

# Propensity to Engage **Type II Processes** in Relation to Donation Preferences and the **Individual Victim Effect**



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## 1. Motivation

The **Individual Victim Effect (IVE)** reflects the **pervasive desire or need to save a single identified victim of a cause**, whilst regarding a large group suffering similarly with less consideration. The IVE is a ubiquitous effect in-lab and in the field: people consistently donate more when the cause is presented as an identifiable victim.<sup>1</sup> We begin by asking: **Will the IVE replicate in an online survey environment?**

Slovic (2007) argues that the IVE reflects primarily a Type I response. Consistent with this idea, Friedrich & McGuire (2010) demonstrated that **high rational scorers on the Rational Experiential Inventory (REI)** did **not** show a preference for donating to an individual victim as opposed to an unnamed group, but low rational scorers did.

We extended this research by asking whether Friedrich & McGuire's result would replicate if we used the Cognitive Reflection Test – a behavioural measure of one's willingness to reflect – rather than the REI, a subjective report measure. **We hypothesize that those who readily engage Type II processes will be less susceptible to the IVE.**

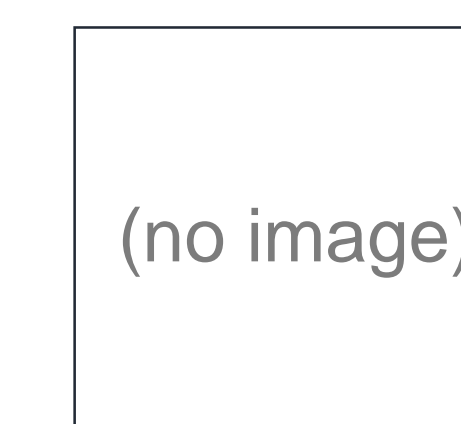
## 2. Method

401 Mturk participants completed a Qualtrics survey. Participants were first asked some basic demographic questions. Then participants were randomly assigned to complete the **Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) and bias battery** before or after responding to a vignette. Participants were also randomly assigned to one of two vignettes: the **IV (Individual Victim) Condition**, and the **Non-Individual Victim (Non-IV) Condition**.



**IV Condition**

7 year old Abeje Madaki (shown left), who lives in Africa with her family, is constantly at risk of contracting malaria...



**Non-IV Condition**

In 2015, an estimated 214 million cases of malaria occurred worldwide, with 438,000 casualties...

The CRT + Bias Task consisted of four questions from the CRT-2 (Thompson & Oppenheimer, 2016), four questions from the CRT-4 (Toplak, West, & Stanovich, 2014), and one denominator neglect bias test, in randomized order. Participants were given free entry for each of the nine questions.

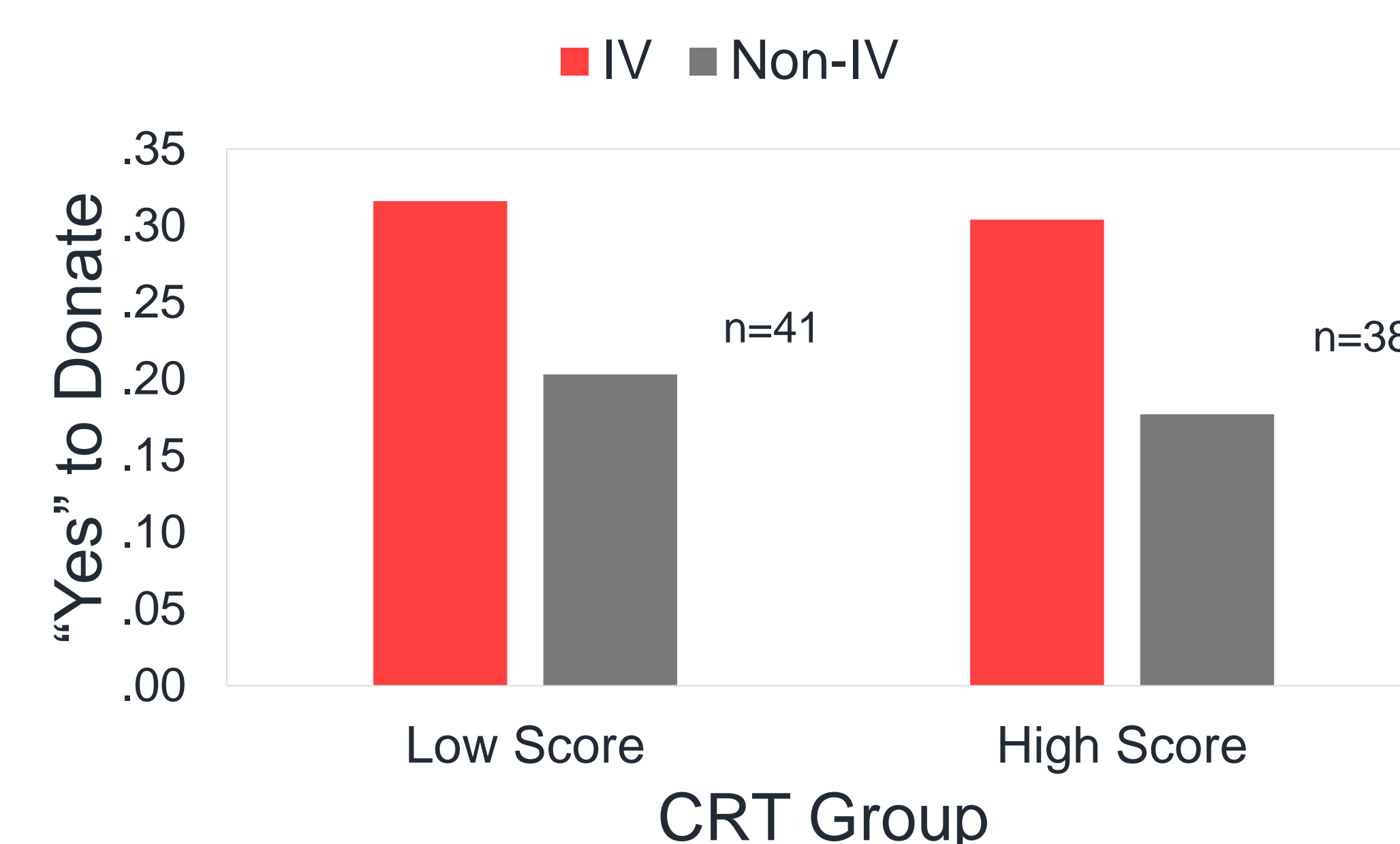
On assignment to a vignette, participants were asked if they would donate. Those answering "No," were taken to the next portion of the survey; those answering "Yes," were given a slider to select their donation amount (to the nearest cent).

## 3. Results

Participants in the **Individual Victim condition** were **significantly more likely** to donate to the cause (37.0%) than were participants in the **Non-Individual Victim condition** (21.4%). There was **no significant difference** in donation amount (\$) across conditions.



CRT + Bias battery scores were partitioned using an interquartile split into low-scoring and high-scoring CRT groups. The two groups exhibited similar preference for donating to an individual victim. Therefore, **CRT score did not have an effect on the IVE.**



The IVE in terms of amount donated also **did not differ** as a function of CRT + Bias group.

## 4. Summary

The usual environment for such studies is in lab or in the field, using physical donations to measure the IVE. **We may conclude that the IVE has now been replicated in an online survey environment.**

No relation was found between the **CRT + Bias test score** and the **Individual Victim Effect**. The effect found in Friedrich & McGuire (2010) did not generalize to a case in which a behavioural measure of rational thinking was used. Possible reasons for this include:

- The IVE is not a Type I process
- Friedrich & McGuire's result was a type 1 error
- Individual differences in **rational/analytic thinking** captured by the REI, but not the CRT, are related to the **IVE**

A follow up study could incorporate the following changes:

- Asking participants *how much* they would be willing to donate, in place of *whether* they choose to donate, to increase the frequency of "Yes" responses
- Obtaining similar data from an Mturk survey that includes the REI scores

## 5. References

1. Slovic, P. (2007). "If I look at the mass I will never act.": Psychic numbing and genocide. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 2(2), 79-95.
2. Friedrich, J., & McGuire, A. (2010). Individual differences in reasoning style as a moderator of the identifiable victim effect. *Social Influence*, 5(3), 182-201.
3. Toplak, M., West, R., & Stanovich, K. (2011). The Cognitive Reflection Test as a predictor of performance on heuristic-and-biases tasks. *Memory and Cognition*, 39(7), 1275-89

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