) became non-significant ($p = .106$).

Firstly, we reiterate that we did not make “arbitrary choices in scale construction” (see beginning of point [3] above, making reference to this point). In our previous revision we had detailed factor analyses results (both FAF and PC analyses), a parallel analysis of comparison between factor analyses to determine number of components (O’Conner, 2000; <https://oconnor-psych.ok.ubc.ca/nfactors/nfactors.html>), and included the link to scale construction instruction (<https://cuhigginslab.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/RFQ.pdf>). We followed these instructions. Promotion and prevention scales have been constructed in this manner in hundreds of studies across various research domains in psychology.

Secondly, we are unaware of any literature pointing to a requirement of dropping an item responsible for a .02 lower reliability (Cronbach’s alpha), nor are we aware of any literature suggesting that a scale is constructed in an “arbitrary” manner if such an item is not dropped.

Thirdly, we have run the analyses as reported by the reviewer, that is dropping item RF11 and using the same filter the reviewer also reports having used (= excluding participants with affordability issues, who failed both attention checks, and who presented as outliers at SREs > |2.5| and Cook’s distance > .08). We do not find interactions “flipping signs” (see the syntax on OSF, section “Results excluding item RF11”) compared to the effects reported in former Table 1 (now Table 1B, p. 18):

The universalism-concern x prevention interaction that was negative but not significantly so (note that the Table reports $p = .106$) in former Table 1 (now 1B) does not become positive and significant, but remains negative and non-significant ($B = -.239$, $SE = .193$; $p = .217$); the interaction between promotion focus, prevention focus, and universalism that was positive ($p = .017$) in former Table 1 (now 1B) does not become negative, but remains positive and significant ($B = .769$, $SE = .335$; $p = .022$); and the

promotion x framing x universalism-concern interaction that was significant in former Table 1 (now 1B; $p = .034$) does not become non-significant, but remains largely unchanged ($B = 1.084$, $SE = .519$; $p = .037$).

The only way we can explain these differences is that the reviewer might not have re-centred the new promotion focus variable, and/or might not have run the respective outlier analyses for the regression including this differently centred promotion focus variable, and/or might have swapped positive vs. negative coding of the two foci, and/or might have excluded outliers differently (e.g., based on analyses for the full promotion scale score including item RF11).

We see no reason to drop item RF11.

O'Conner, B. P. (2000). SPSS and SAS programs for determining the number of components using parallel analysis and Velicer's MAP test. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computes*, 32, 396–402. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03200807>

[5] The authors have not responded to the concerns raised under [7]. They still stand.

To facilitate comprehension, we copy and paste below the reviewer's point [7] from the previous review, but divide it in sub-points.

Though perhaps not in a manner that satisfied the reviewer, we had responded to the point [7] in our previous response letter, namely as follows:

"We must admit that without access to the results, and only based on the above, we are rather confused, especially as the reviewer at the very start of the review stated (see above): "I am very pleased that the results as reported in the manuscript are in fact produced by the data and code provided."

It thus seems the above analyses were either based on differently computed promotion and/or prevention scales, and/or including the full sample (and thus participants who stated they had recently experienced financial hardship and/or failed two of our attention checks), and/or median splits, and/or also including covariates we did not consider. It seems mainly the second alternative analysis (full sample) is referred to above, as transpires from the next point. We therefore focus on this in replying to the next point."

[5.1] [The reviewer's previous start of point 7]. In the robustness analyses, I sought to test that "people who prioritize universalism-concern should be receptive of appeals regarding poverty alleviation and poverty related inequalities that highlight the attainment of this value, and especially so when the appeal is framed so as to fit their regulatory focus".

Contrasting those with above and below average scores on the two 'regulatory focus' scales, I found no evidence for this claim. A t-test of the appeal evaluations showed that appeals were liked just as much when they were matched to the RF scales with an average liking of 4.55 as when they were not matched, resulting in an average liking of 4.51. In response to matched appeals, 61% of participants donated money, compared to 60% for non-matched appeals. In matched appeals, 16% donated to poverty related charities, compared to 14% for non-matched appeals. Among donors only these percentages were 27% and 24%, respectively. 25% of participants who received appeals that matched their 'regulatory focus' said they wanted to know more about the charity campaign, vs 26% of those who received appeals that did not match. None of the differences between matched and non-matched appeals were significant.

Furthermore, I found that those who received the promotion appeal liked it just as much as those who received the prevention appeal. Also, I found no correlation between the 'Regulatory focus' scale scores and the liking of the appeal. The correlations were zero in both conditions.

As previously stated, without access to the analyses it was and is difficult for us to understand what was done here. It seems that the reviewer used a ‘mean split’ on promotion and prevention focus and then created matched and mismatched groups for those above the mean on the promotion and the prevention score (i.e., comparing above mean promotion/promotion message and above mean prevention/prevention message to above mean promotion/prevention message and above mean prevention/promotion message).

Perhaps the division into high/low (above/below the mean) groups was done differently, but in any event, it seems that continuous scales were dichotomised (much like when doing a median split), thus (a) not only reducing variance and creating other problems (see below), but also (b) presumably considering at least some participants twice (as each participant has a promotion and prevention score and can thus end up in both above or in both below average groups).

When using continuous scales to predict outcomes, conducting regression analyses – rather than dichotomization of the data – is the adequate way to analyse results, which we have done. Indeed, for quite a while the bulk of methodologists have argued against median splits, mean splits, or other dichotomizations of continuous data (e.g., Fitzsimons, 2008; Irwin & McClelland, 2003), amongst other reasons because this increases type I errors (e.g., McClelland et al., 2015; Rucker et al., 2015), distorts and attenuates effect sizes (e.g., Morera et al., 2023; Cohen, 1983), reduces the reliability of the measures used (MacCallum et al., 2002), and because of a loss of statistical power (increase in type II errors; McClelland et al., 2015). The problems are even more severe when multiple independent variables are split (MacCallum et al., 2002; see also Royston et al., 2006).

Moreover, the above analyses do not seem to take into account the fact that fit effects were expected for people who prioritize universalism-concern (value prioritization was also not assessed as an either/or dichotomous variable).

Cohen, J. (1983). The cost of dichotomization. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 7(3), 249–253. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014662168300700301>

Fitzsimons, G. J. (2008). Death to dichotomizing. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(1), 5–8. <https://doi.org/10.1086/589561>

Irwin, J. R., & McClelland, G. H. (2003). Negative consequences of dichotomizing continuous predictor variables. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 40(3), 366–371. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.40.3.366.19237>

MacCallum, R. C., Zhang, S., Preacher, K. J., & Rucker, D. D. (2002). On the practice of dichotomization of quantitative variables. *Psychological Methods*, 7(1), 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.7.1.19>

McClelland, G. H., Lynch, J. G. Jr., Irwin, J. R., Spiller, S. A., & Fitzsimons, G. J. (2015). Median splits, type II errors, and false-positive consumer psychology: Don’t fight the power. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(4), 679–689. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.05.006>

Morera, O. F., Dane’el, M. I., Smith, B. A., Redelfs, A. H., Ruiz, S. L., Preacher, K. J., & Whigham, L. D. (2023). Discretizing continuous variables in nutrition and obesity research: A practice that needs to be cut short. *Nutrition & Diabetes*, 13, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41387-023-00248-0>

Royston, P., Altman, D. G., & Sauerbrei, W. (2006). Dichotomizing continuous predictors in multiple regression: A bad idea. *Statistics in Medicine*, 25(1), 127–141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sim.2331>

Rucker, D. D., McShane, B. B., & Preacher, K. J. (2015). A researcher’s guide to regression, discretization, and median splits of continuous variables. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(4), 666–678. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.04.004>

[5.2] *[Continuation of the reviewer's previous point 7].* I found that those with a stronger concern for universalism reported slightly lower satisfaction with their achievements ($-.11$) and reported slightly more rebellion against their parents ($.06$). Also, I found that male participants have 32% higher scores on rebellion than females, 18-35 year olds have 30 to 43% higher scores on rebellion than older participants, university educated participants have 15-20% lower scores than the lowest educated, and the self-employed and disabled have 35% and 42% higher scores than paid employees. In contrast, there were no gender or age differences in performance satisfaction. The higher educated and those in paid employment reported higher performance satisfaction. Because these associations create the possibility that the results reported in the manuscript are biased by covariates, I also ran regressions including the covariates.

The manuscript states on page 16 that the “significant appeal framing by promotion focus by universalism-concern 3-way interaction” was expected. The robustness analysis shows no evidence for this claim. I found that only universalism concern, “the commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people” was predictive of the liking of the appeal. Those with a stronger concern for universalism liked the appeals better ($.30$), regardless of their achievements satisfaction and rebellion against their parents.

The results I obtained in the robustness analysis – i.e., a regression of the liking of the appeal constructed similarly to Table 1 – are different from those reported in the manuscript. In the robustness analysis, none of the interactions are significant. Only the commitment to equality was positively related to the liking of the appeal.

In sample A (N = 848; only excluding the person who failed two attention checks), promotion is negatively correlated with gender ($r = -.09$, $p = .009$) and prevention is positively correlated with gender ($r = .10$, $p = .003$), age is marginally positively correlated with promotion ($r = .07$, $p = .056$) and positively correlated with prevention ($r = .11$, $p < .001$), education level is positively correlated with promotion ($r = .184$, $p < .001$) but not with prevention ($r = .05$, $p = .151$), and employment status is negatively correlated with promotion ($r = -.111$, $p = .001$) and marginally positively correlated with prevention ($r = .06$, $p = .062$; see – also for what follows – the syntax on OSF, section “Potential covariates”).

In sample B (N= 705; excluding also those reporting having faced recent financial hardship), promotion is negatively correlated with gender ($r = -.09$, $p = .020$) and prevention is positively correlated with gender ($r = .12$, $p = .001$), age is marginally positively correlated with promotion ($r = .07$, $p = .052$) and positively correlated with prevention ($r = .11$, $p = .002$), education level is positively correlated with promotion ($r = .137$, $p < .001$) but not with prevention ($r = .00$, $p = .990$), and employment status is not correlated with promotion ($r = -.051$, $p = .178$) but positively correlated with prevention ($r = .09$, $p = .013$).

It is well known that promotion (prevention) is positively associated with male gender and that prevention (promotion) is positively associated with female gender (e.g., Gutermauth & Hamstra, 2024). The same holds for age – or rather future time perspective, as age is not a psychological variable – being positively associated with prevention (e.g., Baltes et al., 2014). To the best of our knowledge, such differences have not been taken into account in previous work looking at associations between the two foci and outcome variables.

Nonetheless, we understand the reviewer's point that results should also be checked when including meaningful covariates. We thus conducted the analyses regarding appeal evaluations – as reported in our previous revision and in former Table 1 (now Table 1B), respectively former Table S5.1 (now Table 1A) – again, but including gender, age, education level and employment status as covariates.

For sample A, the reported (see former Table S5.1, now Table 1A) non-significant appeal framing by promotion focus by universalism-concern interaction ($p = .591$) remains non-significant in this analysis ($B = .21$, $SE = .45$, $t = .47$, $p = .639$).

For sample B, the reported (see former Table 1, now Table 1B) significant appeal framing by promotion focus by universalism-concern interaction ($p = .034$) remains significant in this analysis ($B = 1.06$, $SE = .52$, $t = 2.06$, $p = .039$).

We can add footnote indicating that results remain unchanged when including gender, age, education level and employment status as covariates should this be deemed necessary.

Gutermuth, D., & Hmastra, M. R. W. (2024). Are there gender differences in promotion-prevention self-regulatory focus? *British Journal of Psychology*, 115(2), 306–323.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12688>

Baltes, B. B., Wynne, K., Sirabian, M., Krenn, D., & De Lange, A. (2014). Future time perspective, regulatory focus, and selection, optimization, and compensation: Testing a longitudinal model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(8), 1120–1133.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1970>

[5.3] *[Continuation of the reviewer's previous point 7].* In both types of appeals, a comparison of groups with above and below scores on the RF scales did not indicate that the scales mattered much if at all for the relationship between commitment to equality and giving. However, the regressions did indicate that concern with equality did interact with satisfaction with achievements and rebellion scores. At higher levels of concern with equality, both satisfaction with achievements and rebellion scores were more strongly correlated with giving. In contrast to the prediction, however, there was no three way interaction with the framing of the appeal. Also the predicted interactions were not emerging in analyses of the choice of charity among donors.

We assume the reviewer is referring to promotion (prevention) focus when talking about "satisfaction with achievements (rebellion)" scores.

Regarding comparisons for dichotomized (above/below mean scores) promotion and prevention scores, please see our response to point [5.1] above.

Regarding analyses focused on donations, we never claimed that we found predicted effects for donations (nor, for that matter, interest in campaign materials). We stated and still state in the abstract, p. 1: "However [now: Moreover], only universalism-concern value prioritization predicted interest in campaign materials and donations." Similarly, on p. 23 we clearly stated and state that for H1a and H1b are "not supported for behavioral outcomes". Moreover, in the discussion, p. 26 we stated and still state about appeal evaluation fit that this "had no bearing when also considering participants already facing financial hardship" and on p. 27, we stated and still state: "Regulatory fit in appeal evaluations among people not facing financial hardship who prioritize universalism-concern did not extend to donations made to charities alleviating poverty."

Regarding analyses focused on appeal evaluations, we clearly state that there is no three-way interaction regarding appeal evaluations when not excluding participants who report having recently experienced financial hardship.

[5.4] *[Continuation of the reviewer's previous point 7].* Furthermore, the robustness analysis regressions indicate that commitment to equality is positively related to charitable giving, but that it is not particularly strongly correlated with giving to the charities that are poverty related. Among those who chose to give, poverty related charities were somewhat less popular when participants read a promotion of equality appeal (21%) than among those who read a prevention of inequality appeal (29%).

We acknowledge that while universalism-concern is strongly associated with donating, the associations are weaker for donating to poverty alleviating charities. We offer the following explanations for why this might be the case.

First, by selecting eight well-known charities in Australia it was our intention to 'mask' the purpose of the study – to persuade participants to engage in poverty alleviation actions. The charities included in this study were selected from the Australian Government's Charity Register (<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities>), with the exception of the WWF, which is a global charity,

to reflect well-known charities in four important and popular domains (i.e., animal welfare and conservation, environmental protection, mental health services, and poverty alleviation). Each of the charities included were in the top 10 in terms of donation revenue, number of volunteers or total revenues in their respective charitable cause domain in 2022-23. Therefore, it may be the case that participants who chose to donate to a charity have or had an existing relationship with that charity (i.e., as a donor or volunteer) and chose to donate on that basis. If we had instead constrained the choice of donations to either poverty alleviation charities or not making a donation, we would expect to see much higher proportions selecting poverty alleviation.

Second, it may also be the case that the charitable domain of poverty alleviation is less well-defined than other domains, such as animal welfare. For instance, both the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul (amongst the top charities – by revenue – delivering poverty alleviation services in Australia) have religious origins and may be perceived to be religious institutions rather than social welfare organisations. Further, while Headspace and Beyond Blue were selected as the largest charities in terms of revenue in the mental health domain, both charities provide services for people in mental health crisis who are experiencing unemployment and/or homelessness. Consequently, they may be seen as de facto poverty alleviation charities. Had we instead created charity avatars to represent each cause rather than using specific charities, higher proportions may have selected poverty alleviation.

Because of word-count limitations we do not go into detail on this in the manuscript, but we have added a sentence in the “Limitations and Future Direction” section (p. 32) that reads: “Also, both charities focused on poverty alleviation proposed as donation recipients in this study (i.e., the Salvation Army Australia; St Vincent de Paul) have religious origins and the other proposed charities focus on concerns aligned with the content of universalism values (e.g., universalism-nature: the World Wildlife Fund; Clean up Australia); this might have mitigated some effects.”

Other changes

In light of the above, we changed several sentences in our manuscript that are not detailed above.

In the abstract (p. 1) we changed “Participants prioritizing universalism-concern evaluated the promotion-framed appeal more favorably the stronger their promotion focus was. However, only universalism-concern value prioritization predicted interest in campaign materials and donations” to “Participants not reporting recent financial hardship and prioritizing universalism-concern evaluated the promotion-framed appeal more favorably the stronger their promotion focus was, but this fit effect did not emerge when including participants who would personally benefit from the campaign’s success. Moreover, only universalism-concern (...).”

At the start of the discussion (p. 26) we added reference to the different samples: “However, this was effective only in sample B for those who prioritize universalism-concern (defined as commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people; Schwartz et al., 2012) and had no bearing when also considering participants already facing financial hardship (sample A).”

On p. 32 of the discussion we added “and also did not emerge when including potential beneficiaries of the campaign (McCarthy & Zald, 1977),” to the sentence that now reads “Whilst this appeal matching effect did not extend to our behavioral outcomes, and also did not emerge when including potential beneficiaries of the campaign (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), results clearly show that the universalism-concern value is a strong predictor of charitable giving and interest in campaign information regarding poverty alleviation.”

We do not detail all references to the differences between samples here, but have done so throughout the discussion for diverging findings (e.g. also on p. 27).

Furthermore, to comply with word count limits, we edited the text at several points to shorten, but do not detail all these purely word-count related / editorial changes. Thanks to us cutting, rewriting to shorten, and deleting of non-necessary references, despite the implementation of all the above requested changes our manuscript still

complies with guidance on the article’s length (i.e., it counts 9,965 words out of a max. 10,000, excluding only the title page, the figure and tables, but including abstract, keywords, statements, references, and endnotes).

References deleted for wordcount reasons, only, include:

Benish-Weisman, M., Daniel, E., Knafo-Noam, A. (2017). The relations between values and aggression: A developmental perspective. In S. Roccas, & L. Sagiv (Eds), *Values and behavior: Taking a cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 97–114). Springer.

Meer, J. (2017). Are overhead costs a good guide for charitable giving? IZA World of Labor.
<https://wol.iza.org/articles/are-overhead-costs-good-guide-for-charitable-giving/long>

We hope our current revision meets your approval and allows our manuscript to be accepted for publication. Of course, we are happy to work further on this manuscript, but we would appreciate a specific and clear editorial stance on any further information to be provided, clarifications to be made, or other changes to implement, including regarding our analysis – if requested.

We are very much looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
The Authors