



# Using value salience to facilitate effective donation decisions:

## A plan for two online experiments

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### Abstract

People often prefer less effective charities due to biases, e.g. the identifiable victim effect (Caviola, Schubert & Greene, 2021).

Based on a framework we're developing, we hypothesize that such biases can be reduced by increasing the salience of relevant values like altruism and rationality.

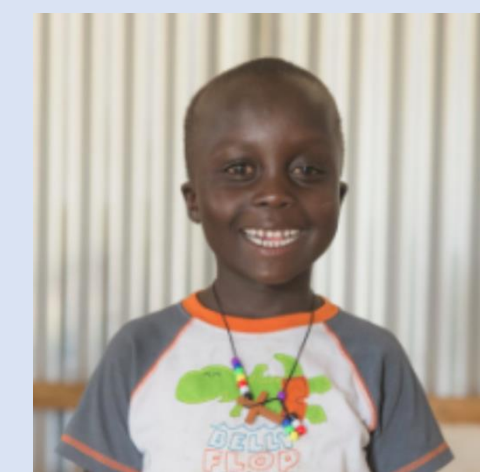
To test that, we are designing two online experiments using the Prolific Academic platform.

### Introduction

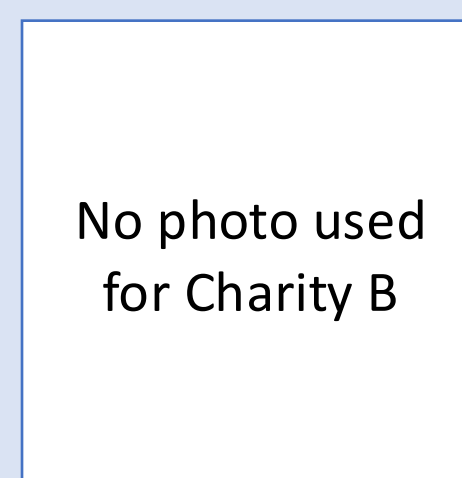
The best charities can be several times more effective than average charities within the same area (Ord, 2013). People express a preference for effectiveness, but there's an intention-behavior gap (Caviola, Schubert & Nemirow, 2020).

We will use decisions scenarios from Caviola et al (2020):

1. Identifiable victim vs statistical victims (see example on the right)
2. Local charity vs charity abroad
3. Low overhead vs high overhead charity
4. Risky but high expected-value vs lower expected value but certain charity
5. Disaster relief vs relief for ongoing issue
6. Splitting donation vs giving everything to one more effective choice



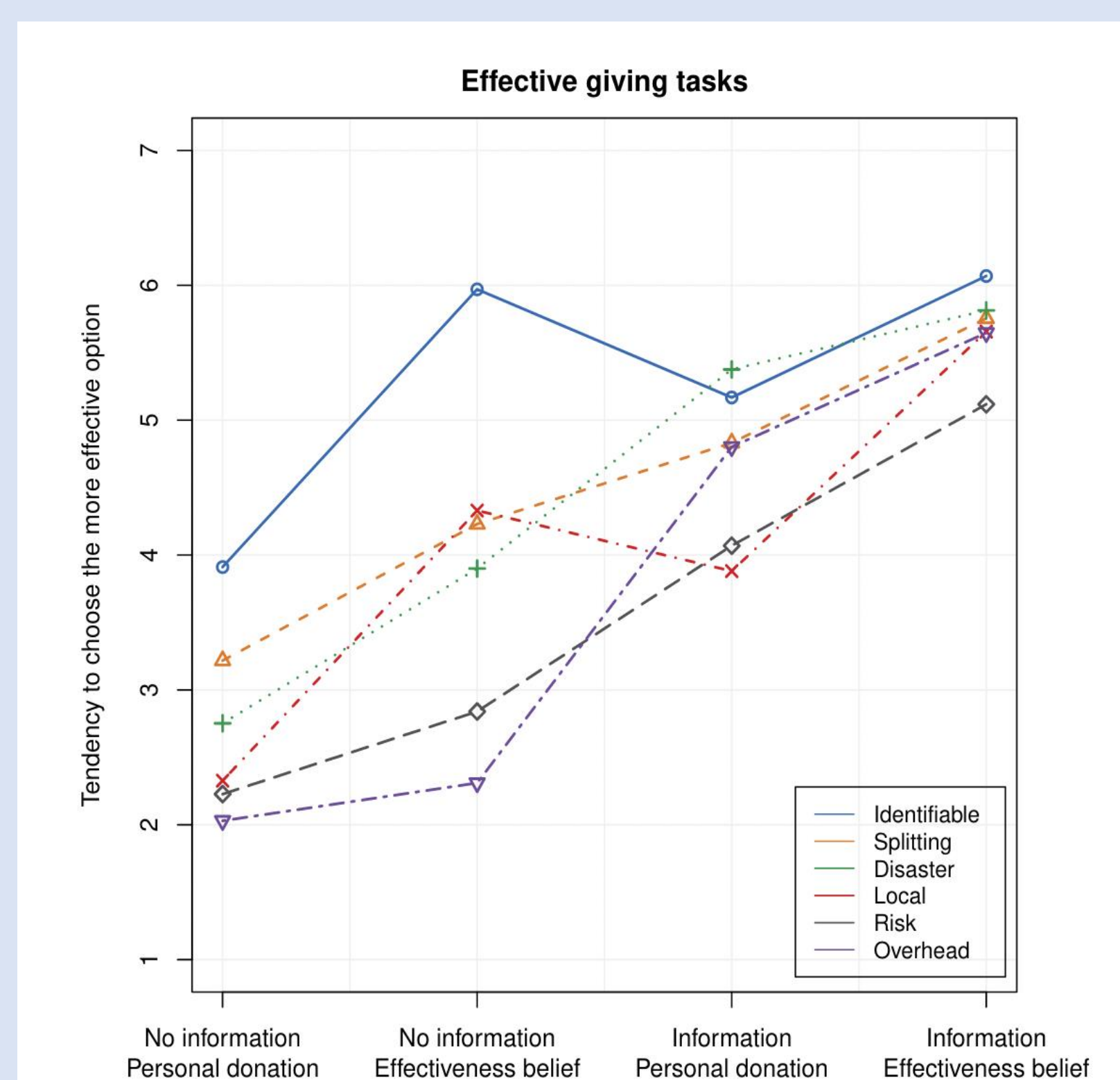
**Charity A**  
 This is Bengé. He is seven years old and lives in Kenya. When he grows up, he wants to become a teacher. Bengé contracted HIV and needs to be flown to Europe to be treated in a hospital. Donating to Charity A will help save Bengé's life and give him a bright future.



**Charity B**  
 Charity B distributes bed nets in Kenya to protect children against malaria-carrying mosquitos. Donating to Charity B will allow for the distribution of such bed nets in the areas that are most affected by malaria-carrying mosquitos.

**Effectiveness information:**  
 Before you respond, consider the following: Scientists have shown that distributing bed nets is one of the most cost-effective ways to help people at risk of malaria, and one of the most effective ways to help people in this area in general. By contrast, treating individual people who have contracted HIV is much less effective. Therefore, Charity B will likely save more lives with your donation.

Donors were asked 1) where they would personally donate or 2) which option they believe to be more effective

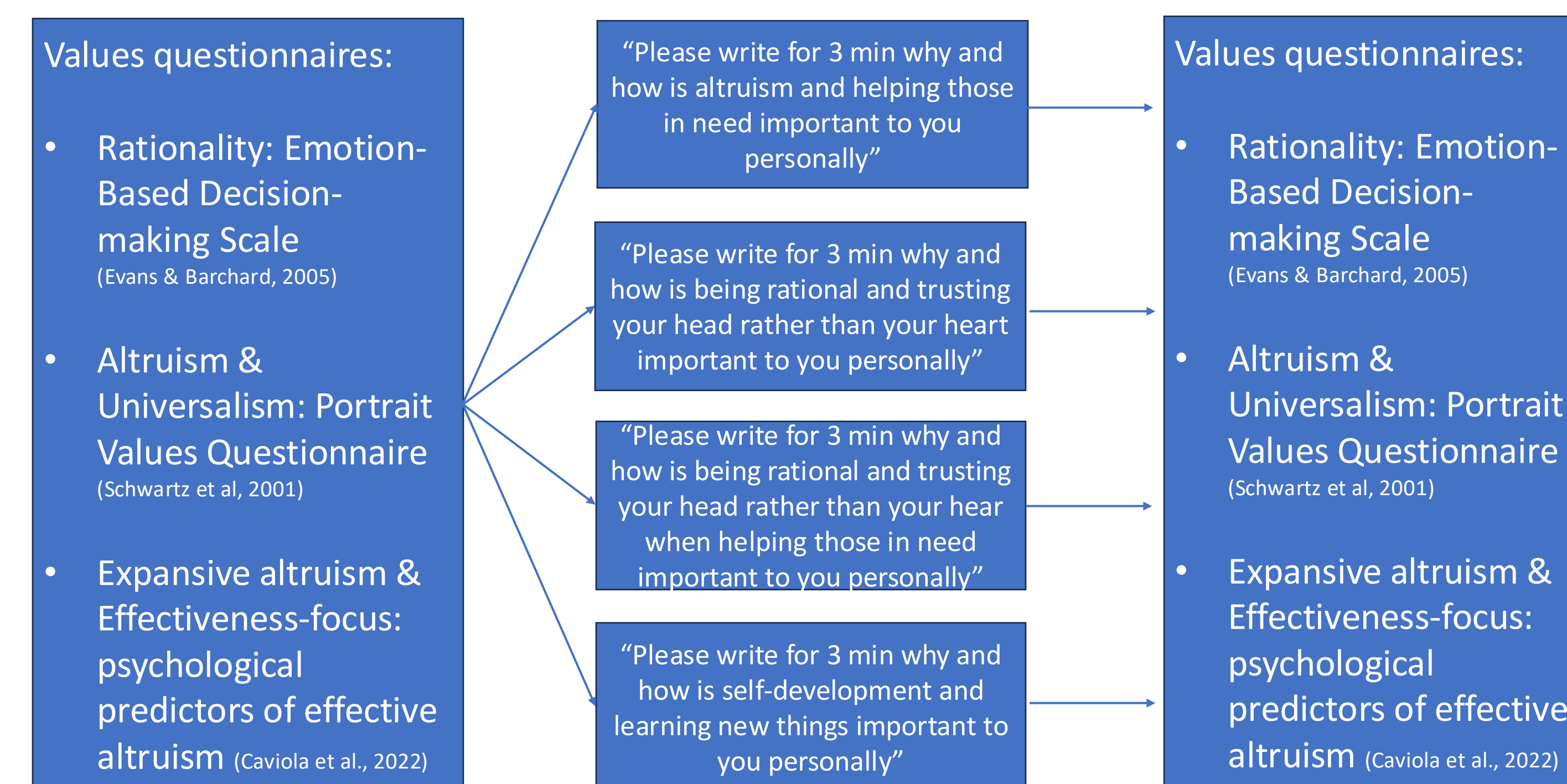


### Research questions

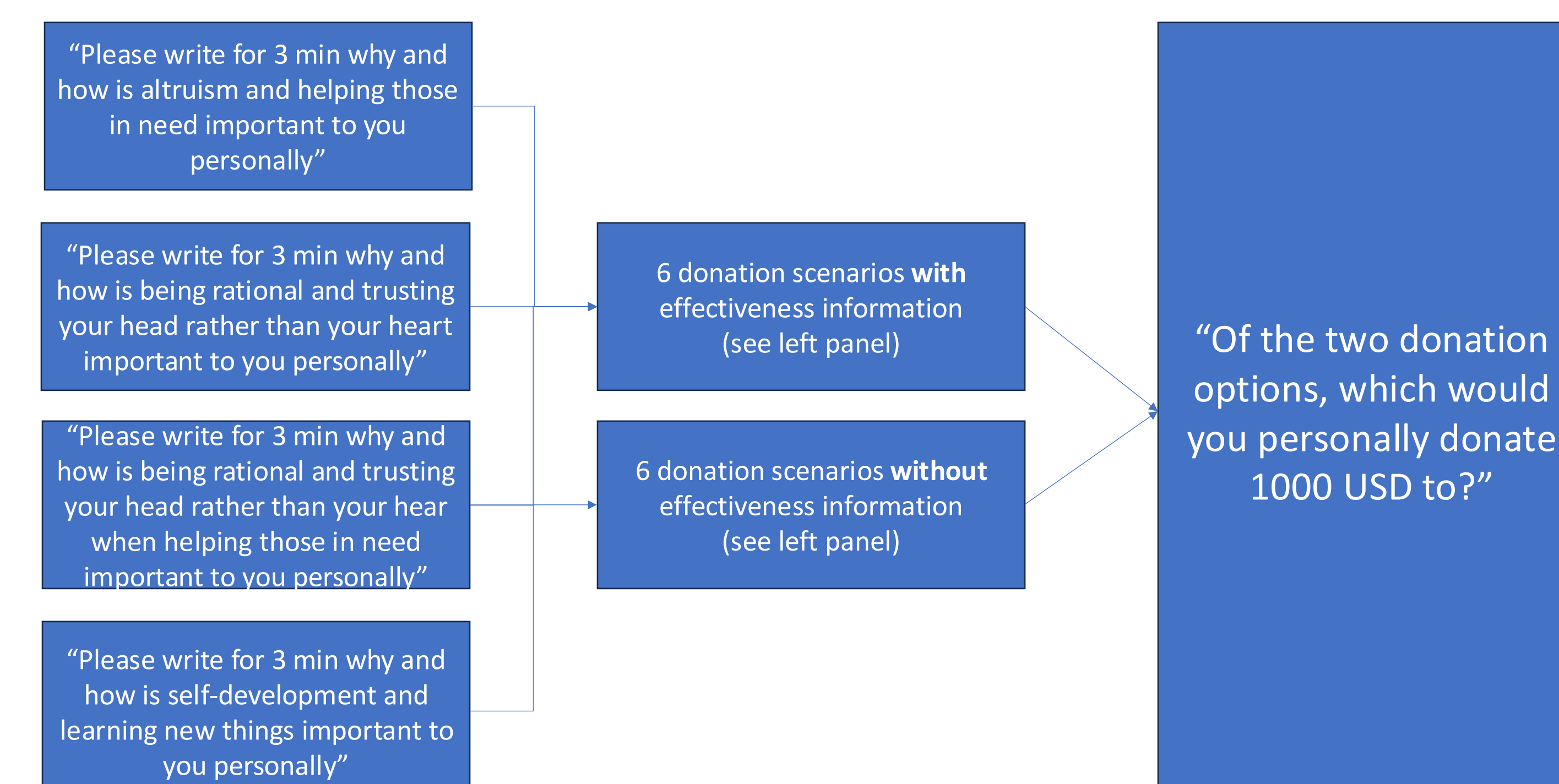
- Does value salience influence preference for effective donation options?
- Do donors perceive a conflict between rationality and altruism when making donation decisions?
- How does the interaction of values and effectiveness information influence effective donation decisions?

### Study design

- 1 Manipulation check with 4 conditions: 1) Altruism 2) Rationality 3) Rational Altruism 4) Control



- 2 4 values (altruism, rationality, rational altruism, control) x 2 effectiveness info (with, without) between-subjects experiment

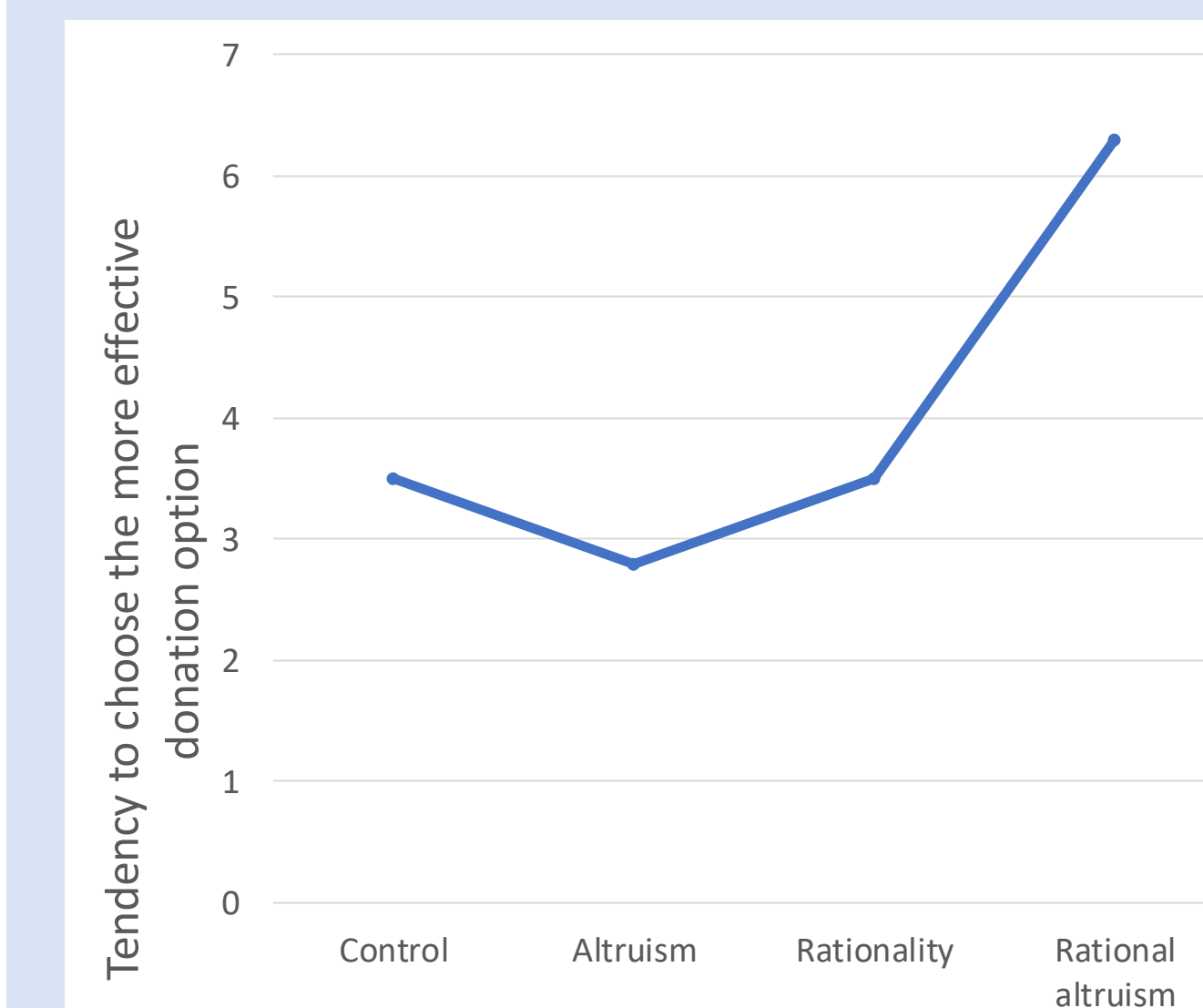


### Interpreting results

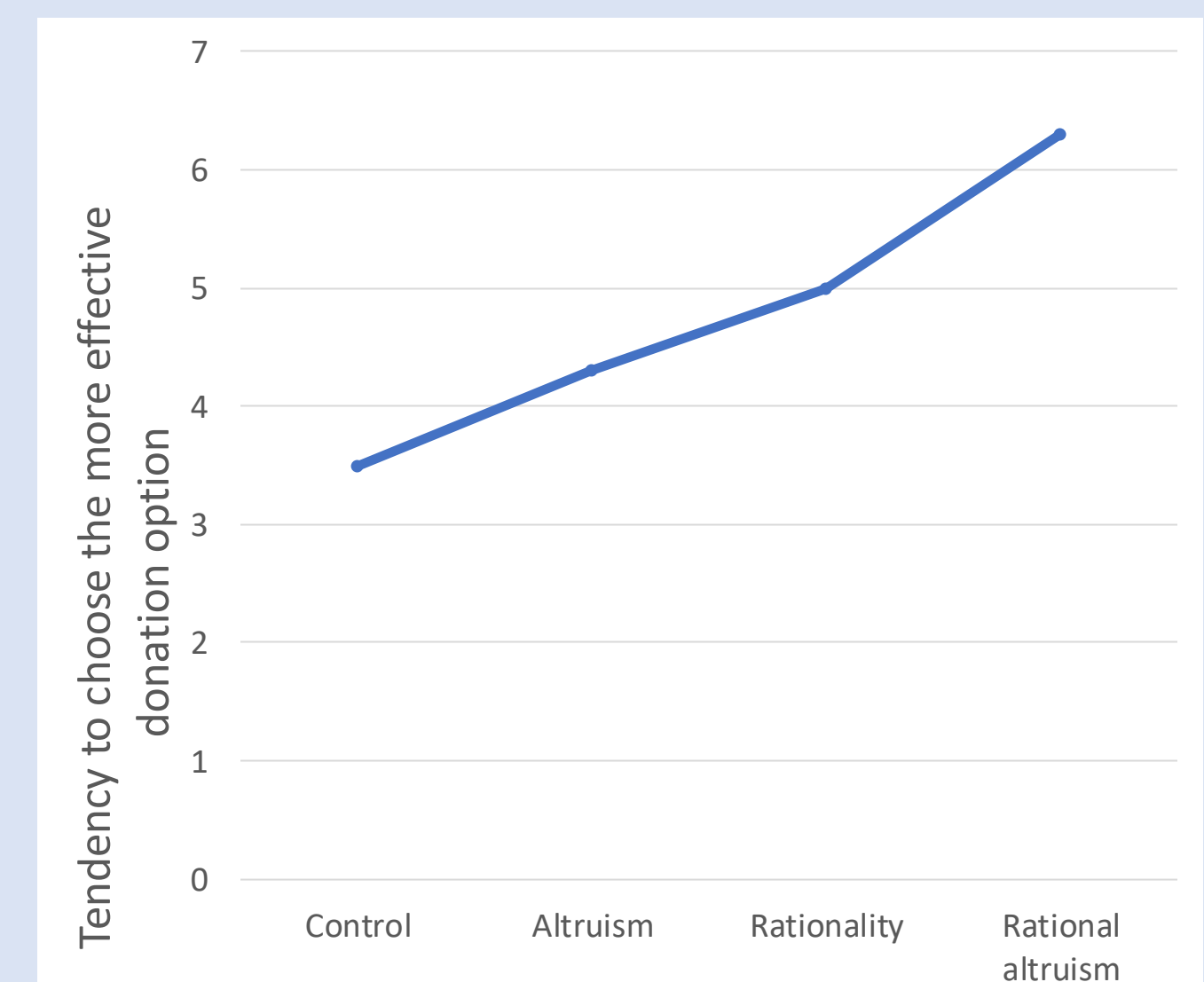
To analyze the main research questions, we will run six mixed ANOVAs for each donation scenarios:

$Y \sim$  writing task (4 levels) x effectiveness info (2 levels) + error  
 where Y is the preference to donate to the more effective option.

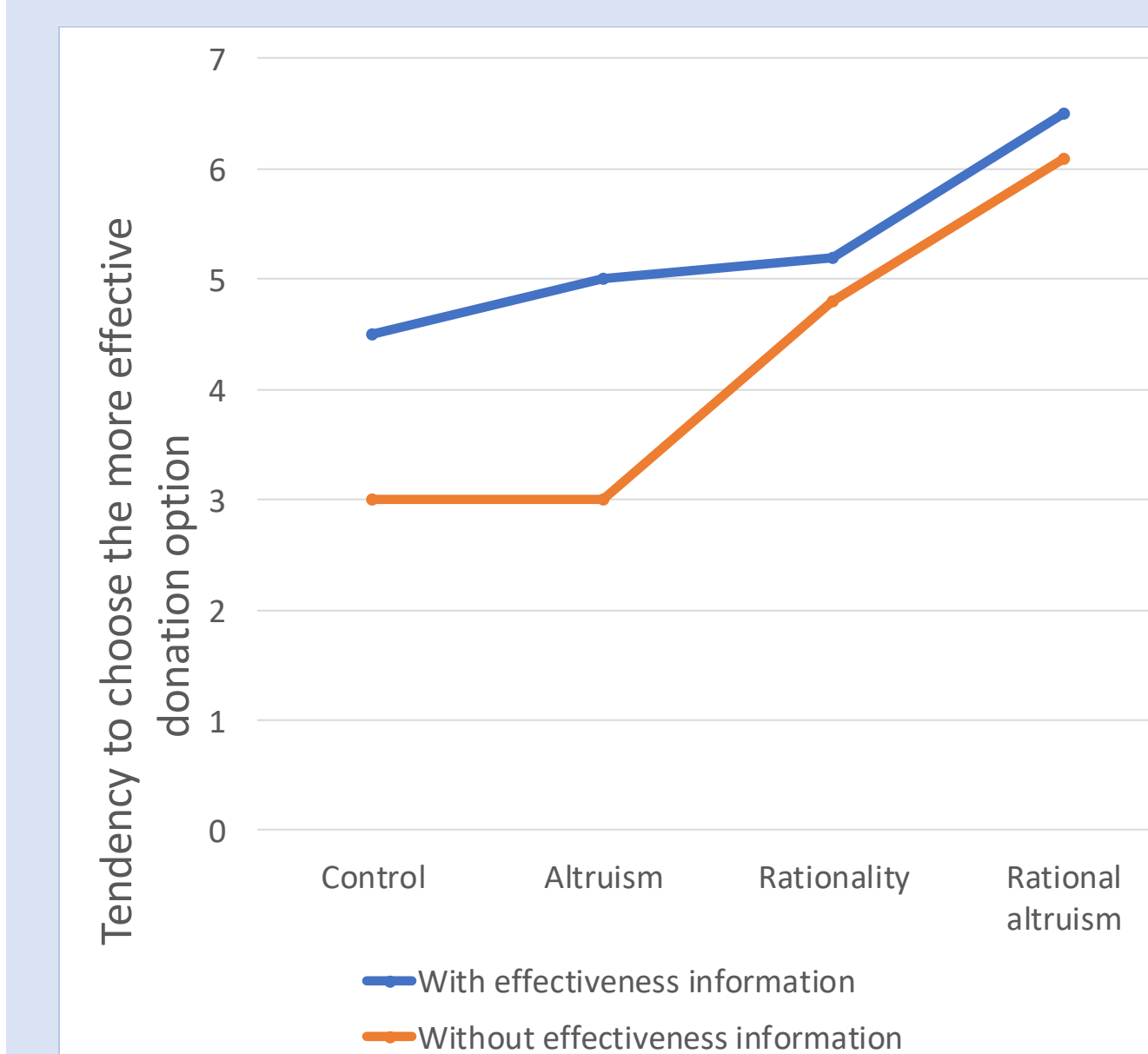
Expected results in the case donors perceive a conflict between rationality and altruism



Expected results in the case of no perceived conflict between rationality and altruism



Expected interaction between value salience and effectiveness information



### References

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