

Tailored Prosociality: The Effect of ‘You’ versus ‘We’ in Charitable Appeals on Donors with Varying Levels of Self-Esteem

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Cite as:

Sadowski Sebastian (2026), Tailored Prosociality: The Effect of ‘You’ versus ‘We’ in Charitable Appeals on Donors with Varying Levels of Self-Esteem. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (131977)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

This research examines the impact of personal pronouns ‘you’ and ‘we’ in charitable appeals on the donations of people with varying levels of self-esteem. Two experiments reveal that pronouns ‘you’ boost donations of people high in self-esteem and pronouns ‘we’ increase donations of people low in self-esteem. These linguistic effects surface though only if relevant preconditions are met: prospective donors are positive towards the charity (Experiment 1) and they are more altruistic (Experiment 2).

Track: Advertising & Marketing Communications