SEEING IS BELIEVING
HOW DO HIGH-NET-WORTH PHILANTHROPISTS UTILISE EVIDENCE TO INFORM THEIR GIVING?

by
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Abstract

Background: This thesis examines if and how high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth philanthropists utilise evidence to inform their funding decisions. It addresses a gap in the extant literature, which largely focuses on philanthropists' motives, highlighting the need for specific research on evidence use in philanthropy.

Objectives: The primary objective of this research was to investigate how philanthropists engage with evidence, how they perceive evidence, their conception of evidence quality, and the extent to which evidence informs their funding decisions. This research also explored other factors influencing philanthropic decision-making and how philanthropists measured the success of their funding.

Methods: The thesis included a systematic review and primary qualitative research. The systematic review utilised a pre-published protocol and adhered to PRISMA and GRADE-CERqual guidelines to examine the factors influencing evidence use by philanthropists. The primary research was informed by the systematic review findings and utilised semi-structured interviews with high and ultra-high-net-worth donors to gain detailed insights into participants' giving strategies, their perceptions of evidence, how they measured success in their giving and other factors that influenced their decision-making process.

Results: The research revealed the relationship between philanthropists and evidence to be complex and multifaceted. Key findings indicated that philanthropists rarely employed an exclusively evidence-based approach; instead, they sought out or relied more upon the endorsement of trusted peers and their instincts before engaging with evidence. The study highlights the need for increased transparency and for systematic, collaborative efforts to augment trust and promote evidence-informed philanthropic decision making.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that while philanthropists said they value evidence, their engagement with it was nuanced and shaped by numerous considerations. There is an imperative for strategies to be implemented that enhance the accessibility and relevance of evidence for philanthropists, fostering more informed and impactful philanthropic practices.

Keywords: Philanthropy, High Net Worth Donors, Evidence-Based Giving, Systematic Review, Qualitative Research

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DECLARATION OF PUBLICATION

This thesis includes three papers that have been co-authored with Professor Paul Montgomery. I want to acknowledge his contributions to these works, which were focused and advisory following the CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) author statement. The following explanation of roles makes clear the extent of our respective contributions:

Greenhalgh C:

- Conceptualisation: Determining the framework for this research.
- Methodology: Constructing the route for the research to follow.
- Investigation: Performing the research and analysis.
- Writing -Drafting the preliminary versions of the papers.
- Data Curation: Overseeing and categorising data collection.
- Writing - Review & Editing: Refining and finalising the manuscripts for publication.

Montgomery P:

- Supervision: Guiding the research process and providing strategic oversight.
- Writing - Review & Editing: Offering guidance and critical feedback.
- Investigation: Contributing to the double coding for the systematic review.

The three papers are:

Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2020). A systematic review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund. *Systematic Reviews*, *9*(1), 199. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01448-w (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020)

Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2023b). Seeing is believing: A qualitative study examining how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors utilise evidence to inform their giving and the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, e1809. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1809 (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2023b)

Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2024). How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 29(2), e1854. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1854 (Greenhalgh & Montgomery 2023a).

This thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar, and advice on formatting and sorting of endnotes for consistency and order, by Jacoby Patterson.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. Background

1.1 Recent Changes to Philanthropy in the UK and USA

Over the last decade, the UK has experienced a significant rise in inequality, with the most affluent seeing their wealth grow exponentially (The Equality Trust, 2018). Indeed, the wealthiest 10% of UK households now own almost half of the UK's wealth, and the wealth gap between high and low-wealth households has expanded significantly (Bangham & Leslie, 2019), as is reflected by the UK's Gini coefficient, which in 2021 revealed that the UK has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the whole of the European Union at 34.4%.

Prior to 2020, that increase in the wealth of high-net worth-individual (HNWI) and ultra-high-net-worth-individual (UHNWI) donors had not been mirrored by enhanced charitable giving, rather, donations by the wealthiest in UK society fell by 12% in the five years preceding 2019 (Ellson, 2019). Ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic, this decrease in giving by the very wealthy was already causing alarm across the charity sector, which was dealing with an economic climate that was putting its income under pressure whilst facing increasing demands to deliver support to vulnerable people.

The pandemic amplified such inequalities. In 2021, it was reported that the number of UK billionaires rose by 24 to 171 over the preceding 12 months and that their combined wealth '*grew by more than one-fifth*' (Jolly, para 2). Subsequently, the wealth of the UK's wealthiest citizens has continued to swell, rising by 8% to £710 billion in just 12 months; in tandem with which '*millions of households*' have endured *'the sharpest rise in the cost of living for 40 years*' (Watts, 2022 para 2). Globally, the collective wealth of the 100 billionaire signatories to 'The Giving Pledge' grew by 28% during the first four months of the pandemic from US$758.3 billion to US$971.9 billion on 17.07.2020 (Collins & Flannery, 2020).

Initially, philanthropists worldwide responded to the pandemic by increasing their financial support of non-profits. In the UK, the top 200 donors collectively increased their giving by £1.14 billion to £4.3 billion in 2021, which is a rise of 36.1% from 2020 (CAF, 2021). Globally, philanthropists responded in 2020 by rapidly donating circa US$20.2 billion, of which donations '*by high-net-worth individuals accounted for at least $5.8 billion*' (Sato et al., 2021, p. 5). Nevertheless, the response was not universal, with the Economics Observatory estimating that '*barely one in ten of the world's billionaires gave in response to the pandemic during its first few months*' (Smith, 2021b). Neither has giving by the UK's HNWI donors post-pandemic been sustained; a report published by The Beacon Collaborative disclosed that giving by UK-based HNWIs increased throughout 2020 '*in line with the first wave of COVID in the UK … before reducing … in December*' (Macdonald, 2021 para 4).

The growing wealth inequalities across the globe, described above, pose considerable challenges for philanthropic practices, not least the concentration of philanthropic power and influence derived to wealth holders. Given such inequalities, it is vital to understand how and why philanthropists allocate their funding to specific causes. How philanthropists engage with evidence can radically influence the impact and effectiveness of their philanthropic efforts, thereby affecting societal outcomes.

Charities increasingly play an essential role in civil society in the UK as they are relied upon to deliver services which were '*traditionally … provided by the public sector',* including social, cultural and recreational services (Charity Commission & Frontier Economics, 2019, p. 3). Indeed, charities in the UK are regarded as being notably well-equipped to counter the many and multi-faceted social challenges that have arisen, in part as a result of growing inequality (Charity Commission & Frontier Economics, 2019, p. 4); moreover, they have played a key role in supporting the most vulnerable throughout the pandemic. Historically, charities relied upon government funding for a significant portion of their income, but such funding has declined since 2004. Indeed, in 2019/20, '*income from the government fell by £684m'* accounting for '*just over a quarter of the sector's income (26%) – the lowest proportion since 2004/2005'* (NCVO, 2022 para. 17). Since the early 2000s there has been a shift in the way the UK government funds charities, as governments have revealed a growing preference for procuring services from non-profit organisations, resulting in a decline in unrestricted grants in tandem with a growth in contract funding. Consequently, UK charities have had to deal with a '*different operating environment'* in which '*charities are seen as mainly service providers and have to compete with each other to win contracts'* (Written evidence from National Council for Voluntary Organisations (CHA0148), cited in HL, 2016-17 p. 41 para. 181). However, even funding from contracts has been significantly reduced over the last decade; in 2010, '*contracts made up the majority (82%) of all income from government',* but by 2020 this had fallen to less than a quarter (23%) of funding (see Appendix 3).

A similar picture has been revealed in the USA. The 2021 Philanthropy Panel Study disclosed that an expanding wealth gap had led to a decline in charitable giving by American households, as the *'wealth gap'* had become a *'giving gap'* (Moody et al., 2022, p. 16). Indeed, the most recent statistics revealed that the number of US households donating to charity had fallen to below 50% (Collins & Flannery, 2022, p. 5).

Conversely, the past decade has seen a growth in 'major philanthropy' as '*super-rich entrepreneurs have pledged to dispose of significant proportions of their fortunes philanthropically*' (Maclean et al., 2021, p. 331).

The Coutts Million Pound Donor Report revealed that in 2016, 139 UK donors made 310 charitable donations worth one million pounds or more, with a total value of £1.56 billion (Coutts Institute, 2017). Globally, the Wealth-X 2016 report disclosed that there were 18,500 Ultra High Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) who had made a gift of one million US dollars or more; their combined wealth was estimated to be US$5.4 trillion (with an average net worth of US$292 million each), and they were each on average expected to donate circa US$30 million over their lifetimes (Wealth-X, 2016, p. 4). The growth of such 'top-heavy' philanthropy has led many non-profits to increasingly rely on '*larger donations'* derived from '*smaller numbers of extremely wealthy donors'* (Collins & Flannery, 2022, pp. 4, 8). In 2020, the ultra-wealthy donated £175 billion to philanthropic causes; whilst donations by US UHNWIs accounted for more than half of this funding, giving from Europe's ultra-wealthy totalled £52 billion, accounting for one-third of global giving (Imberg & Shaban, 2022). According to the National Philanthropic Trust (NPT), £4.305 billion out of a total of £11.3 billion donated to charity in the UK in 2020 was donated by the top 1% of wealth holders, accounting for 38% of total charitable donations in the UK (NPT, 2023). Consequently, such major donors are gaining '*increasing influence over charities' activities and even their core* *missions. And this endangers not only the charities themselves, but also those who depend on their work'* (Inequality.org, 2022 para 8).

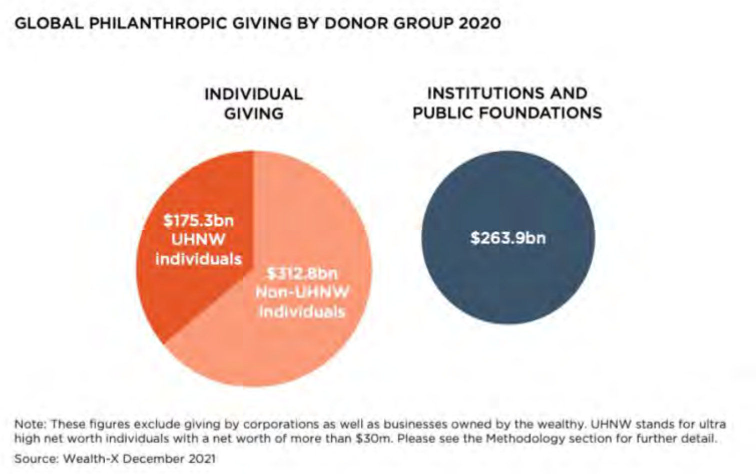


Figure 1 Global Philanthropy by Donor Group 2020 (Imberg et al., 2021)

This research was motivated by the rapidly evolving philanthropic landscape and an increasing reliance across the globe on philanthropic funding to address a myriad of societal needs. It was also informed by a significant growth in major philanthropy, which has seen the extremely wealthy pledge to donate substantial portions of their fortunes to philanthropy. Despite this, a considerable gap remains between philanthropy's potential and its actual impact. The decision-making processes of philanthropists, especially concerning their selection of non-profits or interventions to fund and their engagement with evidence, represent a crucial area of inquiry. Understanding these processes not only sheds light on the effectiveness of philanthropic efforts but also on the criteria and motivations that drive funding choices. This investigation is particularly pertinent as it addresses the broader implications of evidence-based philanthropy, aligning with the requests from examiners for a robust justification of the thesis. The exploration of these dynamics supports the argument that these decision-making pathways are fundamental to understanding the impact and effectiveness of philanthropic investments.

1.2 The Historical Perspective

The growth of major philanthropy and the aspirations which frequently underpin such giving did not originate in the UK. In 1889, the Scottish-born American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie questioned what was '*… the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilisation is founded, have thrown it into the hands of a few?*' (1889, p. 6). Carnegie explicated a vision of philanthropy in which the beneficiaries of great wealth would dispose of that wealth in such a manner that it would '*become, in the best sense, the property of the many*' and so would act as a '*much more potent force for the good elevation of our race than if it had been distributed in small sums to the people themselves*' (1889, p. 10). As such, Carnegie was motivated to fund initiatives that would tackle the root causes of poverty rather than merely alleviate the symptoms of the same. Carnegie recognised that inequalities are an inevitable side-effect of the free market and, as such, believed that those who benefited most had a moral duty to work to ameliorate some of the conditions perpetuating disadvantage; his essay '*The Gospel of Wealth*' (Carnegie, 1889) has subsequently been referred to as '*the intellectual charger of modern philanthropy*' (Walker, 2015). More recently, in 2010, Bill and Melinda Gates, together with Warren Buffett founded 'The Giving Pledge' in which they invited the ultra-wealthy to commit to giving more than half of their wealth away. Like Carnegie, who came before them; these present-day major philanthropists believe that philanthropy can '*address some of the world's biggest challenges*' (The Giving Pledge, 2010).

However, as Aristotle acknowledged, philanthropy is not without its challenges, for whilst giving away money is a simple task that anyone can do, determining who to give it to and for what purpose is a complex task (Aristotle, c. 325 BC). Carnegie endorsed this view, referring to the '*serious and difficult task of wise distribution'* (cited in Moore, 2017, p. 234). Moreover, as the President of the Ford Foundation openly acknowledged in 2015, an inherent tension underpins '*a system that perpetuates vast differences in privilege and then tasks the privileged with improving the system'* (Walker, 2015 para 8).

This historical context is important because it enhances our understanding of the motivations and methodologies employed by contemporary philanthropists. Historical perspectives underscore the risks associated with evidence-free philanthropy, highlighting that an absence of evidence-based decision-making can lead to suboptimal allocation of resources. As a result, philanthropic efforts may be less effective than they could be if guided by robust evidence. This insight emphasises the critical need for philanthropists to engage with evidence in order to maximise the impact of their contributions.

1.3 Donor Motivations

The power to give at very high levels (£1 million plus) is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals and foundations. It is not, however, only an ability to make significant gifts that is concentrated in their hands but also a level of influence both on the charities themselves and sometimes upon public policy, which the making of such gifts confers on them. Indeed, several commentators have questioned whether they have too much influence on public policy (Barkan, 2013; Callahan, 2017; Rogers, 2011) for whilst they may *'act with good* *intentions, ... they define "good."'* Consequently, such arrangements may amount to an *'exercise of wealth-derived power in the public sphere with minimal democratic controls and civic obligations'* (Barkan, 2013, p. 636). Callahan endorses this view, pointing out that many '*of today's richest Americans ... wield a lot more influence over how the rest of us live as they give away their money...*' (Callahan, 2017, p. 19). Indeed, several commentators have expressed concerns about the risks that such a capture of the '*charitable sector by the wealthy'* poses to democracy (Callahan, 2017; Collins & Flannery, 2022, p. 5; Reich, 2018b). Many such concerns arise because '*voluntary giving at scale by wealthy individuals, couples and families—is intimately bound up with the exercise of power by elites'* (Maclean et al., 2021, p. 330). Such concentrations of wealth mean that only a very small segment of society determines which charities and interventions are worth funding (Barkan, 2013; Callahan, 2017). Critics counter that decisions about resource allocation should be made through democratic processes that involve public input and prioritise collective decision-making. However, the influence of elite individuals through philanthropy can undermine democratic processes, as power imbalances allow certain UHNWI donors to shape public policy and affect social agendas, thereby bypassing democratic mechanisms and undermining democratic decision-making. Vallely sums it up thus: there '*are a number of tensions inherent in the relationship between philanthropy and democracy';* philanthropy is perceived as '*an expression of power. Giving often depends on the personal whims of super-rich individuals. Sometimes these coincide with the priorities of society, but at other times they contradict or undermine them'* (Vallely, 2020a paras 5&6). Moody expresses similar concerns and asks, '*If the funding mix of any non-profit becomes increasingly dominated by major gifts from a few supporters, what might the practical and ethical consequences be?*' (2022, p. 17). One consequence could be that rather than being a catalyst for ground-breaking and original solutions to social problems, philanthropy could end up stifling such innovation. Indeed, Arata Kochi (a former director of the World Health Organisation's malaria program) has publicly expressed disquiet that '*the growing dominance of the Gates Foundation on malaria research could have adverse unintended effects, stifling innovation and thwarting public health goals'* (cited in McGoey, 2012 p. 190). Moreover, large donations by HNWIs inevitably shine a spotlight upon the recipient charities, which may result in more funding being directed to those charities, which is an illustration of the Matthew effect at work, in which initial advantages prove to be '*self-amplifying'* (Rigney, 2010, p. 4). This, in turn, means that funding may end up concentrated upon particular causes and issues whilst others are left in the shadows, struggling to compete for a share of any residual funding as wealthy donors become '*powerful drivers of a range of agendas'* (Callahan, 2017, p. 19). '*Money is power, and power dynamics are ubiquitous in philanthropy. They affect everything from who knows about grant opportunities to who gets those grants and how outcomes are evaluated...'* (Gibson, 2018, p. 7). To the extent that it is *'no longer the state that determines what is good for the people, but rather the rich who decide'* (Vallely, 2020a para 10).

1.4 Philanthropy, Control and Democracy

Another common critique relates to the lack of oversight that philanthropists and philanthropy receive, for they typically operate outside the realm of democratic governance, with donors having considerable discretion over how their funds are used. While this autonomy allows for flexibility and innovation, it can also result in the absence of robust accountability mechanisms and a *'lack of transparency and oversight',* which can *'raise questions about the effectiveness, efficiency, and true impact of the initiatives undertaken by* *the wealthy elite'* (Amarante, 2018, p. 1). A further concern is that some wealthy individuals may engage in philanthropy primarily to enhance their reputations, maintain their social status, or pursue personal agendas, which aligns with social exchange theory. Social exchange theory suggests that people engage in social interactions based on the expectation of receiving rewards and minimising costs, and according to the social exchange theory of gift giving, '*something is given by an individual in order to receive … something else in return, such as, status, thanks or simply a feeling of well-being'* (Pitt et al., 2002, p. 52). It is posited that this could cause philanthropists to focus on high-profile projects that generate positive publicity rather than choosing to address systemic issues or meet the most pressing societal needs.

1.5 The Role of Taxation

A further issue relating to philanthropy is that whilst it is being funded by private money, the tax implications of how charitable donations are treated in the majority of developed countries (Scharf & Smith, 2010) are such that philanthropy is publicly subsidised in those countries (Barkan, 2013; D. Callahan, 2017) but without any corresponding public influence on the direction of funds. In the global north, governments commonly offer generous tax incentives to promote philanthropic donations. In the USA, for example, such subsidies '*cost citizens at least US$50 billion in forgone federal tax revenue in 2016'* (Reich, 2018a, p. 9). In the UK, the Treasury disclosed that for the tax year ending April 2023, they paid out just under £6.0 billion in '*tax reliefs for charities and their donors',* including £740 million of Higher Rate tax relief and '*£790 million in Inheritance Tax reliefs for donations'* (HMRC, 2023). Hence, the UK's taxpayers are subsidising the philanthropy of the wealthy, but they have no say in how that philanthropy is directed; this is problematic because '*the priorities of plutocracy, rule by the rich, and democracy, rule by the people, often differ. The personal choices of the rich do not closely match the spending choices of democratically elected governments'* (Vallely, 2020a para 19).

Consequently, Glucksberg et al. refer to elite philanthropy as being '*licensed by and incentivized by the state'* adding that it is, therefore, crucial to examine and understand elite philanthropy because '*understanding elite philanthropy at this level is essential to developing effective policy'* (Glucksberg & Russell-Prywata, 2022, p. 4).

Some form of favourable treatment is offered to donors by most OECD countries, indeed, a recent report on taxation and philanthropy found that support of philanthropy through tax incentives was commonplace: '*In addition to government grants and the contracting of services to philanthropic entities ("direct support"), governments typically support philanthropy ("indirectly") in two ways, by providing: tax incentives for giving to philanthropic entities; and (full or partial) exemptions of philanthropic entities from various taxes'* (OECD, 2020, p. 10). However, a report conducted by the UK His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), which examined the influence of tax relief (specifically Gift Aid) on high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) in the UK, disclosed that tax reliefs did not motivate participants to make donations (Booth et al., 2015). Nevertheless, many participants acknowledged that tax relief was a factor they considered when making donations, motivating them to be more generous (Booth et al., 2015). In some cases, participants even strategically incorporated tax relief to maximise the amount of their donation (Booth et al., 2015, p. 5).

Collins and Flannery divulged, in their 2022 report, that the top two causes supported by UHNWI donors in the US are *'their own private foundations and donor-advised funds'* (p. 6) they point out that both such vehicles offer UHNWI donors significant tax advantages but warned that there is no guarantee that funds will '*flow from them to active charities in a timely way'* or that *'they will fulfil the public interest'* (2022, p. 6). They observe that such warehousing of charitable funds could lead to the non-profit sector becoming: *'dominated by large legacy foundations and donor-advised funds while working charities face greater fiscal austerity',* which could enable affluent donors to deploy their charitable giving in such a way that it allows them *'to opt out of paying their fair share in taxes to support the public infrastructure we all rely on. And they will increasingly be able to deploy philanthropy to advance their narrow self-interests'* (2022, p.4).

Moreover, in 2020, the Institute for Policy Studies disclosed that ever-increasing amounts of charitable dollars were '*being diverted into wealth-warehousing vehicles such as private foundations and donor-advised funds, rather than going to active non-profits serving immediate needs'* (Collins & Flannery, 2020, p. 1).

Some see Taxation as amounting to the confiscation of our property by people who prefer to spend it on their priorities rather than ours; however, when a democratically elected government determines those spending priorities, one could argue that it is the people who are indirectly choosing those spending priorities. The same cannot be said of philanthropy. For when a philanthropist states that they *'can do what I want because it's my money," they are wrong. A substantial portion of the wealth—35 per cent or more, depending on tax rates—*

has been diverted from the public treasury, where its use would have been determined ultimately by voters (Barkan, 2013, p.635).

Governments are motivated to grant such tax benefits[1] because they can power up funding. For example, in the UK, £450,000 in the form of government-funded tax relief powers up to £1,250,000.00 (HMRC, 2000) as the charity receives a £1million donation and reclaims gift aid of £250,000.00 giving the charity a total of £1,250,000.00 and the donor (provided s/he is a higher rate taxpayer - currently 45%) can claim £200,000.00 (20%) to offset against tax. Whilst this is a potent argument for funds that will be directed to public services or other initiatives favoured by the government and its citizens alike, the flaw in this approach is that the government has no say in how those funds are directed. Consequently, those powered-up funds may end up funding initiatives that the government and or the electorate would never have chosen to fund, for philanthropists are free to choose to distribute their funding in whichever way they see fit (Breeze, 2013c). Davies posits that it is this freedom (to decide how to direct their funding) which lies '*at the heart of philanthropy'* but that this distinguishing feature of philanthropy is also its weakness as it *'is not good at providing consistency or equality at a systematic level'* (2015).

[1] In the UK for example, charities receive the benefit of the tax that a donor would have paid if the taxpayer is a basic rate taxpayer (namely 25%). If the donor is a higher rate taxpayer (40%) then the charity will receive an extra 25p for every £1 donated and the donor will be able to claim the difference between the rate they paid and the basic rate on their donation. HMRC give the following example. You donate £100 to charity, the charity claims gift aid on the donation and thus receives £125. The donor is paying 40% tax so can personally claim back £25.00 (£125 x 20%). Hence on a £1,000,000 donation made by a higher rate taxpayer, at current tax rates 45% the beneficiary charity would receive an additional £250,000 – the appeal to the philanthropist is his/her money goes further as it only costs £1,000,000.00 to make a £1,250,000 million-pound donation and the donor also benefits as s/he can claim back £250,000.00 on his or her tax return (£1,250,000.00 x 20%).

Despite these ambiguities, philanthropy's magnitude and influence have expanded exponentially in recent decades as *'philanthropy has become an integral part of being rich in the 21st century'* (Bishop and Green cited in Breeze, 2010, p. 6). Such an expansion of philanthropy in part reflected a desire by the rich to position themselves in a better light by writing their '*moral biographies',* which they utilised as a narrative tool '*to explain how it is possible for them to be rich and good at the same time'* (Schervish 2005 cited in Breeze, 2010, p. 6). This increase in philanthropy has inevitably led, in turn, to an expansion of interest in philanthropy, which has been reflected in the global media. The January 2006 edition of Time Magazine conferred its 'Person of the Year' status jointly upon three philanthropists: Bill and Melinda Gates and the Rock Star Bono under the headline, '*The Good Samaritans*' (Gibbs, 2005). Subsequently, the Charities Aid Foundation publication "The Sunday Times Annual Giving List" and the Coutts Million Pound Donor list have kept philanthropy in the public eye (CAF, 2018; Coutts Institute, 2017).

The concerns raised in the section above highlight the extent of the influence that elite donors can have on public policy and the third sector, which has implications for democracy and equality. This background is relevant because it is only by illuminating the potential biases and motivations of philanthropists that it becomes apparent how vital it is that we improve our knowledge of how wealthy philanthropists engage with evidence. Hence, this framework is essential to and informs the research aims of this PhD, which seeks to explore the mechanisms and motivations behind philanthropic decision-making, assess the role of evidence in these processes, and evaluate the broader societal implications of these practices.

1.6 The Current State of Philanthropy Research with HNWDs

Despite the growth in media interest, robust data on philanthropy remains scarce, and the phenomena of philanthropy have received relatively little attention from scholars within the academic sector. Von Schnurbein et al. concur, noting that there are 'many hurdles involved in collecting and measuring evidence on the economic operations and social performance of philanthropy, as systematic data are scarce except for the US and a few other Western countries' (2021, p.186). There is widespread recognition amongst the academic community that philanthropy today lacks a sufficiently wide and deep knowledge base. Indeed, more than 30 years ago, David Horton Smith (Smith, 1975) raised concerns about the lack of a cross-disciplinary approach to philanthropy exacerbated by a tendency '*towards specialization among scientists in different disciplines* [which] *created the undesirable situation that scholars usually know little about the insights gathered in other disciplines'* (cited in Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007, p. 3). Practitioner research does not always have sufficient rigour whilst the most meticulous academic work has focused quite narrowly on the motivation of donors and designing tools to stimulate giving. As philanthropy is increasingly practised at scale and exerts a growing influence on society, there is a real need to develop broader and more systematic research on philanthropy.

In light of the breadth of global challenges, such as the climate crisis, the cost-of-living crisis, and growing wealth inequality, the researcher posits that there is a compelling need for philanthropy to enhance its impact and to become genuinely redistributive. Further impetus for this research was derived from concerns about the concentration of philanthropic power amongst wealth holders and the researcher's hypothesis that philanthropists prioritised reliance on personal networks over empirical evidence.

Having observed the transformative impact of evidence-based approaches in other sectors, including health and public policy, the researcher was compelled to explore how these methodologies could be applied within philanthropy to better align efforts with the pressing societal needs they aim to address.

1.7 Literature Review of Factors Influencing Evidence Use and Overarching Research Question and Objectives

The researcher posits that examining the factors that influence how philanthropists engage with evidence is vital if the impact of philanthropy is to be improved. This research was further motivated by the observation that philanthropists have been slow to embed such practices into their decision-making processes despite a growing awareness of the value of evidence-based approaches within philanthropy.

The overarching research question steering this thesis is: **"What are the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists?"** This question emerged from a comprehensive literature review on factors influencing evidence use within philanthropy and evidence-based policymaking and practice. This literature review synthesises the findings of several major reviews of those factors, which reveal the complex and multidimensional character of evidence-based approaches to policymaking, practice and philanthropy.

Strategic Giving and Evidence Use

In their book 'Money Well Spent: A Strategic Plan for Smart Philanthropy', Brest and Harvey highlight that strategic planning in philanthropy is vital to prevent 'hundreds of millions of philanthropic dollars' being 'squandered through donations to organizations that have no impact whatsoever' (2008 p. 28). They stress the need for rigorous evaluation and impact assessment and posit that successful, impactful philanthropy depends on well-defined objectives and ongoing engagement with evidence.

Measurement of Social Performance

With a similar focus on the need for nonprofits and social enterprises to clarify and delineate their objectives, Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) propose a framework for measuring social outcomes. They stress the importance of aligning goals with measurable outcomes to ensure accountability and effectiveness, recognising that the 'challenge lies in defining what impact means and how to measure it in a way that is both meaningful and feasible' (p. 123).

Evidence-Based Policymaking

Strydom et al. (2010) review evidence-based policymaking, identifying factors influencing evidence uptake, such as the values, leadership, knowledge, skills, resources, partnerships, and networking abilities of decision-makers. They also identify obstacles to engaging with evidence, including conflicting goals, accountability issues, poor communication, uncertainty, credibility, risk, time constraints, and power dynamics. The researcher hypothesises that these factors similarly influence philanthropists' evidence use. These findings complement those of Hardwick et al. (2015), who observed the impact of relationships and communication on the use of evidence by third-sector organisations.

The Role of Systematic Reviews

Haddaway and Pullin (2014) highlight the importance of systematic reviews in synthesising evidence to inform policy. They advocate for systematic reviews due to their transparency, repeatability, and objectivity, which make them less susceptible to bias than traditional reviews. Systematic reviews play a crucial role by providing comprehensive and unbiased evidence, reducing bias, and maximising reliability. Haddaway and Pullin conclude that systematic reviews are essential for synthesising complex evidence and informing decision-making

Systematic Reviews on Evidence Use

In their 2014 systematic review, Oliver et al. examined the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers. Like Strydom et al., they noted several obstacles to the uptake of evidence, including political factors, lack of relevance, timing issues, and skills gaps. Conversely, the 'most frequently reported facilitators … included access to and improved dissemination of research, and existence of and access to relevant research. Collaboration and relationships between policymakers and research staff…' were also reported as factors influencing evidence use. (Oliver et al. 2014 p.4). Oliver and Pearce build on these findings in their 2017 study, in which they describe three lessons that Evidence-Based Policymaking could absorb from Evidence-Based Medicine: the importance of transparency concerning the mechanisms and structures used to identify and utilise evidence; the need to balance evidence with other interests, in order 'to assemble the evidence jigsaw' (p.1); and the importance of understanding the power dynamics that 'shape how knowledge is produced and used' (p.1).

A systematic scoping review by Hardwick et al. (2015) explored how third-sector organisations use research and other forms of knowledge. Many of their findings aligned with those of Oliver et al. and Strydom et al., highlighting several barriers such as limited resources (including time, staffing, costs, and competing priorities), organisational culture, challenges in adapting evidence-based programmes to fit their specific organisational context, and difficulties in translating academic research findings into practical applications. One included study described the difficulties of ensuring that staff had the time and skill to access scholarly research, assess its quality and reliability and then develop user-friendly summaries.' (pp. 5-6). Facilitators of research use included 'developing relationships between academia and TSOs, technical guidance or assistance in implementation (in the form of manuals or experts), clear leadership, interdisciplinary working, improving access to research of different kinds, evidence that similar organisations that had successfully implemented the evidence-based programme and more relevant local research (p.7).

Donor Control and Social Relations

Ostrander (2007) examined how a donor's control and influence over the nonprofit they were funding could affect how much evidence was used. They found that a donor's power and influence could shape the extent to which evidence is utilised, as increased donor directives often reduce the autonomy of recipient organisations. This dynamic can marginalise the valuable on-the-ground knowledge of nonprofits, diminishing or entirely losing the opportunity for this knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of philanthropic efforts in addressing social issues. Oliver and Pearce's findings similarly highlight the importance of understanding how power dynamics influence evidence use, underscoring that attention to power asymmetries is crucial to avoiding approaches that disregard lessons rooted in rigorous evidence and analysis.

Utilisation of Research by Third Sector Organizations

In their detailed examination of how third-sector organisations use research and other knowledge, Hardwick et al. find that a mix of professional experience, client views, and academic research informs decision-making. Reflecting the results of earlier and subsequent studies, they identified obstacles, including resource constraints, organisational culture and context and a lack of relevant research. Promoters include strong research affiliations and skilled staff. Specifically, they noted that strong 'relationships were developed through more participatory approaches to conducting research. In particular, there is a need for research to include community-based organisations (CBOs) so that the community context is understood as an important factor in any intervention' (p.7). These findings support Oliver et al. (2014) and Strydom et al. (2010), who commented on the importance of access to relevant research and strong collaborative relationships.

Synergies in Evidence-Based Approaches to Policymaking and Philanthropy

The author posits that there are many synergies between the practice of evidence-based policymaking and evidence-based philanthropy. Both seek to employ rigorous, high quality and relevant evidence to inform their practice and to improve their impact. The studies referred to above offer comprehensive analyses of both promoters and obstacles to evidence use by philanthropists. Through examination of the elements that influence the extent to which policymakers engage with evidence (including the accessibility and relevance of evidence, the trustworthiness and credibility of resources) and by acknowledging the extent to which psychological factors influence the uptake of evidence, (Cairney, 2016, Strydom et al. 2010) this thesis can identify synergies and apply these findings to philanthropists. Understanding the undercurrents informing evidence use is of real value to philanthropists who seek to maximise the impact of their funding and, therefore, like policymakers, need to ground their actions in reliable evidence.

Implications for this research

The studies referred to above are highly pertinent to this thesis as they inform our knowledge of the universal and operational drivers of evidence use. Synthesising their findings allows us to recognise both barriers to and facilitators of evidence use within philanthropy and so to enhance the strategic application of evidence to philanthropic decision-making.

1.8 Research Objectives

The overarching research question guiding this thesis is: **"What are the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists?"** To explore this question in more depth, this thesis addresses the following specific questions:

1. **Engagement with Evidence:** Do philanthropists engage with evidence, and if so, how?
2. **Barriers and Facilitators:** What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?
3. **Impact of Trust and Relationships:** To what extent do trust and relationships influence the giving decisions of philanthropists?

These questions aim to provide a deeper understanding of the complex and nuanced interplay between evidence use, trust, and relationships in philanthropic decision-making. Moreover, they seek to identify strategies to bridge the gap between current practices and a more evidence-informed philanthropic future.

Specifically, this thesis explores how evidence informs:

1. The selection of issues or thematic areas that philanthropists choose to fund.
2. The choice of non-profit organisations to support.
3. The types of interventions they favour.
4. The methods used to justify these choices.

To address the central research question, the following objectives have been identified:

- **Objective 1:** To identify the key factors that influence the use of evidence by philanthropists.
- **Objective 2:** To explore the relationship between donor motivations and evidence use.
- **Objective 3:** To evaluate the role of social networks and personal connections in shaping evidence use.
- **Objective 4:** To understand how philanthropists measure the impact of their donations and their interpretation of ‘impact.’
- **Objective 5:** To identify strategies for enhancing the use of evidence in philanthropic decision-making.

By defining these areas, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of evidence in philanthropic decision-making and its broader implications for the effectiveness and accountability of philanthropic activities.

The researcher posits that evidence can enable us to recognise whether a programme or intervention is effective and help charities and donors stay accountable to the communities and people they serve. While the multiple concerns discussed above do not negate the potential positive contributions of philanthropy, they do highlight the importance of ensuring transparency, accountability, and democratic participation in shaping societal priorities and addressing systemic challenges. For these reasons, the researcher proposes that there is a strong ethical argument for ensuring that philanthropic funds avoid harm and seek to benefit the most disadvantaged and underserved communities. There is also a pragmatic case to be made, namely that problems do not impact all communities in the same way; hence, if philanthropic funding is to be effective, maximise its impact, and reach underserved communities, it needs to be strategic, targeted, and informed by high-quality evidence.

However, while some excellent research has explored the motivations of elite donors, many of whom emphasise a desire to rigorously assess the impact of their giving, our understanding of how they practice their philanthropy is poor.

This thesis explores the nuanced and complex interplay between evidence use and philanthropic decision-making. Specifically, it investigates the use of evidence by high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth philanthropists. Its objectives are to explore how philanthropists engage with evidence, perceive its quality, and incorporate it into their funding decisions, alongside other factors influencing their giving.

This research aims to offer a deeper understanding of these dynamics and contribute strategies to bridge the gap between current practices and a more evidence-informed philanthropic future.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach comprising a systematic review and qualitative research. The systematic review component provides a broad understanding of the existing literature and evidence base, and the primary qualitative research offers detailed, context-specific insights that may not be captured in the existing literature. This combination allows for a comprehensive understanding of the research question, leveraging the strengths of both methodologies.

This introductory chapter begins by reviewing the definition of philanthropy, which is found to be complicated because its meaning is contested. It then briefly considers the origins of philanthropy, noting that it is not a new phenomenon. The ‘philanthropic impulse’ is discussed, derived from the simple human impulse to end someone’s or something’s suffering. Theories of giving are reviewed, explanations for the significance of philanthropy are appraised, and the contextual dimension is examined before considering the importance of evidence in relation to philanthropy. The chapter concludes with the justification for and contribution of this thesis.

2. The Meaning of Philanthropy

The etymology of *'philanthropia'* is derived from the ancient Greek words *'philos'* or *'phileo'* and *'anthropos'*; *'Phileo represents one of four major words groups usually employed in ancient Greek to express the concepts of love, attraction or desire ... Anthropos ... is the generic word for "humankind" signifying human beings in the widest sense of the word…'* (Sulek, 2010a, p. 386).

The Oxford English Dictionary offers a modern definition of 'philanthropy' as a *'love of mankind; the disposition or active effort to promote the happiness and well-being of others; practical benevolence, now esp. as expressed by the generous donation of money to good causes.'* Such a definition suggests that philanthropy is underpinned by an intention by the donor to address the problems of society; the act of giving in itself will not be sufficient to satisfy the meaning of philanthropy; the gift must be intended to solve a particular social problem or issue (Davies, 2015).

2.1 Philanthropy is Contested

How philanthropy is interpreted and defined is contested; much of the confusion surrounding how philanthropy is conceptualised arises from '*attempts to contain within it a diversity of human phenomena that resist generalization and categorization'* (Payton, 1987, p. 1). Philanthropy is commonly defined as private donations of money or other resources to serve the greater public good.

Some commentators take a narrower view of philanthropy, maintaining that it has come to signify giving by wealthy individuals and foundations with the intent of addressing social problems (Daly, 2012), as such, the practice of philanthropy should ultimately serve to eliminate the need for charity. Indeed, the National Philanthropic Trust defines philanthropy as: '*the practice of organized and systematic giving to improve the quality of human life through the promotion of welfare and social change'* (National Philanthropic Trust, 2016 para 3). Such a construct of philanthropy with its emphasis on 'welfare and social change' may give rise to questions as to whether certain gifts, such as a gift to the National Gallery or the Royal Opera House, could be classified as philanthropy.

Moreover, such a construct of philanthropy also presents operational challenges, not least in the demand for evidence as to the nature of the problem (Davies, 2015) or, as Miller et al. ask, '*how do we differentiate the construct of interest from other constructs?'* (2009, p. 22). Furthermore, it is necessary to identify the evidence that points to which interventions are most effective at addressing the problem and how best to implement those solutions. Finally, there is a need for measures that are both pertinent to solving the problem and valid and dependable (Miller et al., 2009).

Additional confusion arises concerning gifts and actions that are not perceived to be made voluntarily (for example, when a donor feels compelled to give because of social norms or moral restraints) as to whether or not such actions can be deemed philanthropic (Schervish, 1998; Sulek, 2010b). Miller posits that when defining philanthropy, one must distinguish between '*motives, means, and objectives that are truly philanthropic and those that are not'* (2006, p. 52).

A further question relates to whether a gift given for a particular purpose but which fails to fulfil that purpose will be considered philanthropic (Van Til, 1990 cited in Sulek, 2010b). On this latter point, the researcher would argue that one role of philanthropy is to act as risk capital and, as such, to explore new and innovative approaches to what are often perceived to be intractable problems. However, as Lorenz points out, risks do not always prove to be successful but in '*order to truly innovate, to try new things, to be creative, to think outside the box, we must understand that failure is a likely outcome. As funders, we must be willing to embrace this failure and learn from it'* (2016 para 3).

For the purposes of this study, we will be utilising the following construct of philanthropy: namely, that it is (a) fuelled by private means and (b) that it is intended to serve the public good.

2.2 Philanthropy's Relationship with Charity

Philanthropy is frequently confused with charity, but it is not the same as charity, although the two are related. Charity commonly refers to giving between individuals (Sulek, 2010b). Gross defined charity as that which engages '*individuals in … direct acts of compassion and connection to other people*' (2003, p. 31). Charity is also characterised as being focused on addressing the '*suffering caused by social problems*' (Zimmer, 2018), as such charity often takes a short-term approach to address immediate needs. On the other hand, philanthropy extends beyond the individual and is more commonly defined as '*the application of private means to public ends*' (Salamon & Anheier, 1992; Sulek, 2010b, p. 201). Philanthropy, however, requires more than just large-scale charitable giving; it also requires an effort which '*an individual or organization undertakes based on an altruistic desire to improve human welfare*' (Hayes, 2022). Hence, philanthropy is underpinned by an intention to reform society, and thus, it could be argued that its ultimate objective is to make charity unnecessary by eliminating social problems outright (Gross, 2003; Zimmer, 2018). For this reason, philanthropy is broader than charity.

2.3 The Statutory Definition of Charity in the UK

Constructs of charity are rooted in the ancient world; however, the modern legal concept of charity has its foundations in the Charitable Uses Act 1601 (Statute of Elizabeth I). The Charitable Uses Act 1601 was the first act to define what was meant by *'charitable purposes'* in the UK and is acknowledged to be the underpinning of charity law (Bromley, 2001). Indeed, in 1949, Lord Simonds, referring to the 1601 Act, stated that from the beginning, '*it was the practice of the Court to refer to the preamble of the Statute in order to determine whether or not a purpose was charitable'* (Lord Simonds cited by Bromley, 2001, p. 1).

The Act's preamble enumerates which purposes it deemed to be charitable, including:

'… the relief of aged, impotent and poor people; the maintenance of sick and maimed soldiers and mariners; schools of learning; free schools and scholars in universities; the repair of bridges, ports, havens, causeways, churches, sea banks and highways; the education and

preferment of orphans; the relief, stock or maintenance of houses of correction; marriages of poor maids; support, aid and help of young tradesmen, handicraftsmen and persons decayed; the relief or redemption of prisoners or captives; and the aid or ease of any poor inhabitants covering payments of fifteens, setting out of soldiers and other taxes.'

The act also introduced a 'public benefit' test, laying down that the institution must '*exist for the benefit of the public'* (The Charitable Purposes Act 1601 cited in Malik, 2008, p. 37).

In 2011, the UK enacted the Charities Act 2011. Section 1 (1) of the Charities Act affords a statutory definition of a 'charity' as '*an institution that is established for charitable purposes and as such must provide a public benefit*'. Hence, organisations must satisfy a 'public benefit' test (section 2(1)(b)) to be conferred charitable status. Section 3(1) outlines 13 purposes deemed for the public benefit; these purposes are wide-ranging, encompassing the relief of poverty, education, health, sport, and the arts through to animal welfare; a detailed list is attached in Appendix 1.

The granting of charitable status in the UK means that donations by individuals to charities in the UK benefit from tax relief and, as such, are tax-free with the amount equivalent to the tax that would have been payable to either the charity directly (through for example gift aid) or to the donor (see Appendix 2).

2.4 The Statutory Definition of Charity in the USA

Just as in the UK, the judicial model of charity in the USA originated primarily from the Charitable Uses Act 1601 (Statute of Elizabeth I).

In 1894, the US Congress enacted the 'Wilson-Gorman Tariff', which granted charitable organisations an exemption from federal income tax. The tariff was subsequently overturned; however, 1909 saw the enactment of the Corporation Excise Tax Act, which also provided an exemption from the obligation to pay tax to charitable organisations. The act provided:

'…*that the excise tax should not apply to any corporation or association organized and operated exclusively for religious, educational, or charitable purposes, no part of the net income of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual'* (IRS, 1980, p. 2).

The purpose of conferring such a tax exemption upon charitable organisations was based upon the 'theory of shared social responsibility' (IRS, 1980, p. 3).

In the US, gifts to qualifying charitable organisations enable donors to benefit from certain tax exemptions. Whether or not an organisation meets the qualifications is governed by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which determines that: '*To be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an organization must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3)'* (IRS, 1986).

According to the Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute: '*A charitable organization is a non-profit organization that seeks to advance some public benefit. Public benefit includes a broad range of areas such as education, poverty alleviation, scientific research, environment, diversity, religion, and health. If an organization achieves 501(c)(3) status, individuals can deduct donations to the organization from their taxes'* (Cornell, 2021 para 1).

Non-profit organisations are groups that do not distribute any income generated to their members or officers, and their primary purpose is not to generate profits.

3. The Roots of Modern Philanthropy

Although philanthropy's origins can be traced back to the Ancient Greeks, this introduction will focus on the evolution of philanthropy during the Victorian era, which was a pivotal period in the evolution of philanthropy. The Victorian era witnessed a surge of philanthropic initiatives, which were heavily influenced by the work of numerous social reformers. Hitherto, philanthropy had been informed by ancient and religious traditions of generosity, such as Prometheus's mythological gifts to humanity and the religiously inspired benevolence of Plato and Aristotle. However, the Victorian period and the subsequent Gilded Age saw a shift to a more structured and targeted approach to giving, which transformed the field from a largely ad hoc, altruistic endeavour into an organised, research-informed practice dedicated to achieving substantial societal improvements. This pivotal shift laid the foundation for evidence-based philanthropy, setting the stage for the approach to philanthropy observed in the modern era.

3.1 The Age of Reform – The Victorians

The Victorian period (1837 to 1901) was one of growing urbanisation in the UK as large swathes of people moved from rural areas to towns and cities where new industries were calling out for labour. In such settings, conventional mechanisms of charity (‘*in which philanthropy and the almsgiving that preceded it, had been something that took place at a highly localised, parish level’)* (Davies, 2017 para. 11) were no longer appropriate because the scale of need was such that philanthropists in the towns and cities could no longer deal with the number of people in need since no one individual could evaluate all the petitions for aid or distribute the funds to those judged deserving of support. Hence, if philanthropists were going to succeed in combatting urban poverty, philanthropy would need to evolve in order to address the underlying causes of poverty rather than just treating the symptoms of poverty (Davies, 2017).

This period also saw the growing influence of many reformers upon philanthropy, including Beatrice Webb (née Potter), Charles Booth and Joseph Rowntree, whose philanthropy was underpinned by secular rationality rather than by conventional religion. Webb referred to this as a ‘*Time-Spirit’* which comprised a compound of two elements: ‘*the first, a religious dedication to the service of others, inspired … by a secular religion, the "Religion of Humanity"; the second, the faith in science, the idea that the welfare of society could best be promoted by scientific, rational, organized means’* (Webb cited in Himmelfarb, 1997, p. 51). During this era, Booth produced the first of his poverty maps, in which he conducted a comprehensive survey of the social and economic circumstances of people living in London. The first of these maps was published in 1889 (Booth, 1889). Upon completing his research, Booth advocated for state support for the elderly, serving on the Royal Commission of the Aged Poor and campaigning for the Old Age Pensions Bill, which was eventually passed in 1908. Together with Beatrice Webb, he served on the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (LSE, 2018). In 1889, Seebohm Rowntree conducted the first of his three surveys on poverty in York, in which he identified that people experiencing poverty were not responsible for their own plight, but that poverty was caused by low wages. In later surveys, he also drew attention to the cycle of poverty '*whereby children, young married couples with children, and old people constitute the social groups that bear the highest risk of falling into poverty'* (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015). The work of Joseph Rowntree, Charles Booth and Beatrice Webb *'had a huge impact on the understanding of poverty at the time',* which '*led to many changes in policy and practice'* (Davies, 2017 para. 23).

Hence, the Victorian period saw the emergence of evidence-based philanthropy, which was informed by methodical research and examination, and it '*was this combination of religiosity and rationality that informed the social consciousness of the late Victorians'* (Himmelfarb, 1997, p. 51). Nevertheless, then as now, evidence-based philanthropy was not without its critics, for whilst evidence-based philanthropy did generate greater efficiencies, it was '*based on a moralistic view of poverty'* which made a *'distinction between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor'* (Davies, 2017 para. 24) raising concerns about the power imbalances that are intrinsic to charitable giving, which are like those we see reflected in critiques of modern-day philanthropy.

3.2 The Gilded Age: Philanthropy during the 19th & early 20th centuries

The onset of industrialisation in the 19th and early 20th centuries gave rise to considerable inequalities in society, typified by a mass of poorly paid workers at the bottom of society and a wealthy elite at the top. This period is sometimes referred to as the Gilded Age, and it coincided with the birth of modern philanthropy, which Andrew Carnegie pioneered. In 1889 Carnegie published his essay, 'The Gospel of Wealth' in the North American Review, in which he posited that '*He who dies rich, dies disgraced'* (Carnegie, 1889). Carnegie led by example and had given away over 90% of his fortune before his death. Other wealthy industrialists soon followed suit, establishing private foundations endowed with huge fortunes, which were tasked with a variety of philanthropic goals (The Week Staff, 2016). However, the arrival of these *'mega'* foundations did not meet with universal approval (Barkan, 2013; McGoey, 2012), with many critics openly questioning the underlying motives of the philanthropists in setting up such foundations and asking whether they were simply mechanisms for securing the wealth of, and bolstering the public image of, those '*business moguls who amassed fortunes during the robber baron years'* (Barkan, 2013 p. 635). Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt opposed a request by John D Rockefeller to set up such a foundation with the comment that *'no amount of charity in spending such fortunes [as Rockefeller's] can compensate in any way for the misconduct in acquiring them'* (Barkan, 2013, p. 636). Nevertheless, in due course, many such mega foundations (including Rockefeller's) received their charters, and the tax benefits accrued from their legal status.

Many of these foundations, including the Ford Foundation, The Andrew W Mellon Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, continue to exist today; they have subsequently been joined by thousands more private and family foundations. In the US, foundation grants totalled US$88.55 billion in 2020 (Dubb, 2021). In the UK, the combined giving of the top 300 foundations (which account for circa 90% of all donations by foundations) amounted to £3.48 billion in 2020 (Walker & Pharoah, 2021); more than a quarter of these foundations are family foundations.

The arrival of these mega-foundations on the philanthropic scene changed the way in which much philanthropy was conducted as philanthropy became increasingly professionalised (Zimmer, 2018). Foundations were frequently created with the intention of taking a more strategic view of their philanthropy, and many had ambitious goals, which are reflected in their mission statements; examples include to '*improve the human condition'* (Barkan, 2013, p. 635) and '*improving the quality of life for individuals around the world*' (Gates & Gates, 2010).

Reflecting on the last three decades (1990 onwards), many commentators have drawn parallels between the present day and the first *'Gilded Age'* (circa 1870 to 1900). Similarities include rising levels of inequality, and the concentration of extraordinary wealth amassed by the global top 1% aligned to conspicuous consumption. Such are the number of similarities that many pundits now refer to the period since 1990 as *'The Second Gilded Age'* (Wortel-London & Cothran, 2020).

The philanthropy of the first Gilded Age, exemplified by people such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, offers intriguing parallels with that of our contemporary age, as personified by Bill Gates. Just as Carnegie and Rockefeller leveraged their vast fortunes to create lasting public institutions, Gates has leveraged his wealth to tackle global challenges. Such mega philanthropy, both then and now, provides exceptional opportunities for societal advancement, be it through establishing libraries and universities or pursuing innovative health and technology solutions. However, whilst philanthropy on such an enormous scale can and has brought about extensive public benefits, the broader implications of giving on such a scale should also be acknowledged, not least those mega philanthropists, such as Carnegie and Gates, wield enormous power and influence, which they can use to shape societal landscapes according to their personal beliefs and ideologies. Such influence is largely unhindered and rarely subject to democratic processes or checks and balances, unlike those that guide public policy. Consequently, whilst such philanthropy can drive significant societal progress, it poses potential risks, not least because of the extensive undemocratic influence that such philanthropists wield. Hence, it is crucial to remain cognisant of both the opportunities presented by such mega philanthropy and the challenges characteristic of such a concentration of power for generosity is not necessarily '*the unassailable good we think it to be but might also undermine democratic values'* for it is a *'form of power that is largely unaccountable and lavishly tax-advantaged'* (Reich, 2018a back cover).

4. Theories Relating to Philanthropy

Whilst there is no single theoretical model that captures all the motivations that inform the study of philanthropy, multiple theories contribute cogent frameworks and insights that help elucidate the underlying motivations and applications of philanthropy.

Given the nuanced and complex character of philanthropic decision-making, the researcher chose to adopt Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) as the theoretical framework that would buttress this thesis. Social Capital Theory offers a lens through which to hypothesise that social networks and the relationships comprising those networks can influence the extent to which philanthropists employ evidence to inform their funding decisions. It is theorised that philanthropic decision-making can be governed by personal relationships and peer endorsements, which can, in turn, mitigate against utilising rigorous evidence-based approaches to inform their philanthropic practice.

4.1 Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory postulates that the networks of relationships that exist among and between individuals and organisations can engender multiple benefits for the members of those networks. Social capital is derived when sufficient trust develops between the parties as a consequence of their affiliation to or membership of the same social network or networks where *'interaction and exchange'* are enabled (Luoma-aho, 2016, p. 760). It is the sum of the actual or potential resources associated with the possession of an enduring network of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital theory offers a valuable lens to examine the dynamics of philanthropic decision-making, particularly how membership of specific social networks could augment, or hinder evidence use and how trust and relationships can shape philanthropic decision-making.

Social capital theory emphasises the significance of relationships, trust and social cohesion in promoting and maintaining philanthropic actions in society. It highlights the role of philanthropy in building and strengthening social networks and communities. Hence, the researcher posits that charitable giving may be predicated on and informed by the donor's social networks and that the reason and the amount that someone gives may be determined by who asks them and, as such, could be seen as a manifestation of social capital.

The researcher cautions that social capital could impair evidence-based decision-making by donors, particularly when they prioritise relationships with peers or fundraisers over empirical evidence of a charity or programme's impact and effectiveness. This dynamic suggests a kind of herd instinct among donors, where social influence may override data-driven choices. To acquire evidence supporting this argument, further research could involve examining case studies of donor behaviour, conducting surveys or interviews with philanthropists to assess the factors influencing their funding decisions, and analysing patterns where donations are guided more by social networks than by objective impact assessments.

The researcher further theorises that trust derived from social capital could also serve to distort giving between charities, as those charities with well-established networks will receive more funding than they would have otherwise, and those charities with weaker connections would experience a disadvantage, regardless of their merit or the genuine validation they may receive from individuals.

Components of Social Capital Theory

- **Social Networks**: The ties existing amongst individuals and organisations that facilitate cooperation and trust.
- **Trust and Reciprocity**: The mutual trust and expectation of reciprocity that fortifies social bonds.
- **Norms and Values**: Shared norms and values that govern behaviour within a network.

Application to the Research Questions

- **Engagement with Evidence**:
    - **Research Question**: Do philanthropists engage with evidence, and if so, how?

    - **Social Capital Theory Application**:
        - This research hypothesises that the extent to which philanthropists engage with and rely upon evidence will be influenced by their social networks and the mutual trust fostered within those networks.
        - It is posited that philanthropic decision-making is heavily influenced by personal networks and trust, often at the expense of more systematic evidence-based approaches.
        - It is also theorised that trusting relationships with evidence producers could facilitate the uptake of and acceptance of evidence.

- **Barriers and Facilitators**:
  - **Research Question:** What are the barriers to, and facilitators of evidence use?
  - **Social Capital Theory Application:**
    - It is hypothesised that barriers will include a lack of trust in evidence sources and poor social networks.
    - It is posited that facilitators could include stronger relationships between philanthropists and evidence providers.

- **Impact of Trust and Relationships**:
  - **Research Question**: To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?
  - **Social Capital Theory Application**:
    - It is theorised that trust and relationships are key components of philanthropic decision-making and may influence the acceptance of and assimilation of evidence into philanthropic practices.
    - It is further posited that trust within philanthropy is multifaceted and hinges on transparency and accountability, personal interactions, and reciprocity.

Theoretical Contribution

This research's principal theoretical contribution is applying Social Capital Theory to evidence-informed philanthropic decision-making. It is theorised that applying Social

Capital Theory will enhance our understanding of how social networks and, trust, and relationships influence evidence use in philanthropic decision-making.

5. The Philanthropic Impulse

The philanthropic impulse is derived from the simple human impulse to end someone's or something's suffering without seeking any reciprocity. Such an impulse can be expressed in numerous ways including through volunteering, donating to causes or raising awareness of particular causes.

Philanthropy is sometimes referred to as a hybrid of head and heart because it is perceived to be informed by both emotional empathy and rational thought (Davies, 2015). The *'heart'* characterises the emotional, empathetic, and moral compass that drives people or organisations to donate their time, efforts, or resources to contribute to the well-being of society. This side of philanthropy stems from an intrinsic desire to make a difference and help those less fortunate; it can arise from compassion, a sense of social justice, or the personal satisfaction of giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a). Conversely, the *'head'* signifies the strategic, logical, and pragmatic side of philanthropy, which seeks to ensure that the impact of donations are amplified (Singer, 2015). Some commentators theorise that the most impactful philanthropy involves both *'head'* and *'heart'*, as it will drive more sustainable and effective giving, which benefits both the donor and the recipient (Chapman, 2010; Holdsman, 2018).

Truly impulsive philanthropy is spontaneous and irrational; indeed, *'when giving is unregulated, it becomes deeply moving, an act of freedom*' (Bornstein, 2009, p. 622). Nevertheless, some critics point out that such impulses, whilst fuelled by good intentions, may lead to irrational consequences, for whilst such donations may alleviate immediate suffering, they rarely address the long-term underlying need that is the cause of that suffering (Bornstein, 2009).

Over recent years, a trend for thoughtful and strategic philanthropy has emerged in which philanthropists seek to address the longer-term causes of suffering. Such philanthropists will endeavour to identify persistent and urgent social challenges, research solutions, and allocate funding and resources in the most effective way (MacAskill, 2015).

5.1 The Giving Pledge

In 2010, Bill and Melinda Gates, together with Warren Buffett, founded 'The Giving Pledge' in which they invited the world's wealthiest individuals and families to join them in committing '*more than half their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes either during their lifetime or in their will'* (Gates et al., 2010). The purpose underpinning the pledge was both to engender more large-scale philanthropy and to ensure more effective giving, for by '*giving more, giving sooner and giving smarter',* they hypothesised that philanthropists could help to combat some of the world's most pressing problems. To this end, the Gates Foundation facilitates the introduction of pledgers to one another so that they may inspire and support each other '*to find the particular areas where they wanted to be engaged and supporting mechanisms to help accelerate that and have greater impact'* (Rob Rosen Director of The Giving Pledge, quoted in D. Callahan, 2017, p. 25). Signatories to The Giving Pledge are invited to an annual retreat at which they can share their experiences of large-scale philanthropy and share best practices. Signatories to the pledge believe not only that philanthropy can be utilised to maximise social impact by scaling up effective innovations but also that philanthropy can be innovative and act as an incubator for new ideas to tackle *'wicked'* problems (Marshall, 2008, p. 447).

To June 2022, there are 236 signatories to the pledge from 28 countries, many of whom have published a letter outlining their commitment and the motives that underlie their philanthropy (The Giving Pledge, 2010).

The Giving Pledge is not without its critics: one criticism is that its signatories do not commit to giving their wealth away within a designated time frame (Florino, 2021). Another is that the Giving Pledge would serve to '*increase the number of mega-foundations',* which could hurt '*democracy because of the influence these institutions will exert'* (Candid, 2010 para 3).

5.2 Motivations of High-Net-Worth Donors

The motivations for giving by HNWDs are many and varied and are not dissimilar to the motivations of all donors (Schervish, 2007). Primarily, people donate to charities because they feel an affinity with a cause (Breeze, 2013c, p. 2). Yet, there are some motivations for philanthropic giving which are unique to the very wealthy (Schervish, 2007). These include rationales focused on inheritance and estate planning, as an ever-growing number of such donors are concerned that leaving too much money to their children can be harmful. Sir Tom Hunter, the British billionaire philanthropist, has disclosed that he does not wish to burden his children *'… with great wealth'* (Finch, 2007 para 15) and *'Warren Buffett [a US billionaire] said that he would leave his kids enough that they can do something but not too much that they will do nothing'* (Hope, 2007 para 7).

Lloyd identified five primary influences which encouraged giving by wealthy people (Lloyd, 2004).

I. Lloyd identified a '*belief in the cause'* as the most significant factor in determining whether a donor would support a charity. Such a belief may be aligned to or informed by an 'awareness of need' and underpinned by 'confidence' in the non-profit or cause, both of which Bekker and Wiepking identified as components of philanthropy.

II. Lloyd also revealed that donors who believed their gift would enable them to be a '*catalyst for change'* were more likely to support a particular charity. Similarly, Bekkers and Wiepking identified a *'desire to change the world'* as a key driver of philanthropy (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007).

III. Lloyd also found that many donors were motivated by a sense of '*duty and responsibility'*. Likewise, Bekkers and Wiepking recognised that some donors felt compelled to give to charities because of social, ethical or moral norms after being solicited to give by a peer.

IV. Lloyd recognised that many donors were prompted by a need for 'self-actualisation', which is not dissimilar to the psychological benefits of Bekkers and Wiepking's framework, in which donors derive a sense of purpose and satisfaction from their philanthropy.

V. Finally, some donors acknowledged that joining donor networks was appealing (Lloyd, 2004, p. 3). This is analogous to Bekker and Wiepking's findings that some donors were motivated by reputational factors such as the opportunity to be part of a particular social network or to be recognised for one's philanthropy.

An additional motivation which can be ascribed to some HNWI donors is that of 'hyperagency'. Schervish explained that many wealthy donors are motivated to act by a sense of '*hyperagency'* in which they *'determine the conditions and circumstances of life instead of merely living within them…. As hyperagents, the wealthy construct a world that suits their desires and values. If agency means ferreting out the best possible path within the institutionally given constraints imposed by others, hyperagency means being able to construct a self and a world that transcends the established institutional limits and, in fact, create the limits for others*' (Schervish 1994 cited in Thompson, 2011 para 7 (numbered 1)).

Hence, rather than donating to existing causes, wealthy donors choose to '*produce new philanthropic organizations or new directions in existing ones'* (Schervish, 2007, p. 195).

5.3 Donor Constraints

Despite the increase in mega philanthropy depicted earlier in this chapter, The Sunday Times Giving List 2017 disclosed that many of the wealthiest people in Britain are failing to give either at or close to their capacity (CAF, 2018). Indeed, UHNWDs could give away less than one per cent of their wealth and still be ranked within the top half of the list of the top 200 UK donors. Tillotson concurs, revealing that whilst the private wealth of individuals in the UK totalled £1.5 trillion in 2015, philanthropic giving by the wealthy in the UK in 2015 amounted to £1.3 billion or '*a meagre 0.1% of total private wealth*' (2015, p. 4). More recently, Orlando Fraser, the Chair of the UK Charity Commission, observed that giving by the wealthiest was verging '*on shameful when compared with the generosity of poorer donors and volunteers'* and that '*not all of the top 1% were rising to the challenge of philanthropy'* (Hargrave, 2022 para 6).

There are numerous reasons to account for this failure by the wealthiest in society to give more generously. Callahan (2014) cited nine reasons:

a) Insufficient time.
b) Reputational concerns (exacerbated recently by the failure of Kids Co in the UK and the Oxfam scandal).
c) Deferred intention.
d) Concerns that visible philanthropy will lead to multiple requests for more money.
e) Too much choice.
f) Assets are not liquid.

g) Anxiety about their net wealth.

h) Waiting to accumulate more wealth.

i) Lack of empathy.

The constraints to giving identified by Callahan are not exhaustive. The researcher hypothesises that a lack of professional, philanthropic advice is also a factor. Only 20% of the UK's professional advisory firms offer a philanthropic advisory service to their clients, and whilst only 12% of the UK's wealthiest individuals receive such professional philanthropy advice *'their giving accounts for £770 million of the total £1.3 billion'* which equates to 58% (Tillotson, 2015, p. 4).

The question of why the wealthiest are not giving more and whether they can be supported to give more effectively is critically important.

6. The Significance of Philanthropy

With the advent of the 21st century, there has been a growing awareness that the world's most 'wicked' problems cannot be addressed by government or business alone; hence, philanthropy has increasingly been called upon to help solve such problems (Phillips & Jung, 2016). Indeed, as stated earlier in this chapter, commentators such as Schervish and Callahan have observed that many philanthropists share a '*strong sense of empowerment or hyperagency'* (D. Callahan, 2017, p. 59; Schervish 1994 cited in Thompson, 2011 para 7 (numbered 1)) as they seek to generate solutions to problems that are '*constructive and a better alternative'* (Laura Arnold cited in D. Callahan, 2017, p. 42). Although Melinda Gates cautions that '*the problems are so large and you know you're only a small piece of trying to figure this out'* (cited in D. Callahan, 2017, p. 42 & 43).

Nevertheless, the significance of philanthropy is not confined to its role in addressing 'wicked' problems. Following the global financial crisis in 2007, the onset of austerity has seen a significant escalation in wealth inequality, as private wealth has become concentrated in the hands of a few. Such widening income inequality has given rise to considerable challenges as widespread disparities in access to education, healthcare, and financial resources have widened the inequality gap even further, entailing substantial social costs.

Non-profits have experienced considerable challenges as they have been confronted by a harsher fiscal environment, which has led to a decline in their income whilst at the same time being faced with an ever-growing demand for their services (Greenhalgh, 2017). Indeed, in 2010, the UK Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government looked to the third sector to take a central role in the delivery of their 'Big Society' agenda (Cameron, 2010); in so doing, they clearly signalled the significance that they attached '*to the growth of charitable giving and philanthropy in building the Big Society'* (Pharoah, 2011, p. 66). Subsequently, Keidan observed that '*In an era of public austerity and private abundance, philanthropy has not only acted alongside government but has been encouraged by the state to assume a greater role through public policies such as tax breaks, match-funding schemes and giving campaigns*' (Keidan, 2014 para 4).

6.1 The Breadth of Philanthropy

The breadth and diversity of philanthropy is extensive; much of its diversity is derived from the fact that the funds philanthropists donate for the public good are their own. As such, they (and their foundations) are free from much of the regulation and, consequently, the constraints affecting the commercial or public sectors. Hence, philanthropists may choose how to direct their funding. It is this freedom of choice which lies at the centre of the philanthropic movement and from which it derives much of its potency (Davies, 2015), but it can also lead to controversy.

Collins and Flannery cite several examples of controversial gifts by philanthropists, including donations by the Koch brothers to non-profits that lobbied *'against corporate taxes and spread disinformation about climate change'* and donations by the Walton Family Foundation to non-profits whose agendas include seeking *'corporate and personal wealth protection policies including the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, and Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform, as well as the climate-change-denying Heartland Institute'.* They also highlight a donation made by Willis Johnson '*to pay for South Dakota to send its national guard troops to guard the border with Mexico'* and one by Dick Uihlein, who '*used his family foundation to contribute to non-profits that have been challenging the validity of the 2020 presidential election, including some organizations designated as hate groups'* (Collins & Flannery, 2022, p. 23).

However, one consequence of being free from the constraints of government funding is that philanthropists can provide challenge to governments and other bodies. They can also experiment with innovative approaches to problems (Davies, 2015), which governments may struggle to justify or get support for in a challenging fiscal environment. Moreover, many philanthropists chose to explore and fund emerging research that is too innovative to receive funding from sources that are more accountable; for example, Gordon and Betty Moore decided to fund research that advanced '*understanding of the world by asking new questions'* (Moore, 2018). Some commentators refer to this as *'risk philanthropy'* and others as *'moonshot philanthropy'* (Breeze, 2022).

At its best, philanthropy can help scale existing initiatives, innovate, challenge, and engender social change. However, *'social change is risky - it requires taking on high-risk, high-reward projects that might pay off in an outsized way, but that might totally fail'* (Buck, 2020 para 1). Such approaches may '*have a higher risk of failure, but the potential to be lasting and truly game-changing if they succeed'* (Buck, 2020 para 5).

At its worst, philanthropy can do the opposite by stifling innovation and causing harm.

6.2 New Models of Philanthropy

The customary model of philanthropy is one in which individual donors or foundations make grants to various charities. However, in recent years, a number of new models of philanthropy have emerged as major donors have sought to become more strategic in their giving (Fyffe, 2016) and, in doing so, have embraced a range of practices and models including venture philanthropy; strategic philanthropy, catalytic philanthropy and social impact investing. All of these models are derived from the view that '*simply handing out money does not achieve lasting or meaningful results'* (Buckley & Cairns, 2016).

Indeed, the approaches of many modern-day philanthropists are informed by their commercial expertise (Gordon, 2014) as they '*theorise that practices employed by the commercial sector are equally appropriate for and transferable to'* charities (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 14). Many such philanthropists seek to ensure that their gifts are outcomes-focused, that they will produce a discernible social return upon their investments, and that they are cost-effective (McGoey, 2012).

One instance of philanthropists utilising commercial approaches to inform their philanthropy is venture philanthropy, which is informed by the ideologies and strategies of venture capitalism. Venture philanthropists actively engage with the non-profits they are supporting, and in addition to providing funding, they will also offer strategic support and expertise. Moreover, they will seek to build the capacity of the non-profits they are supporting, emphasise performance and impact measurement and help them innovate and scale. An example of venture philanthropy is that of New Profit which was founded by Vanessa Kirsch in Boston in the late 1990s. Kirsch's premise was that by backing a few well-chosen non-profit ventures and providing them with '*programmatic support'* and '*growth capital'*, New Profit could help '*the most effective and innovative organisations … to scale their winning solutions'* (cited in D. Callahan, 2017, p. 197).

Philanthropists who hypothesise that they can reinvent philanthropy by utilising their private wealth and entrepreneurial skills to combat some of the world's most entrenched problems are sometimes referred to as Philanthrocapitalists (Bishop, 2007; Edwards, 2008). The term 'Philanthrocapitalism' was first employed in an article in The Economist in which the need for philanthropy to become '*more like … for-profit capital markets'* was articulated (The Economist, 2006). Later that same year, on 26th June, Warren Buffett made the most significant single philanthropic donation in history when he publicly gifted US$31 billion to The Gates Foundation alongside another US$6 billion to foundations bearing his children's and his former wife's names. Buffet's gift doubled the endowment of The Gates Foundation from US$31 billion to US$62 billion, allowing the foundation to both '*think big'* and '*go for it*,' for if such an '*approach works in making money, they reason, why wouldn't it work when it comes to giving the stuff away?*' (Bishop & Green, 2010, p. 3). President Bill Clinton posited that at *'its best, philanthrocapitalism reinforces and amplifies the time, money, skills, and gifts given every year by people who are not rich, and it informs and enhances government policies'* (Bishop & Green, 2010 loc 48).

The original exponents of philanthrocapitalism, Bishop and Green, referred to both macro and micro definitions of philanthrocapitalism (Philanthrocapitalism.net, 2018). At the micro level, philanthrocapitalists apply their commercial business skills and techniques to their philanthropic work; hence, they choose to *'be hands-on, bringing innovative ideas to scale by investing their time and energy'.* At a macro level, philanthrocapitalism encapsulates a 'win/win' approach to capitalism, by which it is hypothesised that one can do well by doing good. In this scenario, capitalism is perceived to work for the benefit of humankind, driving, as it does, '*innovation which tends to benefit everyone, sooner or later, through new products, higher quality and lower prices'* (Philanthrocapitalism.net, 2018).

6.3 Sunset Clauses

Many philanthropists have embraced *'giving while living'* (Bishop & Green, 2008; Gordon, 2014), with an increasing number of people applying *'sunset'* clauses to their foundations or giving vehicles. Sunset clauses impose a limited life span on a philanthropic vehicle (typically a foundation), requiring the fund to be spent by a specific date. Such clauses can act as a catalyst to ensure that a foundation focuses on '*sustainability'* to ensure that going forward, the beneficiaries will be self-reliant and '*no longer need you ... It helped us think about how people develop the power to solve their own problems'* (Ostrower, 2011, p. 12). An example of a foundation with a sunset clause is that of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which they have stipulated must be spent out and wound down within 20 years of their death (Mor & Vyas, 2017). The usual rationale for a sunset clause is to ensure that the donor intent is preserved. Still, other rationales include concerns that '*institutionalized philanthropy'* is *'bureaucratic and wasteful'* and that when particular problems are in urgent need of solutions, funds should be granted in a shorter time frame (Ostrower, 2011, p. 9).

7. Why Evidence Matters

The Hippocratic Oath, a vital tenant of medicine, underscores the critical importance of the ethical practice of medicine. The fundamental principle of "primum non nocere" or "first, do no harm" aligns closely with the ethos of Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) and Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). Masic et al. define Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) as '*the conscientious, explicit, judicious and reasonable use of modern, best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients'* (2008, p. 1). Similarly, Evidence-based Based Practice (EBP), which Oliver et al. explain is '*derived from evidence-based medicine (EBM)'* (2014, p. 1), is grounded in the belief '*that the best possible way to guarantee that something works is to scientifically prove that it works'*. Indeed, Tellings emphasises that '*it is not only desirable but'* it is also feasible *to* establish whether an intervention is both needed and effective (or not) (Tellings, 2017, p. 582).

At the core of both EBM and EBP is the evidence-based triad, which blends empirical research with clinical judgment and patients' values and preferences. The confluence of these three elements in informing medical decisions exemplifies a holistic approach to patient care. Such an approach can be adapted for complex social interventions, by amalgamating rigorous empirical research with practitioner wisdom, and beneficiary preferences. Such methods are crucial to ensure that when designing and implementing interventions they are not only effective but are also ethically and contextually appropriate.

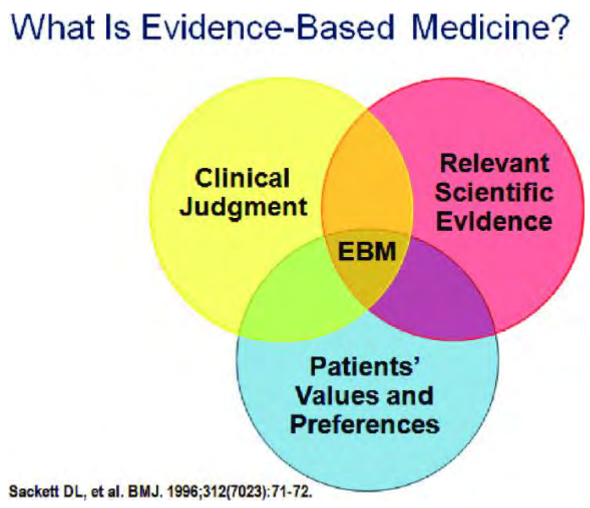


Figure 2. Venn Diagram Illustrating the Three Core Elements of Evidence-based Medicine (Sackett et al., 1996)

Unfortunately, such evidence-informed approaches have not always underpinned philanthropy; indeed, as Brest and Harvey point out, ‘hundreds of millions of philanthropic dollars are squandered through donations to organizations that have no impact whatsoever’ (Brest & Harvey, 2008). Consequently, not only have some programmes failed to achieve their intended impact, but some have also caused harm. For example, the ‘Scared Straight’ programme, which sought to deter at-risk youth from offending by taking them on organised visits to prisons, was found to increase future offending rates (Petrosino et al., 2013). Another example of a programme causing unintended harms was that of the DrumNet programme in Kenya, which encouraged and supported local farmers to switch from growing locally consumed crops to crops for export. Within two years, the programme had failed because the farmers' crops did not ‘*satisfy European export requirements’.* (Ashraf et al., 2009, p. 2).

Even when harm is avoided, a failure to consult high-quality evidence may result in other drawbacks. Possible shortcomings include funding programmes that are less effective than alternative initiatives addressing the same issue, thereby resulting in opportunity cost losses. Moreover, without an evidence-based approach, philanthropy risks inefficiency, ineffective decision-making, poor strategic planning, lack of accountability, stifled innovation, and inadequate support for systemic change. By not integrating diverse types of evidence, philanthropists may miss opportunities to maximise the impact of their efforts, leading to decisions that are neither well-rounded nor informed. This will be explored in more detail in Sub-section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2.

Hence, the researcher posits that philanthropy should be informed by the same evidence-based reasoning as EBM and EBP, for if donors wish their funding to be effective, they will need to utilise evidence to inform their decision-making. In reality, however, '*philanthropic donors are often misled by nature and by their instincts'* (Fiennes, 2016).

To recognise good programmes, it is theorised that donors need to employ robust scientific evidence and meticulous reasoning (Effective Altruism, 2018; Fiennes, 2016); this is known as evidence-based philanthropy (EBPh). Evidence-based philanthropy advocates the *'adoption and implementation of effective programs and relies heavily on science and evaluation to identify effective programs and to determine which programs are effective'* (Easterling & Main, 2016, p. 81). EBPh has its roots in EBM: *'which dates back at least to 1972, with Archie Cochrane's seminal work on effectiveness and Efficiency. Since the early 1970s, both practitioners and academics have also considered how policy – in the sense of larger-scale decisions about the delivery and management of services at a population level – could be based on or informed by evidence. For Cochrane and his heirs, the goal of EBM was to bring about the abandonment of harmful and ineffective interventions and the adoption of interventions shown to be effective for clinical outcomes'* (Oliver et al., 2014, p. 1).

The purpose of EBPh is to ensure that philanthropists make knowledgeable decisions and so enhance the impact of their philanthropy. EBPh is informed by an amalgamation of the philanthropist's expertise and preferences, scientific evidence, and stakeholder needs and so it requires philanthropists and funders to draw upon several different types of evidence.

EBPH encompasses:

- Evidence concerning the nature of the problem.

- Evidence examining proposed solutions to the problem, whether that solution works/is harmful or why it is hoped (if it is a pilot) that it will work.
- Evidence gathered from stakeholders and beneficiaries as to their perceptions vis-à-vis what is needed, what they want and will use – there may be a cultural context, which means a particular solution would not be applicable in a specific setting.
- Evidence as to what else is being done in that arena (Fiennes, 2016)

The types of evidence referred to above can be integrated into the framework of the evidence-based triad as illustrated below:

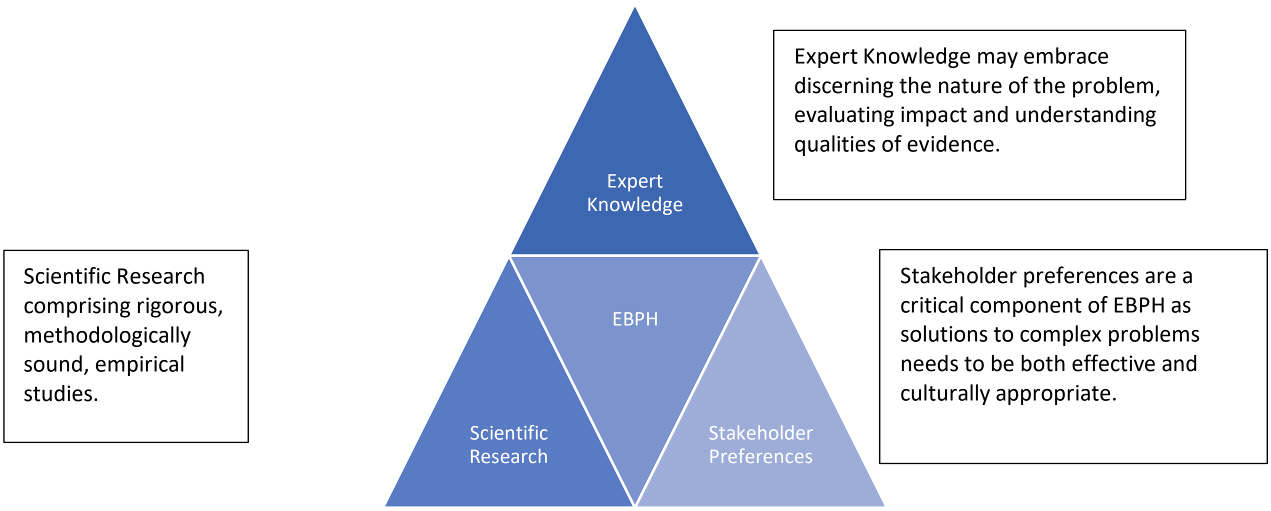


Figure 3. An Amalgamation of EBPH into the Evidence-Based Triad

Whether and how philanthropists utilise evidence will vary according to what is available to them, their ability to distinguish between different qualities of evidence, which evidence they perceive to be the most useful and their individual mindset. Cairney (2016) highlights that psychology will always impact decision-making and that it would be naïve to assume that decisions are made solely based on scientific evidence (2016). Ye et al. concur and discuss the numerous psychological mechanisms that drive donations, including empathy, guilt, and social networks. (Ye et al., 2022, p. 2).

As highlighted above, many factors may inhibit or encourage evidence use by philanthropists, some of which have been identified by the academic literature. One such factor is a donor's motivation, which can influence the extent to which they utilise evidence to inform their philanthropic decision-making. It is posited that donors seeking to have a measurable social impact are more likely to seek out and engage with rigorous, high-quality evidence than donors who are influenced by their personal experiences, beliefs or values (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014, Frumkin 2006). In a paper examining the social dynamics that underpin philanthropy, Ostrander finds that peer relationships and social networks shape philanthropic decision-making and influence the extent to which philanthropists engage with evidence. For philanthropists frequently seek the advice and validation of their peers, and hence, membership of networks that encourage evidence use can enhance its take up (Ostrander, 2007). The convenience and quality of evidence also affect the readiness with which philanthropists will engage with it (Brest & Harvey, 2018). As does the extent to which philanthropists trust the sources from which the evidence is derived further impacts its use or otherwise (Kearns, 1994; Schmitz et al., 2011).

Some commentators have noted a tension between funding bottom-up projects emerging from the community they serve and evidence-based projects. Many donors and foundations will favour one philosophy or the other, which can have implications for their strategy (Easterling & Main, 2016). However, a balanced approach is possible, as demonstrated by a recent study of The Colorado Trust Foundation (Easterling & Main, 2016) which found that '*a foundation can simultaneously accommodate a community-based philosophy and an* *evidence-based philosophy, … by according respect and discretion to community-based organizations and residents, while at the same time bringing new knowledge and evidence into community settings'* (2016, p. 87). The researcher posits that evidence-based approaches should encompass a rich tapestry of insights, including beneficiaries' lived experiences and needs. Employing participatory research methods such as interviews and focus groups ensure that the voices and lived experiences of beneficiaries inform understanding and action. Rigorous evidence and data gathering should not eliminate empathy or participation but rather should enhance them, providing a robust framework in which the dignity and wisdom of beneficiaries augment the impact of the collective work.

To conclude, evidence is crucial to enable us to recognise whether a programme or intervention is effective and to ensure that philanthropists, funders and non-profits are accountable to the communities and people they serve. There is also a practical and moral imperative *'for greater and better use of evidence to inform charitable programmes and how philanthropic capital is allocated'* (Kassatly, 2021 para 14).

7.1 Comparative Analysis of Evidence Use Across Philanthropy, Policy Making, and Clinical Practice

Philanthropists, policymakers, and clinicians all aim to maximise the impact of their decisions through evidence use, yet their decision-making contexts and influencing factors can differ significantly. Understanding these similarities and differences is crucial for enhancing strategic evidence use in philanthropy.

7.1.1 Similarities in Evidence Use:

Philanthropists, policymakers, and clinicians face the challenge of integrating diverse sources of evidence, such as empirical research, stakeholder feedback, and expert opinion, to make informed decisions. They all require clear objectives and measurable outcomes to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Strategic planning and rigorous evaluation are essential in all fields to avoid ineffective interventions and ensure optimal use of resources (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Brest & Harvey, 2008).

7.1.2 Differences in Decision-Making Contexts:

Autonomy and Accountability: Philanthropists often operate with greater autonomy and less bureaucratic oversight compared to policymakers and clinicians. This autonomy allows for more flexible and innovative approaches but can also result in less structured evidence use (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014). Policymakers must navigate political pressures and bureaucratic constraints, operating within ‘bounded rationality’, which limits the amount of information they can gather and forces them to make decisions quickly, often influencing the selection and use of evidence to support predetermined policies (Cairney, 2016a). Clinicians, guided by clinical guidelines and standards, balance empirical evidence with patient preferences and clinical judgment, aiming for patient-specific outcomes (Masic et al., 2008).

Motivations and Biases: Philanthropists' decisions are often driven by personal values, experiences, and motivations, introducing biases in evidence interpretation and use. Policymakers, while also influenced by personal and political biases, must align their decisions with broader governmental agendas, potentially leading to selective use of evidence to support these agendas (Fedorowicz & Aron, 2021)). Clinicians are motivated by the imperative to provide optimal patient care, balancing scientific evidence with individual patient needs and preferences (Engle. R. L. et al. 2019).

Power Dynamics: In philanthropy, donors' control and influence over funded organisations can shape how evidence is used. Ostrander (2007) notes that donor directives can diminish the role of on-the-ground knowledge from recipient organisations, impacting intervention effectiveness. Policymakers face power dynamics related to political hierarchies and the need to balance competing interests within the government. Clinicians experience power dynamics within healthcare hierarchies and must navigate guidelines, patient autonomy, and institutional policies (Oliver et al., 2017).

Access to Evidence: All groups face challenges in accessing high-quality, relevant evidence. Policymakers benefit from structured access to systematic reviews and research dissemination networks, often lacking in the relatively isolated efforts of individual philanthropists. Clinicians have access to peer-reviewed journals and clinical guidelines but must balance this with time constraints and practical application in clinical settings (Masic et al., 2008).

Conclusion: While philanthropists, policymakers, and clinicians aim to utilise evidence to enhance decision-making, the contexts in which they operate lead to distinct differences. Policymakers are often constrained by political agendas and bureaucratic processes, clinicians by clinical guidelines and patient-specific factors, whereas philanthropists enjoy greater autonomy but may be more susceptible to personal biases and power dynamics. Recognising these differences can help develop strategies to improve evidence use across all sectors, ensuring more effective and impactful outcomes.

7.2 What Constitutes Evidence?

Evidence has been defined as '*factual information used as proof to support a claim or belief*' (NSW Government, 2020 para 1) and as '*an argument or assertion backed up by information*' (Cairney, 2016, p. 3). Such information may include a wide variety of sources, including peer-reviewed articles and academic literature, analysis of statistics and data, conference presentations and papers and the grey literature (NSW Government, 2020, p. 1).

In the context of philanthropy, understanding the boundaries of decision-making is crucial for effectively leveraging evidence. This involves identifying and comprehending the various factors, constraints, and considerations that influence a philanthropist's decision on whether to support a particular non-profit or intervention. Section 7.3 (below) discusses the varying types and purposes of evidence, and their possible contributions to philanthropy.

Qualities and types of evidence vary in their rigour, value and their fitness for purpose (NSW Government, 2020). Greenhalgh (2010) presents a '*hierarchy of evidence*' (Figure 4 below), which positions randomised control trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews at the top of the pyramid and 'expert' opinions at the bottom. However, whether evidence is relevant and useful will depend in part upon the nature of the problem being addressed and the question being asked. Qualitative research, although situated close to the bottom of the hierarchy of evidence, may, in fact, *'be best placed to answer what and why something works'* (Greenhalgh, 2017).

Moreover, wherever evidence sits on the pyramid, it should still be '*assessed for quality, generalisability and applicability'* (NSW Government, 2020, p. 2). Critical appraisal tools such as CASP checklists can be employed to assess the quality of research papers and gauge their dependability, significance, and findings.

Figure 4. Hierarchy of evidence (Adapted from Greenhalgh, 2010)

Indeed, one of the challenges of utilising evidence is that different people perceive and interpret evidence in distinct ways (Rosqueta, 2014). This is borne out by Oliver and de Vocht (2015), who found that public health policymakers utilise '*a wide range of different sources to obtain information'* but indicated that they did not rely directly on research evidence. Oliver and de Vocht's survey of 123 policymakers identified the types of information that were most typically sought and relied upon and those considered most valuable. A summary of their findings is presented below (Oliver & de Vocht, 2015, p. 113):

Table 1. Types of Information or Evidence & Approximate Percentage of their Usage:

Type of Information or Evidence	**Deemed Most Useful (%)**	**Regularly Used (%)**
Local Data	80	95
Joint Needs Assessments	75	90
Practice Guidelines	Just over 60	90
Survey and Questionnaire Data	Circa 55	Circa 75
Public Health Surveillance Data	Circa 50	75
Qualitative Research Studies	Just over 60	Circa 50
Health Impact Assessments	Circa 60	Just under 60
Systematic Reviews	Just under 50	Circa 45
Experimental or Trial Data	Circa 30	Just over 20
Meta-Analyses	Circa 45	None

Observations and anomalies that are noted include the following:

- Local Data is highly regarded, with a majority deeming it useful and almost all respondents using it regularly. Despite the high perceived utility of Practice Guidelines, Joint Needs Assessments, and Survey and Questionnaire Data, they are all used regularly by a higher percentage than those who deem them *'most useful'*.
- Meta-analyses presented a significant anomaly. While deemed useful by nearly half of the respondents, none use them regularly, indicating a potential gap between perceived utility and practical application or accessibility.
- Experimental or Trial Data had the lowest regular usage compared to its perceived utility, suggesting challenges in its practical application or accessibility.

These observations underline the complexity of evidence use, highlighting discrepancies between perceived usefulness and regular usage.

Rosqueta recommends that we broaden our definition of high-quality or rigorous evidence, for regardless of the nature of the issue or intervention, triangulation of evidence from multiple sources will increase confidence in the findings (2014 para 14). Different categories and qualities of evidence will each have their own strengths and weaknesses. For instance, Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) may reveal definitive findings, but participant insights can provide valuable context and practical implications.

'For example, the results of a randomized control trial study may definitively show that use of a bed net reduces malaria or that a particular program increased graduation rates among a cohort of children at risk for dropping out. But it's the observations of a village grandmother

or community health worker that help us understand how to prevent people from using that bed net as a fishing net; it's the insight of a great teacher or counsellor that helps us recognize what a 9th-grade girl in East Palo Alto needs to succeed and how that might be different from what a 9th-grade boy in North Philly needs … And while the beneficiaries themselves may not know the latest metrics, policy trends, or strategic planning behind a particular nonprofit or funder's work, they are the ultimate authorities on whether a change created by a program represents a meaningful improvement in their lives' (Rosqueta, 2014 para 12).

Puddy and Wilkins emphasise that '*the best available research evidence enables researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to determine whether or not a prevention program, practice, or policy is actually achieving the outcomes it aims to and in the way it intends. The more rigorous a study's research design, (e.g., randomized control trials, quasi-experimental designs), the more compelling the research evidence*' (2011, p. 3). However, they caveat that other types and standards of evidence should also be considered and recommend including experiential evidence and contextual evidence as reflected in their framework below:

Figure 5. A Framework for Thinking About Evidence

The Centre for High Impact Philanthropy recommends a hybrid approach to capturing the best evidence and posits that information should be sought from the three 'circles of evidence':

1. Research of Scientific Evidence
2. Evidence derived from the field and
3. Informed opinion

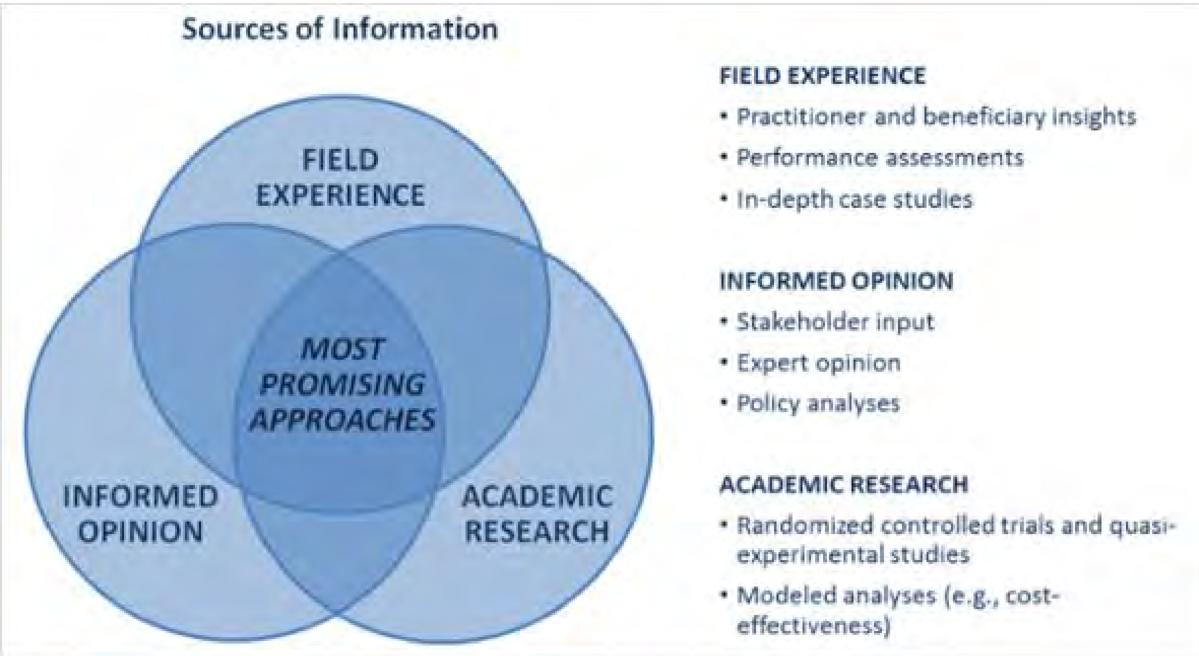


Figure 6. Centre for High Impact Philanthropy (Rosqueta, 2014 para 11)

7.3 Types of Evidence, Their Different Roles, and Possible Contributions to Philanthropy

Evidence-based philanthropy (EBPh) involves utilising various types of evidence to inform decision-making processes. The types of evidence that philanthropists, funders and non-profit staff may employ include empirical research, qualitative data, expert opinion, and stakeholder feedback. Each type of evidence plays a unique role and contributes differently to philanthropy, beyond just avoiding harm caused by ineffective programmes and interventions.

7.3.1 Types of Evidence

1. **Empirical Research**: This includes quantitative studies, randomised controlled trials (RCTs), meta-analyses, and systematic reviews. Such evidence is critical for establishing the effectiveness of interventions and providing robust data that can be generalised across similar contexts. It helps philanthropists understand which programmes have been proven to work and under what conditions.
2. **Qualitative Data**: This encompasses case studies, interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic research. Qualitative evidence can facilitate deeper insights into the experiences, needs, and preferences of beneficiaries. By capturing the lived experiences of beneficiaries, qualitative data ensures that interventions are contextually relevant and tailored to the specific circumstances of the target group. It adds context to quantitative findings, helping researchers and philanthropists understand why and how interventions work or fail, and ensuring that programmes are designed and implemented in a way that resonates with and effectively addresses the real-world challenges faced by beneficiaries.

3. **Expert Opinion**: Insights from practitioners, academics, and other experts can guide philanthropists by providing informed perspectives on complex issues. This type of evidence is especially useful when empirical data is scarce or when navigating new and emerging fields.
4. **Stakeholder Feedback**: Input from beneficiaries, community members, and other stakeholders ensures that the interventions are culturally appropriate and address actual needs. This type of evidence is crucial for aligning philanthropic efforts with the priorities of those being served.

7.3.1 Roles and Contributions to Philanthropy

1. **Avoiding Harm and Ensuring Effectiveness**: As highlighted by the Scared Straight programme example, utilising evidence can prevent harm caused by well-intentioned but ineffective interventions. Empirical research and systematic reviews are particularly valuable in this role, as they provide rigorous proof of what works and what does not.
2. **Informed Decision-Making**: Evidence enables philanthropists to make better informed decisions about which programmes to fund. This includes not only delivery programmes but also research initiatives, capacity-building efforts, and policy advocacy. By examining a broad spectrum of evidence, philanthropists can identify the most promising opportunities for impact.
3. **Strategic Planning**: Different types of evidence contribute to strategic planning by offering insights into both the macro and micro factors affecting a given issue. For

example, quantitative data can highlight broad trends, while qualitative research can uncover specific barriers and facilitators within communities.

4. **Enhancing Accountability**: Evidence ensures that philanthropists remain accountable to their stakeholders. It provides a transparent basis for evaluating the success of funded initiatives and for making adjustments as needed. This accountability builds trust and strengthens relationships with beneficiaries and partners.
5. **Promoting Innovation**: By funding research and pilot projects, philanthropists can use evidence to explore innovative solutions. Qualitative insights and expert opinions often pave the way for new approaches that are later validated through empirical research.
6. **Supporting Systemic Change**: Evidence can also be leveraged to support systemic change. For example, funding advocacy efforts and policy research can lead to broader societal impacts beyond the immediate outcomes of individual programmes. Stakeholder feedback and qualitative data are essential in understanding and addressing the root causes of issues.

7.3.2 Types of Decisions Informed by Evidence

1. **Selection of Programmes to Fund**: This involves assessing the evidence on the effectiveness of various interventions to determine which ones to support.
2. **Funding Research and Innovation**: Decisions about investing in new research, pilot projects, and innovative solutions rely on evidence to gauge potential impact and feasibility.

3. **Policy and Advocacy**: Evidence is used to identify and support advocacy efforts that can lead to systemic changes and long-term solutions.
4. **Capacity Building**: Determining the best approaches to strengthen organisations and communities often requires evidence on effective training, leadership development, and resource allocation.
5. **Evaluation and Improvement**: Ongoing assessment of funded initiatives ensures continuous improvement and adaptation based on the latest evidence.

In conclusion, a comprehensive approach to evidence use in philanthropy not only avoids harm but also maximises the impact of philanthropic efforts. By integrating multiple types of evidence, philanthropists can make well-rounded, informed decisions that address both immediate needs and long-term goals.

7.4 Synergies between Evidence-Based Policy Making and Evidence-Based Philanthropy

A review of the extant literature revealed many synergies and alignments between evidence-based policymaking and evidence-based philanthropy. In their 2014 paper, Oliver et al. identified multiple barriers to evidence use by policymakers, including '*the importance of personal relationships and contacts between decision-makers and researchers, and the need for research to be clearly and accessibly presented'* (2014 p.2). They also observed that policy was determined '*as much by the decision-making context (and other influences) as by research evidence'* (Oliver et al. 2014). This challenge is further highlighted by Cairney (2016) with reference to policymaking, as he discusses the psychological influences on the decision-making process. Cairney argues that psychology will always impact decision-making and that it is naïve to assume that decisions are ever made purely on the basis of scientific evidence.

These findings reflect the difficulties experienced by philanthropists seeking to make evidence-informed decisions. They must navigate their own biases and the influence of their social networks and peers, as well as identify and understand high-quality and relevant evidence.

Like Fiennes (2016), Oliver et al. (2014) stress the need to understand the different types of evidence informing policymaking and the roles such evidence plays, requiring philanthropists to employ a structured approach to ensure that they engage with the many diverse types of evidence effectively.

Another principle that evidence-based policymaking shares with evidence-based philanthropy is transparency, which is critical for accountability and trust (Oliver et al. 2017).

To conclude, both evidence-based policymaking and evidence-based philanthropy are aligned in their views that each field would benefit from amalgamating rigorous empirical evidence, contextual insights and transparency into their decision-making processes. Such integration will augment the impact of the programmes and interventions being funded and enable policymakers and donors to be more accountable to the communities they serve.

7.5 The Emergence of Professional Intermediaries

Alongside a resurgence of interest in and enthusiasm for philanthropy, a host of organisations have sprung up, including consultancies, private banks, and rating agencies that offer advice and services to philanthropists. These organisations may help philanthropists navigate the challenges of making evidence-informed decisions by providing expert guidance, comprehensive evaluations, and reliable information on the effectiveness of various initiatives.

To date, very little research has been conducted into the effectiveness of such organisations; consequently, in choosing an advisor, philanthropists may be subjected to the same pitfalls as those they are seeking to avoid by engaging an advisor in the first place.

In both the UK and the US, private banks such as J. P. Morgan and Barclays Private Bank offer philanthropic advice to private clients. Numerous consultancies have also sprung up across the globe seeking to advise wealthy philanthropists on achieving impact within their philanthropic endeavours. In the UK, New Philanthropy Capital was founded by Peter Wheeler and Gavin Davies in 2002, with '*a mission to direct more funding to effective charities and help donors make better decisions on how to* give' (Loader Wilkinson, 2009). In the US, Geneva Global offers practical and strategic philanthropic advice to major donors. The King Baudouin Foundation, located in Belgium, educates and guides philanthropists on giving practices through its Centre for Philanthropy (Loader Wilkinson, 2009).

Numerous rating agencies have also materialised over the last two decades; such agencies typically rank charities according to their financial health and their accountability and transparency; however, they do not consider outcomes or results when ranking charities. Some of these rating agencies are hugely influential; the largest in the US is Charity Navigator, which has evaluated more than 9000 US charities and, in 2017, recorded more than 11 million visits to its website (Charity Navigator, 2018). Potential problems arise when evaluating charities according to their financial health and accounts because this focuses solely on their '*financial position and financial performance. In isolation this information does not give the user a rounded overview of what has been achieved from the charity's activities and the resources used in their delivery'* (Charity Commission, 2015).

8. The Purpose of this Research

The charity sector is facing enormous challenges as it deals with an economic climate that puts its income under pressure whilst facing increasing demands to deliver results to vulnerable people. These challenges have been amplified following the pandemic, which, in addition to being a global health emergency, has had far-reaching consequences for the most vulnerable in society, including low-income people and families, the elderly, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, refugees and children. Each of these vulnerable groups is more likely to depend on support from public services, but because of the strain those services are under following the pandemic, many of these individuals are at risk of not having their needs met. Consequently, '*philanthropy and philanthropists play an important role in funding civil society's response to the current pandemic, as well as many other challenges'* (Dr Maximillian Martin cited in B. Breeze, 2020, p. 3).

Considering these challenges, the rise in elite philanthropy and, in particular, donations by UHNWI philanthropists are both significant and of particular interest to charities and policymakers. Consequently, how the wealthy practice philanthropy and how they utilise evidence in their decision-making is a crucial question which needs to be explored, particularly in light of concerns that philanthropy is increasingly seen as plutocratic, '*meaning that it is economic elites who are dominating the field through the sheer scale of their giving'* (Glucksberg & Russell-Prywata, 2022, p. 3).

Throughout this thesis, we use the term *'elite philanthropy'* to refer to major giving enacted by high and ultra-high-net-worth individuals as employed by both Ostrower (1995) and Glucksberg & Russell-Prywata (2022).

Earlier in this introduction, it was disclosed that healthcare and public policy typically utilise an evidence-based approach, but that evidence-based decision-making is not yet firmly embedded within philanthropy. Indeed, whilst *'there is a rapidly growing empirical evidence base on barriers and facilitators of evidence use'* within public policy-making (Oliver & de Vocht, 2015, p. 2), no such evidence base exists concerning the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists to inform their decision-making.

High-quality evidence is essential to a vibrant nonprofit sector, but the researcher theorises that a general lack of understanding of how to generate, analyse and use evidence undermines and inhibits philanthropic giving.

To date, whilst there has been some excellent research conducted into the motivations of HNWD and UHNWDs, which has found that many new philanthropists place a great emphasis on the need to rigorously assess the impact of their giving (Bishop & Green, 2015; Breeze, 2014; Edwards, 2002). Nevertheless, we only have a '*poor understanding of giving by high net worth and ultra-high net worth individuals in the UK…'* (Pharoah, 2023 para 2) and furthermore, very little research has been conducted into how philanthropists use evidence to help inform their philanthropy, the quality of the evidence they utilise and how they measure the performance of the charities to which they are donating. The use of high-quality evidence is vital if the aim of these philanthrocapitalists to maximise their social impact is to be realised.

The researcher proposes to address this gap in the research and to strengthen the evidence base by conducting a qualitative study of a number of HNWI and UHNWI philanthropists, with a view to ascertaining:

- Whether they utilise evidence in their decision-making.
- Their perception of what constitutes evidence.
- Their understanding of high and low-quality evidence and whether they seek to differentiate between them.
- How they utilise evidence in reaching decisions about whether to fund a particular charity
- What other factors impact their decisions, and how do they measure success in their giving?

The researcher hopes that her findings will augment our knowledge and comprehension concerning how best to enhance the impact of philanthropic funding.

8.1 Contributions of this Research

This study makes significant contributions across several areas:

- **Empirical Contribution**: By conducting a qualitative study of HNWI and UHNWI philanthropists, this thesis affords empirical insights into how these individuals engaged with and employed evidence in their philanthropic decision-making processes.

- **Theoretical Contribution**: The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of the complex and nuanced interplay between trust, relationships, and evidence use in philanthropic decision-making, augmenting the extant literature.

- **Practical Contribution**: The research makes practical recommendations and contributes strategies that can bridge the gap between current practices and a more evidence-informed philanthropic future.

9. Thesis Structure and Chapter Overview

This thesis is structured to systematically explore the methodologies, findings, and implications of the research undertaken. The chapters are organised as follows:

- **Chapter 2**: Methodology
- **Chapter 3**: Findings of a systematic review conducted in 2019
- **Chapter 4**: Qualitative research findings (Paper 1)
- **Chapter 5**: Qualitative research findings (Paper 2)
- **Chapter 6**: Discussion
- **Chapter 7**: Conclusion

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to examine if and how philanthropists engaged with and utilised evidence, when reaching a decision about whether to fund a non-profit.

The researcher sought to understand how philanthropists engaged with evidence, their perceptions of what constitutes evidence and any other factors influencing their decision to make a donation. The research comprised two distinct elements: secondary data analysis, encompassing a systematic review, and primary research. The primary research was informed by the systematic review findings and utilised semi-structured interviews with philanthropists to gain detailed insights into their giving strategies, perceptions of evidence, methods for measuring success in their giving, and other factors influencing their decision-making process.

This chapter commences by stating the research questions and then proceeds with a description of the researcher's background and research philosophy, an explanation of the research paradigm and theoretical constructs underpinning the research, the research design, justification of the population and sampling strategy, an explanation of the methods employed for data collection, an account of the data analysis methods employed and a consideration of the methodological limitations.

2. Research Question for the Systematic Review (Secondary Analysis)

I. What are the barriers to and the facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists?'

3. Research Questions for the Qualitative Research (Primary Analysis)

I. **Engagement with Evidence**: Do philanthropists engage with evidence and if so, how?

II. **Barriers and Facilitators**: What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?

III. **Impact of Trust and Relationships**: To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?

4. Research Philosophy: Researcher Background and Context

The researcher is a white, middle-aged female. She is a part-time doctoral candidate with the Third Sector Research Centre within the College of Social Sciences, at the University of Birmingham. She studied law as an undergraduate and her LLM focused on disability discrimination; she moved into the third sector upon graduating. Her professional background is in the Third Sector; she has served as Director of Development for two mid-sized charities. Moreover, she has served on three charity boards; sat on numerous advisory panels and was a Pilotlighter (Pilotlight brings together professionals to coach charity leaders and their board through the strategic challenges they face - https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/what-is-pilotlight) - indicating a strong and long-term commitment to the third sector. She is currently the executive director of a consultancy working with funders and non-profits to strengthen their collective impact by working collaboratively. She believes in working with funders and charities to utilise research and employ evidence-based interventions to identify sustainable and innovative solutions that are both impactful and scalable. She has both a practical and academic interest in trends in philanthropic giving and in particular how donors engage with philanthropy and conceptualise and measure the effectiveness of their giving. The researcher's background is pertinent because it was the motivation for and informed and influenced her research.

It is recognised that 'all research will be influenced by the researcher and that there is no completely neutral or objective knowledge. As such it is important that researchers themselves reflect on potential sources of bias and report on these.' (Ritchie et al. 2014 pp. 22-23. Hence, there is a requirement for researchers themselves to reflect on their potential sources of bias and to give an account of them. The researcher acknowledges that her background and in particular her professional experience is relevant because they contributed to her motivation to undertake this thesis and informed and influenced her research.

The researcher acknowledges her role as an insider and the limitations and potential bias that this posed. Being known to the first group of participants may have created a bias in the sample and affected the diversity of participants. This familiarity could have influenced participants' responses, as they might have felt more inclined to provide positive feedback or align their answers with what they perceived the researcher wanted to hear. However, gaining access to elites is recognised as being extremely difficult, the researcher therefore maintains that she was justified in utilising convenience sampling for her thesis. Indeed, according to Mikecz, 'the success of interviewing elites' hinges on the researcher's knowledgeability of the interviewee's life history and background. It enhances the researcher's positionality and decreases the status imbalance between researcher and researched' (2012, p. 482). To mitigate potential biases, the researcher ensured that subsequent groups of participants were not personally known to her, thereby enhancing the diversity and reliability of the sample. Additionally, measures were taken to maintain objectivity, such as using anonymised data and having an independent researcher review the findings.

Reflecting on her professional experience as Director of Development at a large NHS hospital charity, the researcher was frequently asked by different funders of the same program to provide different measures of impact. However, she was rarely asked what the intended impact was or how it was measured. Instead, she had to capture evidence to satisfy the funders' ideas of impact. This prompted her to pursue an MSc in Evidence-Based Social Interventions and Policy Evaluation at the University of Oxford, which shaped her approach to research and evaluation. This experience underlines the importance of understanding and addressing potential biases in research, ensuring that the findings are comprehensive and accurately reflect the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

5. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm describes the way in which the researcher sees the world and the beliefs that the researcher holds which inform the researcher's world view. It is the '*conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed*' (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 26). As such, *'no inquirer ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach'* (Guba and Lincoln cited in Pickard, 2013, p. 5). This is because the philosophical approach of the researcher will inform their methodology and indeed may inform their research question in the first instance (Vanson, 2014).

A research paradigm comprises three elements:

- epistemology
- ontology and
- methodology

5.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge; it focuses on the relationship between the knower and the known. Epistemology requires us to examine how we derive our knowledge, how and when we come to know something and obliges us '*to concern ourselves with the general ways by which 'realities' are taken as 'known' in human societies'* (Berger & Luckmann, 1991 p.15).

The researcher adopts the perspective of a social constructivist and a subtle realist. As such, the researcher acknowledges the need for subjective insights whilst taking account of the underlying reality but also holds the view that both knowledge and reality arise out of an amalgamation of social, cultural and historical practices, exchanges and interactions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Schwandt, 2000). For knowledge is constantly evolving as '*people actively construct … their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner*' (Elliott, 2000, p. 256); it is the manner in which knowledge is composed and comprehended that is of interest to the social constructivist for they hold the view that '*reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed'* (Schwandt 2000 cited in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008) and that society can be considered to be '*a subjective and objective reality'* (Andrews, 2012 para 1). The belief that knowledge is derived from the *'interactions of individuals within society'* underpins social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1991 cited in Andrews, 2012 para 7). As such, social constructionism is not incompatible with subtle realism for '*one can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered and yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world…'* (Andrews, 2012 para 6).

Subtle realists recognise the need for subjective insights which allow the underlying reality to be acknowledged and to be taken account of. They insist that *'phenomena are independent but that knowledge of them is always constructed by the inquirer…'* (Hammersley, n. d. para 1).

The researcher is not alone in believing that realism and social constructionism are not mutually exclusive for one '*can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world. This is consistent with the idea of Berger and Luckmann (1991) and the subtle realism of Hammersley (1992), in that reality is socially defined but this reality refers to the subjective experience of everyday life, how the world is understood rather than to the objective reality of the natural world'* (Andrews, 2012, p. 40).

5.2 Ontology

Ontology asks the question 'what is the nature of reality?' Hence, ontology relates to the 'nature of social entities' and as such requires *'researchers to consider their own ontological position namely, how they perceive the nature of their existence'* (Vanson, 2014).

There are four key alternative paradigms within ontology: Pragmatism, Positivism, Post-positivism and Interpretivism.

Pragmatists seek to gain a realistic understanding of material real-world issues (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020; Weaver, 2018) and as such take a *'what-works'* approach to research; deciding which methods are most appropriate *'in terms of carrying us from the world of practice to the world of theory and vice-versa*' (Kelemen, 2012 p.1 cited in Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020 para 3). Pragmatism lends itself to quantitative research but can also underpin a mixed methods approach.

Positivists are also known as realists; they believe in a perceptible 'social reality' which endures regardless of who constructed that reality. (Lincoln and Guba cited in Pickard, 2013, p. 7) give the example of water which '*remains water whether someone is swimming in it or not'*. In the main, positivists tend to employ quantitative research methods.

Post-positivists (who are sometimes referred to as critical realists), are of the opinion that their belief in a social reality will be constrained by limitations in uncovering its nature, due to the unreliability of humans (Pickard, 2013). Like pragmatism, post-positivism also lends itself to a mixed methods approach.

Interpretivists or alternatively relativists, believe in the existence of 'multiple constructed realities' which are dependent on and determined by the social contexts which give rise to them. Interpretivists take a subjective view that considers '*the multiple and varied perspectives of what may be real'* (Ryan, 2018, p. 43) and that '*access to reality happens through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings and instruments'* (Myers 2008 cited in Nickerson, 2022 para 1). Consequently, people's perceptions of reality will differ according to the context, their own perceptions and experience and over periods of time (Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited in Pickard, 2013, p. 7); hence interpretivists favour qualitative research methods which facilitate more in-depth understanding of the respondents.

The research paradigm employed by the researcher is that of interpretivism. As such, *'the results of the investigation are a product of interaction between the subject and the* *investigator. What can be known is a result of the interaction'* (Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited in Pickard, 2013, p. 7).

Interpretive methodologies are usually inductive and normally employ qualitative methods underpinned by, '*questioning and observation in order to discover or generate a rich and deep understanding of the phenomenon being investigated'* (Helm, 2022 para 2).

5.3 Methodology

The researcher conducted both secondary and primary research.

The secondary research comprised a systematic review conducted in 2019. In the first instance, the researcher formulated and published a protocol (dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.wbsfane) which defined the search and inclusion criteria; the sample population; the primary outcomes sought; the method of data extraction; quality appraisal and the mechanisms for data synthesis utilised. The systematic review applied both PRISMA and GRADE-CERqual parameters.

Systematic reviews are often perceived to be a positivist instrument in part because they are designed in a highly structured way. Nevertheless, the researcher posits that despite the review's seemingly structured and dispassionate appearance the process of reviewing is dependent upon and is characterised by interpretative and subjective judgments (such as the choice of PICO - population, intervention, comparison and outcome) which determine the outcomes. Such subtle and nuanced methods recognise that whilst systematic reviews seek to contribute comprehensive and unbiased scrutiny, the inevitable partiality that determines the extent and boundaries of the review, may also have a bearing on how the findings are construed. Hence the researcher believes that the systematic review merges positivist rigour with interpretivist insights.

For the primary research, the researcher employed in-depth qualitative research methods designed to '*generate knowledge grounded in human experience'* (Sandelowski, 2004 cited in Nowell et al., 2017b, p. 1); enabling her to obtain a detailed understanding of participants' giving strategies and approaches and the factors influencing their decisions, as well as the mechanisms they employed in order to measure the success of their giving. Such an understanding was of great importance, given the need to elucidate the participants' own perspectives and the under-researched nature of the area.

6. Conceptual Framework

According to (van der Waldt, 2020), conceptual frameworks can be defined as cognitive structures that include various '*dimensions of the research process'*, including the researcher's pre-existing knowledge and interests, the literature review, theoretical foundations, research techniques, data analysis, and research findings. The conceptual framework underpinning this study was informed by the systematic review and provided a solid foundation and a guiding framework. It elucidates the rationale behind and the significance of the research.

6.1 Conceptual Model of Barriers and Facilitators for Use of Evidence by Philanthropists

The researcher developed two evidence-based conceptual models of the multiple factors that serve to act as barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists (Figures 7 and 8). The models were derived from the systematic review and further informed by the primary research. Factors that promoted and moderated the use of evidence by philanthropists were identified in the systematic review.

Figure 7 Conceptual Model of Factors Moderating Evidence Use by Philanthropists

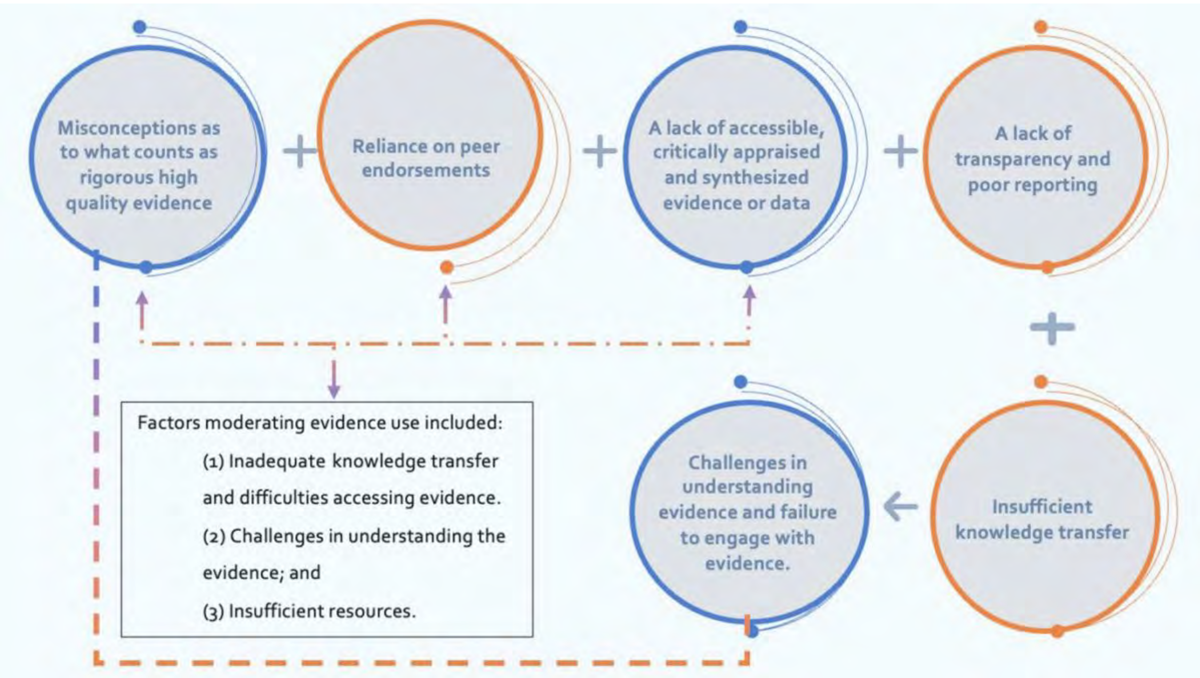
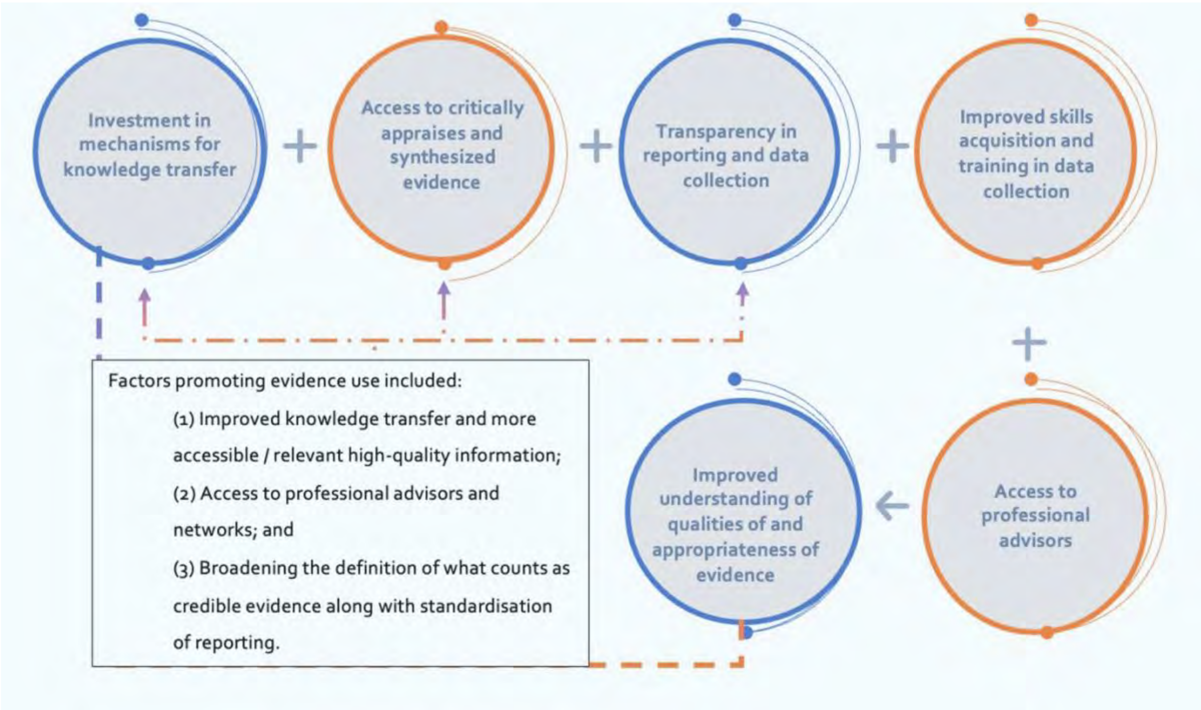


Figure 8 Conceptual Model of Factors Promoting Evidence Use by Philanthropists



7. Theoretical Framework

7.1 Introduction to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework served as a road map for this research, encompassing pre-existing information and previously developed concepts regarding intricate phenomena, the researcher's epistemological orientations, and a systematic and analytical methodology (Collins & Stockton, 2018, p. 2). It reflects the researcher's nuanced understanding of knowledge and its subjective and reflexive nature (Collins & Stockton, 2018; Lysaght, 2011).

Given the scant literature on the decision-making processes of HNWIs and UHNWIs in philanthropy, this research adopted an inductive approach. This aligned with the exploratory nature of qualitative research methodologies and allowed for emergent theories to take shape during data analysis.

7.2 Social Capital Theory as the Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) serves as the primary theoretical framework for this research, providing a foundation to explore how social networks, trust, and relationships influence philanthropic decision-making. This theory is particularly pertinent in understanding how elite participants' behaviours and experiences are shaped by their social context and the perceived social standing of themselves and their peers (Pawson & Tilley, 1997).

This section details how Social Capital Theory informs the research methodology.

7.2.1 Elements of Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory is composed of several key elements:

- **Social Networks**: These networks enhance bonds between individuals and organisations, thereby fostering trust (Chapman et al., 2019; Scharf & Smith, 2016). Indeed, 'associational relationships are key to gifts of money for both religious and secular causes; they increase connections and embed individuals in relationships wherein one is more likely to be asked to give. At the same time, one’s belief in the system and regard for others increases gifts of money for secular causes and gifts of time’ Brown & Ferris (2007, p.94).

- **Trust and Reciprocity**: Trust and the expectation of reciprocal actions reinforce social ties within networks (Brown & Ferris, 2007).
- **Shared Norms and Values**: Common norms and values guide behaviour within a social network, promoting cohesion and mutual understanding (Brown & Ferris, 2007).

7.2.2 Application to Research Design

While this study does not employ a formal social network analysis, Social Capital Theory significantly informs both the research design and the interpretation of the qualitative data collected. The methodology is designed to deepen our understanding of the role of professional networks and trust in philanthropic decision-making.

By applying the lens of Social Capital Theory, the researcher can better comprehend how social capital and membership in social networks influence the use of evidence by philanthropists. This theoretical framework allows for an exploration of both the enhancing and hindering effects of social capital on evidence-based decision-making in philanthropy. For, ‘Social capital, the networks of community and the norms of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action, seems likely to play an important role in eliciting philanthropic behaviour from individuals in a community’ (Brown & Ferris 2007, p.86).

7.2.3 Detailed Insights from Social Capital Theory

1. **Influence on Evidence Engagement**:
    - **Research Question**: Do philanthropists engage with evidence, and if so, how?
    - **Theory Application**: It is hypothesised that social networks and the mutual trust within these networks significantly influence the degree to which philanthropists engage with and rely upon evidence. The decision-making process is often shaped by personal networks and trust, potentially at the expense of systematic evidence-based approaches. Additionally, trusting relationships with evidence producers may facilitate the uptake and acceptance of evidence.

2. **Barriers and Facilitators to Evidence Use**:
    - **Research Question**: What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?
    - **Theory Application**: Barriers may include a lack of trust in evidence sources and insufficient social networks, while facilitators could be stronger relationships between philanthropists and evidence providers.

3. **Impact of Trust and Relationships on Giving Decisions**:
    - **Research Question**: To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?

- **Theory Application**: Trust and relationships are theorised to be critical components of philanthropic decision-making, influencing the acceptance and integration of evidence into philanthropic practices. Trust in philanthropy is multifaceted, depending on transparency, accountability, personal interactions, and reciprocity.

7.3 Theoretical Contribution

The principal theoretical contribution of this research is the application of Social Capital Theory to evidence-informed philanthropic decision-making. By employing this theory, the research aims to enhance the understanding of how social networks, trust, and relationships shape the use of evidence in philanthropic decision-making.

7.3.1 Data Collection

The methods employed for data collection were apprised by the factors underpinning Social Capital Theory and so comprised semi-structured interviews informed by a topic guide designed to examine the roles of trust, reciprocity and shared values and norms within the social networks that the participants were part of.

7.3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis was informed by Social Capital Theory:

- The researcher utilised thematic Analysis to identify themes relating to trust and relationships which arose in the interview transcripts.

- The researcher utilised multiple data sources including the systematic review, the findings of the qualitative study and the extant literature to triangulate the data and so enhance the validity of the study.

7.3.3 Addressing the Research Questions

- **Do philanthropists engage with evidence and if so, how?**

  Utilising Social Capital Theory enabled the researcher to examine how social networks enabled or hindered evidence use by philanthropists.

- **What are the barriers to, and facilitators of evidence use by philanthropists?**

  The application of social network analysis to the data revealed that trust and relationships can serve to both obstruct and promote evidence use by philanthropists.

- **To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?**

  Applying Social Capital Theory enabled the researcher to examine the impact of trust and relationships and of social networks upon the way in which philanthropists engaged with evidence in their philanthropic practice.

7.4 Adapting Breeze's Framework

The researcher also borrowed from a theory developed by Breeze as a framework for the giving decisions of donors, in which she (Breeze, 2013a) theorises that normative assumptions (which are portrayed as actions that are deliberate, logical and rational) about rational choice, fail to capture the complexity of donor decision-making . Consequently, donors utilise stratagems to manage the decision-making process and to overcome *the ever-present limitations of information, cognitive ability and time'* (Breeze, 2013a, p. 179).

The researcher of this study sought to understand the extent to which philanthropists employed evidence to help them to decide whether to fund a non-profit and hence theories of decision making could enable '*greater insight into the processes behind donor's decision making'* and in so doing, further our understanding as to how to influence philanthropists to utilise evidence in their decision making. However, the extant literature contains little research on the decision-making mechanisms employed by philanthropists, hence it was apposite to take an inductive approach so allowing themes and theory to materialise from the data.

8. Research Design

The objective of this empirical study was to explore if and how HNWDs and UHNWDs engaged with and utilised evidence when reaching a decision about whether to fund a non-profit. The researcher sought to understand how philanthropists engaged with evidence, what their perception is of what constitutes evidence and any other factors that might impact upon their decision. Finally, she also sought to know how they measured success in their giving.

The researcher theorised that the practice and impact of philanthropy would be considerably improved if such philanthropy was informed by the use of evidence-based research. Consequently, ahead of conducting the qualitative research examining the experiences of philanthropists, the researcher performed a systematic review which sought to identify, evaluate and synthesise appropriate, rigorous research, examining factors which serve to act as barriers to or facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists. The primary objective of the systematic review was to identify limiting and promoting factors regarding the use of evidence by philanthropists and to rigorously evaluate existing research on this issue. Thematic analysis was employed to integrate the data, in which the main findings and theories were extrapolated and then ordered as either barriers or facilitators to form a narrative synthesis.

Following publication of the systematic review in 2020, the researcher undertook a qualitative study involving 17 high-net-worth individual (HNWI) philanthropists, aiming to understand their engagement with evidence. The study employed qualitative research methods as such designs enabled the researcher to better understand how people '*interpret their experiences, … construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences'* (Merriam, 2016, p. 6).

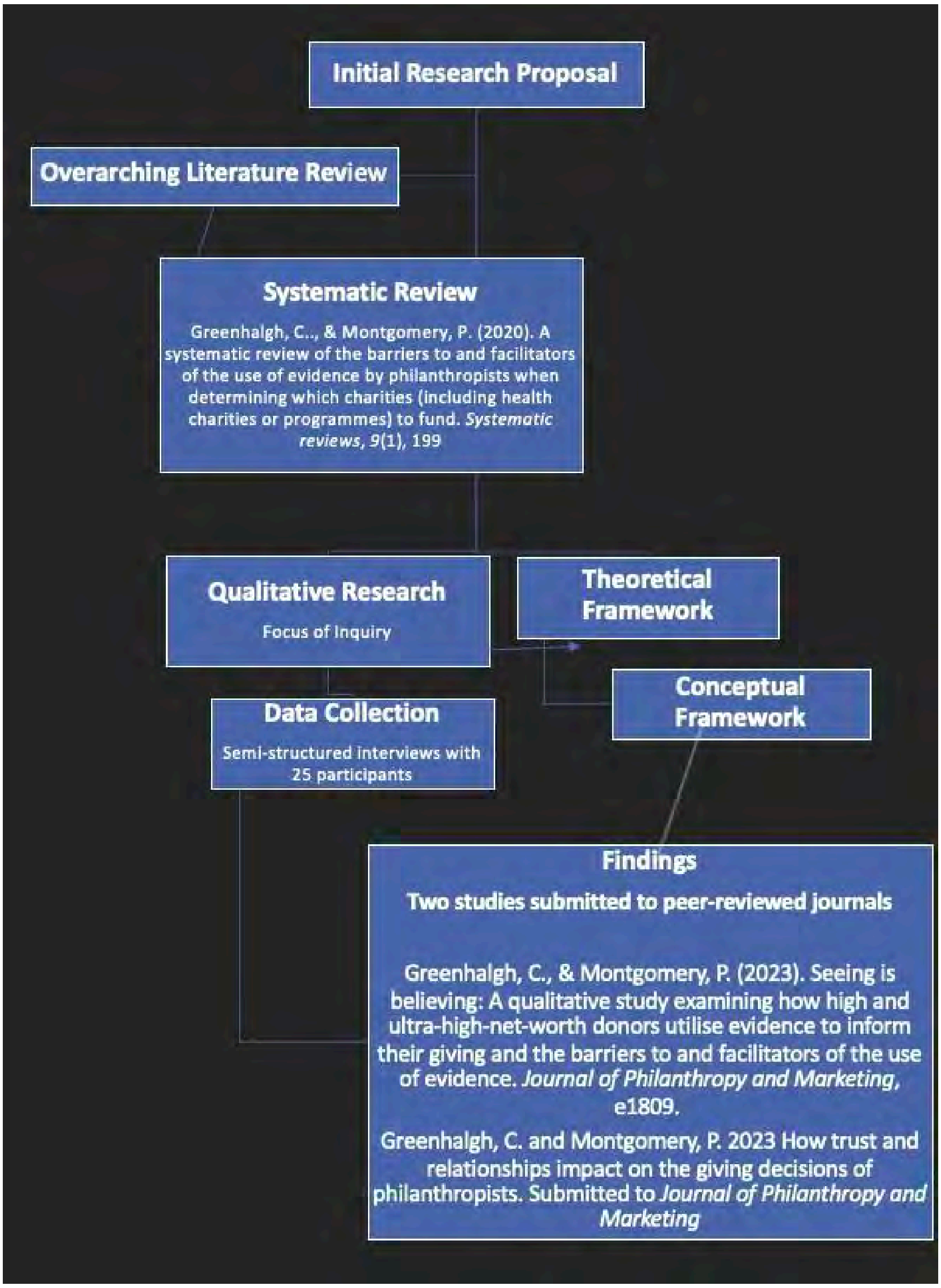


Figure 9. Research Design. Adapted from Kumar, 1999, and Lincoln and Guba 1985 (Pickard, 2013, p. 11).

Despite the modest sample size, utilising in-depth semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to obtain valuable insights into how philanthropists engage with evidence. So, whilst the empirical findings were not meant to be generalisable, they nevertheless contribute to our understanding of philanthropists' decision-making processes.

8.1 Research Design for the Systematic Review (Secondary Analysis)

The systematic review sought to explore the barriers to and facilitators of evidence-informed philanthropy. The main objective of the review was to identify, evaluate and synthesise appropriate, rigorous research, examining factors which serve to act as barriers to or facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists. The purpose of systematically reviewing and synthesising the extant literature ahead of conducting the primary study was to enable the researcher to blend knowledge gathered from distinct studies '*with developing theory*' (Atkins et al., 2008, p. 1).

'Ultimately, systematic reviews aim to enhance our understanding and provide evidence in a way that allows transferability, to identify research gaps for further exploration, prevent unnecessary duplication of research…' (Soilemezi & Linceviciute, 2018 pp. 1 & 2).

Qualitative research is concerned with how people see, engage with and understand social settings and occurrences and, as such, can '*offer explanations for unexpected or anomalous findings emerging from quantitative research and may also elucidate relationships identified in these studies'* (Atkins et al., 2008, p. 2). Hence, synthesising the findings of multiple qualitative studies facilitates the production of a 'more comprehensive and generalisable theory', which in turn '*may usefully inform the implementation of interventions and programmes'* (Atkins et al., 2008, p. 2).

8.1.1 Data Collection - Systematic Review

A systematic review of the literature pertaining to the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists, conducted by the researcher informed the creation of the conceptual model (below).

The research protocol for the systematic review was published on protocols.io (available at: dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.wbsfane) and the researchers employed PRISMA guidelines and the GRADE-CERqual (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation - Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research) approach as this permitted them to ascertain the level of confidence that they could have in their findings. The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research was applied to facilitate critical appraisal of each of the included studies.

The systematic review was conducted in two phases:

- Phase one comprised hand searching relevant journals and websites.
- Phase two encompassed a systematic search of bibliographic databases and other e-resources.

Studies were included if they comprised primary research into, or systematic reviews of, the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists or funders when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund.

All studies were appraised for quality, and the results synthesised using thematic analysis.

The researcher searched eleven interdisciplinary databases, employing unambiguous and wide-ranging search terms and a highly sensitive search strategy. Searches were restricted to articles published in English and limited to primary research or systematic reviews investigating the perceptions and/or experiences of philanthropists, HNWIs, or funders (including grant-making organisations) regarding their use of evidence.

The databases searched were:

- Abstracted Business Information (ABI)/INFORM Global.
- Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA).
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS).
- PAIS (originally the Public Affairs Information Service) Index.
- Policy File Index.
- Social Services Abstracts.
- Social Science Premium Collection.
- Worldwide Political Science Abstracts.
- Scopus.
- Open Grey and
- ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global.

The researcher spent considerable time constructing the search string as it required both methodological precision and thematic knowledge. The researcher utilised a multifaceted approach to ensure that the correct search terms were employed. At the outset, the researcher sought to identify important and customary terms and topics within the extant literature and the discourse related to philanthropy. The researcher then sought guidance from the Cochrane Handbook on how best to structure the search strategy for a systematic review. Finally, the researcher adhered to the handbook's advice on utilising Boolean operators and the use of 'noft' regulators to enhance her search strategy. The meticulous composition of the resulting search string was such that it was able to search databases for titles, keywords, and abstracts of articles that address the manifold barriers and facilitators in philanthropy without overreaching into the full text where wide-ranging and less pertinent data might blur the findings. Such an approach safeguards the review ensuring that it retains a laser focus on the most relevant studies, and so permitting a thorough synthesis of the extant evidence.

The researcher searched titles, keywords and abstracts of articles utilising the following search string: <u>(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*), where noft means "not in full text"</u>

Despite the highly sensitive search strategy employed, it remained a possibility that germane studies may have been missed (particularly as not all studies had been well indexed). In order to counter such limitations, the researcher combined systematic database searching with supplementary searching including: hand searching key journals and bibliographies therein (Britten & Pope, 2012; Jenkins, 2004; Jones, 2004; Ring et al., 2011); contacting significant authors and philanthropy experts (Gallacher et al., 2013; Noyes et al., 2013; Pope & Mays, 2006); searching relevant websites and combing the grey literature (including reports and publications produced by non-profits and think tanks) to minimise publication bias (Lohner et al., 2017).

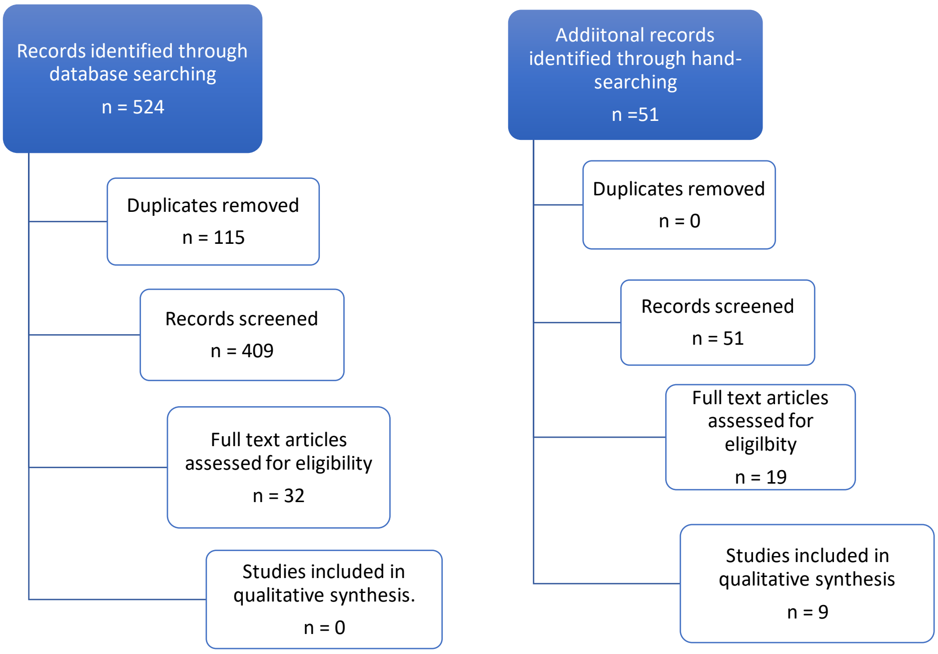


Figure 10. PRISMA Flowchart capturing flow of studies through the review.

After removing 115 duplicates, 377 articles from the database searches and 32 from the hand-searching were excluded based on title and/or the abstracts and a total of 42 were excluded at full text assessment for not meeting the inclusion criteria. A final sample of nine studies were included in the qualitative synthesis.

8.1.2 Data Analysis - Systematic Review

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data derived from the included studies (nine in total) as thematic analysis ensures credibility '*as it is transparent, rational and uniform, allowing the reader to have confidence in the findings*' (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 22). Following thematic analysis, the researcher categorised factors into either barriers or facilitators and counted them by frequency.

The thematic analysis identified three main barriers to philanthropists or funders utilising evidence:

1. Inadequate knowledge transfer and difficulties accessing evidence.
2. Challenges in understanding the evidence; and
3. Insufficient resources.

A further three factors expediting the use of evidence were identified as:

1. Improved knowledge transfer and more accessible / relevant high-quality information.
2. Access to professional advisors and networks; and
3. Broadening the definition of what counts as credible evidence along with standardisation of reporting.

'*The identified factors were then categorised following thematic analysis, thus enabling the synthesis to account for the arbitrary difference of factors revolving around the same underlying problem*' (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020, p. 11).

8.2 Research Design for the Qualitative Interviews (Primary Research)

The researcher chose to employ a qualitative research design, as such designs facilitate our understanding of both the interpretation and explanations of social occurrences (Kitto, 2008), which in turn enables researchers to examine how '*people experience specific situations'* (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 20). The importance of context and social settings (Braun & Clarke, 2012) also informed the researcher's choice of qualitative research methods, for she theorised that the experiences and behaviours of the elite participants would, to an extent have been informed by the context in which they were operating, for example, their perception of their own social standing and the social standing of their peers (Pawson & Tilley, 1997).

Such research methods also allowed the researcher to discern the weighting and importance given to various components that influenced the participant's decision-making process.

8.2.1 Sampling Strategy – Primary Research

Determining the sample size in a qualitative study can be exigent and is the subject of debate (van Rijnsoever, 2017) for unlike in quantitative studies, which rely upon recognised conventions to determine the correct sample size, there are no such reliable guidelines that can easily be applied to qualitative studies. Nevertheless, there are a number of factors which can serve to both determine and justify sample size including: the study's objectives, the '*nature of the phenomenon under* *investigation*', '*data saturation*', '*data adequacy*' and also '*informational redundancy*' (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 1).

As this study sought to elicit the perspectives of elite HNWI and UHNWI donors, the sample was of necessity both purposive, in which participants were chosen '*by virtue of their capacity to provide richly-textured information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation*' and small '*to support the depth of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry*' (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Participants were initially recruited from a sample frame compiled from The Coutts Million Pound Donor List (Coutts Institute, 2017) and the Sunday Times Giving List (CAF, 2018) , which comprise HNWIs and UHNWIs.

Having identified donors from the sample frame, the researcher employed a mixture of convenience, snowball and purposive sampling. It was convenience in style because the researcher was known to several participants, having sat on boards with or worked alongside six of the participants in the initial sample. Subsequently, snowball sampling was used, as the six initial participants introduced and endorsed the researcher to other HNWDs and UHNWDs in their networks. Both convenience and snowball sampling are methods that are regularly employed when recruiting elite participants, as gaining access to elite participants can be difficult, hence, one should not be '*shy about enlisting their help in getting in the door with others on your sample list. This is often called snowball sampling*' (Goldstein, 2002, p. 671). The researcher then purposively sampled from within the population to ensure that donors employing a range of giving strategies and levels were captured. Recent studies have demonstrated '*the greater efficiency of purposive sampling compared to random sampling in qualitative studies,'* indeed, employing purposive sampling enabled us to select '*information rich cases'* (van Rijnsoever cited in Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2).

The researcher considered the sample (comprising 17 philanthropists; three philanthropist consultants/wealth advisors, two charity professionals, one academic researching philanthropy and two gatekeepers to a major philanthropist) to be sufficient for the purposes of this empirical study, as the sample was relatively homogenous, aligned to our research objectives, and sufficient to reach data saturation, meaning the '*point at which no new codes or concepts emerge'* (van Rijnsoever, 2017, p. 1). Data saturation is deemed by some to be a '*guarantee of qualitative rigor'* (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1893). Once data saturation had been achieved, the researcher did not seek to recruit any further participants. Some researchers have drawn a distinction between 'code saturation' and 'meaning saturation'. *'Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi …* [achieved] *code saturation … at 9 interviews … but meaning saturation required 16–24 interviews*…' (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2). *'Guest, Bunce, and Johnson … found that saturation of themes was reached by the twelfth interview'* (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2).

The researcher is confident that the sample was of sufficient size to allow the acquisition of *'new and richly textured understanding of the phenomenon under study'* but it was not so large as to impede the *'deep, case-oriented analysis'* that we sought (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2).

8.2.2 Elite Interviewing – Primary Research

The majority of the participants qualified as 'elites', which presented different methodological challenges to interviewing non-elites (Mikecz, 2012). Elites are usually defined as individuals who hold and exercise power (Scott, 2008). Obtaining access can present a significant hurdle, and as Goldstein points out, '*everything … depends on getting in the door, getting access to your subject'* (Goldstein, 2002, p. 669). Another challenge relates to the ease with which elites can shield themselves from intrusion and criticism (Hunter 1995 cited in Mikecz, 2012). Moreover, the acquisition of dependable data from elite interviews requires researchers to *'establish a rapport with respondents…'* (Goldstein, 2002, p. 669). The researcher believes she was able to overcome these challenges as she was known to six of the participants. Hence, trust already existed, and consequently, the researcher found it easy to achieve a rapport in the interviews. Having been personally introduced to the remaining participants, the researcher quickly developed a trusting relationship with each of the subsequent interviewees.

8.2.3 Data Collection – Primary Research

The researcher employed semi-structured, conversational style interviews as the major form of data collection, because such interviews allowed for interpretation in accordance with the participants' own understandings and the probing of complex issues (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Patton, 2001) and were designed to '*generate knowledge grounded in human experience*' (Sandelowski, 2004 cited in Nowell et al., 2017b, p. 1). As such, the researcher believed that such methods would enable a more detailed understanding of participants' giving strategies and approaches and the factors influencing their decisions, as well as the mechanisms they employed to measure the success of their giving. Such an understanding was of great importance, given the need to elucidate participants' own perspectives and the under-researched nature of the area. Moreover, as the researcher was interviewing and engaging with 'elites', the researcher could only gain access to the participants on an individual basis.

Providing the participants with full anonymity encouraged them to share their authentic views and was deemed necessary to ensure that they did not shelter behind socially acceptable views.

The semi-structured interviews were based on a topic guide (see Appendix A included in Chapter 4 as part of a published paper) containing a series of open-ended questions which emerged from our examination of the extant literature and our systematic review. Open-ended questions '*were employed because they are purported to generate richer data'* (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

8.2.4 Ethical Approval – Primary Research

Ethical approval was acquired from the University of Birmingham Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (ERN_18-1290) on 23 January 2019. Participants were informed of the research's purpose, and written consent was obtained before interviews began. The identities of participants were kept confidential, and all data were stored securely.

Interviews were conducted between February 2019 and April 2020 and were typically of one hour's duration. Most interviews were conducted in person at a venue of the participant's choosing (typically their workplaces); however, after the lockdown (owing to Covid 19) ensued, five of the interviews were conducted over Zoom.

8.2.5 Data analysis – Primary Research

Interviews were systematically recorded and transcribed by a third-party professional transcription company, which allowed for meticulous analysis of the interviews, enabling the retention of the language and phrases used.

Upon receipt of the transcript, the researcher listened to the recording whilst reading the transcript through, both to ensure accuracy and to immerse herself in the data. Only a very few minor corrections were needed, and no discrepancies of any magnitude were discovered.

The researcher utilised thematic analysis, enabling an inductive 'data-driven' approach to be employed (Boyatzis, 1998) allowing for rich, sensitive and insightful exploration of the data. This was important because the primary aim of the research was exploratory and descriptive.

The researcher employed an inductive approach to her data analysis which was a contextual, analytical and reflexive process '*situated, interpretative, reflexive process'* (Braun, 2021 pp. 333, 334) and took a '*semantic approach'* to the identification of the key themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

The researcher utilised Braun and Clarke's 'reflexive thematic analysis' method of thematic analysis, which they first delineated in 2006 (Braun & Clarke, 2006) but which they expanded upon in 2021 (Braun, 2021). Although Braun and Clarke were keen to avoid rigidity, they recommended a six-stage approach to data analysis including:

1) data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes;

2) systematic data coding;

3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data;

4) developing and reviewing themes;

5) refining, defining and naming themes and

6) writing the report' (Braun, 2021, p. 331).

The data analysis approach followed the principles of Cresswell (2009) shown in Figure 11.

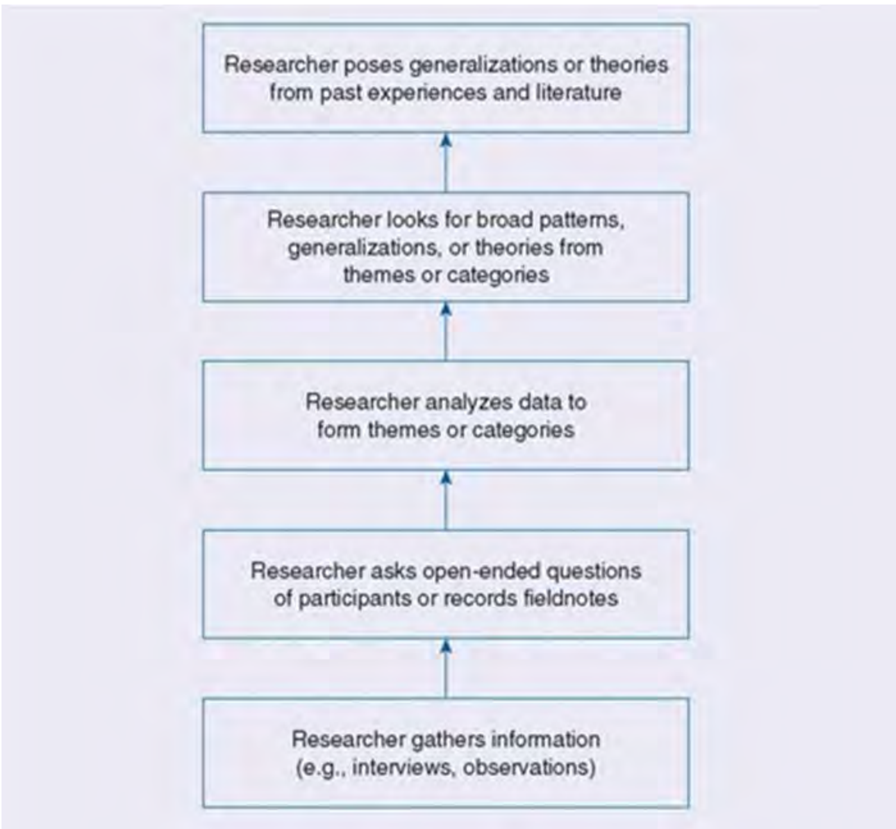


Figure 11. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research (Cresswell, 2009).

The full transcripts of the interviews were analysed using NVivo 12. 20% of the interviews were coded by the second researcher to ensure the reliability of the coding decisions; some minor modifications were made following this feedback.

9. Methodological Limitations

A key limitation of this study relates to transferability, due to the small size of the study and the sampling method, which is not representative. The researcher has chosen to focus on depth of analysis rather than quantity of interviews. However, there are several limitations associated with interviewing. These include researcher bias, power relations and transferability. The researcher sought to overcome issues of researcher bias by asking open-ended questions and by recording and transcribing interviews to preserve the language and phrases used. The interviewer believes that issues of power relations were minimised due to her age, education, and prior experience as a member of several charity boards and Chair of Fundraising for Human Rights Watch in the UK, which deemed her to be an insider. Although, due to the small sample size, the findings of this study will not be transferable, the researcher believes that this study will provide readers with an insight into how HNWDs utilise evidence, which will be useful in their interactions with this group.

The researcher's role in the research process is discussed in the Reflective journey section in the final chapter.

Finally, by its character, interviewing disrupts the interviewee's daily pattern and as such could contribute to a level of stress or be inhibited by insufficient time. The researcher endeavoured to minimise these problems by conducting interviews at a location of the interviewee's choice.

CHAPTER 3 - SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

The following pages reproduce a published article on the Systematic Review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists. This review methodically analyses the obstacles to, and promoters of evidence use by philanthropists when deciding which charities or programmes to fund. This wide-ranging review identifies, critically appraises and synthesises the results of nine studies which met the inclusion criteria. By examining both factors that promote, and hinder evidence use, this study unequivocally speaks to the overarching research question of this thesis, namely, 'What are the barriers to and facilitators of evidence use by philanthropists?' Systematic reviews 'are an important tool for obtaining and appraising evidence in a reliable, transparent and objective way. They are useful because they encourage the development of focused, well-defined questions within a topic of interest.' (Haddaway et al. 2014 p.179). As such this systematic review serves to illuminate how evidence can be better integrated into philanthropic decision-making thereby enabling us to satisfy the objective of identifying and examining the factors that influence philanthropists to engage with evidence. The findings of this systematic review also served to inform the research questions and interview questions of the qualitative study that formed the second part of this thesis.

Greenhalgh C, Montgomery P. A systematic review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund. *Syst Rev*. 2020 Aug 27;9(1):199. doi: 10.1186/s13643-020-01448-w. PMID: 32854765; PMCID: PMC7453541

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https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01448-w

Systematic Reviews

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW UPDATE Open Access

A systematic review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund

Caroline Greenhalgh* and Paul Montgomery

Abstract

Background: Philanthropists, charity leaders and policy-makers have increasingly recognised that the process of giving resources needs to be grounded in evidence—sometimes referred to as 'evidence-based' or 'data-driven' philanthropy. Yet few philanthropists practise evidence-based philanthropy, and some contend that there is insufficient evidence on which to base their funding decisions. This review aims to identify factors that promote or limit the use of evidence by philanthropists and to rigorously evaluate all existing research on this issue.

Objectives: To identify, synthesise, and evaluate appropriate and rigorous research, examining factors which act as barriers to or facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists.

Methods: This review was conducted according to Cochrane standards and reported following PRISMA guidelines. The review protocol was pre-registered (dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.wbsfane). We searched 10 interdisciplinary databases using a highly sensitive search strategy, developed in consultation with an information scientist. We also contacted experts and searched a range of websites. Studies were included if they comprised primary research into or systematic reviews of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists or funders when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund. All studies were appraised for quality, and the results synthesised using thematic analysis.

Results: Of 686 studies identified through database and hand searching, nine met inclusion criteria. The thematic summary identified three main barriers to philanthropists or funders using evidence: (1) inadequate knowledge transfer and difficulties accessing evidence, (2) challenges in understanding the evidence and (3) insufficient resources. The three key factors that expedite the use of evidence are (1) improved knowledge transfer and more accessible/relevant high-quality information, (2) access to professional advisors and networks and (3) broadening the definition of what counts as credible evidence along with standardisation of reporting.

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Conclusions: The authors of this review found several compelling arguments for promoting the use of evidence by philanthropists to inform their philanthropy. If evidence-based philanthropy is to flourish, then they recommed the following actions: Firstly, philanthropy should be underpinned by a commitment to 'do no harm'. Secondly, the definition of evidence should be expanded and funding decisions based upon consideration of 'all available evidence'. Finally, there should be more investment in synthesizing evidence and in the infrastructure for knowledge transfer.

Keywords: Barriers and facilitators, Philanthropy, Evidence

Background

It is widely accepted that evidence regarding whether or not an intervention 'works' is critical to and should underpin all health and social initiatives and in so doing ensure avoidance of harm. However, despite increasing recognition by philanthropists and funders alike, that the process of allocating funding to charities ought to be underpinned by evidence, few philanthropists practise evidence-based philanthropy in the UK [1]. If donors are to recognise and support the most effective philanthropic programmes, they need to be encouraged to practise evidence-based philanthropy, lest they inadvertently fund programmes that are ineffective or—at worst—actually cause harm. An absence of evidence may also lead donors to fund programmes that already have ample reserves and therefore do not need funding [2]. Our unequivocal support for evidence-based philanthropy is founded in our belief that we should 'first do no harm' and a concern that there are multiple ways in which philanthropy can commit unintentional harms. An example of such harms was revealed by The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) of the House of Commons, which scrutinised the collapse of *Kids Company*, a large charity that had attracted considerable funding from both private philanthropy and the public sector. PACAC raised concerns about safeguarding commenting that 'There are a number of safeguarding issues which have come to PACAC's attention during the conduct of this inquiry into *Kids Company*....' ([3] p. 52). PACAC also concluded that it was not possible to reconcile the claims made by *Kids Co* vis a vis its caseload with evidence from other sources. 'The evidence is that the figures [relating to outcomes] were significantly over- inflated... [and] was misleading to donors' ([3] p.51). While we acknowledge that there are many varied and valuable motives which underpin philanthropy, we nevertheless believe that harm reduction is an unequivocal need that is best served by utilising evidence to ensure that the programmes and interventions funded by philanthropy are beneficial to the communities they are intended to serve.

Today, there is growing awareness among philanthropists, charity leaders and policy-makers that the process of giving resources needs to be grounded in high-quality evidence. Accordingly, we have seen the emergence of both 'evidence-based' and 'strategic' philanthropy, as philanthropists seek to be more outcomes-focused in their giving. Philanthropists and funders are also increasingly recognising that collaboration, sharing knowledge and 'learning from mistakes' are a good practice ([4] p.6). The PACAC report: 'The collapse of Kids Company: lessons for charity trustees, professional firms, the Charity Commission, and Whitehall' is one such example of 'learning from mistakes' as it 'sought to identify the lessons to be learned from the collapse of Kids Company' ([3] p.6). Yet it is still rare for philanthropists to 'draw upon the full extent of available knowledge' ([5] p. 1).

How donors direct their money to charities matters today more than ever, as government funding to the voluntary sector has declined in both the UK and USA. In the UK, the voluntary sector experienced a fall in government funding of £1.9 billion (down from £15.2 billion to £13.1 billion) between 2009 and

2013 ([4] p.5). Moreover, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has predicted that there will be an annual shortfall of '£4.6 billion .... in sector income over the next five years, simply to maintain current spending power' ([6] p.6) by 2019. In the USA, non-profits have experienced similar funding shortfalls as they have had to contend with a decline in funding from both state and federal governments in tandem with changes to the tax code, both of which have squeezed corporate giving [7]. If charities are to retain their independence and ensure a sustainable funding base, they will need to seek funding from alternative sources, which in many cases will be from philanthropists. Certainly, '... philanthropy has been on the rise since the financial crisis, with 2016 seeing the highest amount given' in the last decade ([8] p.15). In light of the increasingly competitive funding environment, such a rise in donations by philanthropists is both significant and of particular interest to charities. Accordingly, the way in which donors practise philanthropy and how they use evidence in their decision making needs to be explored. Findings of such research can be disseminated to charities to better enable them to develop and manage their relationships with such donors and to access their financial support.

While the need to generate evidence to support philanthropic funding decisions is clear, the extent to which philanthropists will use it is less certain. The utility of evidence may depend on how readily available it is to those making funding decisions, whether or not philanthropists can distinguish between the different qualities of evidence, and whether the available evidence is relevant to their question and aligns with their own tastes and preferences.

Moreover, what is meant by 'the best available evidence' is contested, particularly in light of the differing types and weight of evidence in the social sciences [9, 10]. Greenhalgh [11] refers to a 'hierarchy of evidence' (shown as a pyramid) which ranks randomised control trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews at the top of the pyramid and situates 'expert' opinion and qualitative research at the bottom. In reality, the type of evidence that will prove the most useful in determining the best way to address a particular problem will, to an extent, be determined by the nature of the question being asked [9]. Quantitative research, for example, may be best placed to answer questions relating to the extent to which something works (such as 'how many?' or 'how much?') whereas qualitative research may be better placed to answer how and why something works, as the purpose of qualitative research is to 'explore people's perceptions and experiences of the world around them' ([12] p.2).

Rationale

There is limited research on how donors use evidence to inform their philanthropy and on the barriers to and facilitators of their use of evidence. To date, much of the research in this area has concerned the extent of giving by donors rather than how they choose charities. Studies that do examine the manner in which donors choose charities usually focus on the 'why'—namely, the donor's motivation for choosing the charities—rather than the 'how', with its focus on the mechanisms by which donors choose charities.

This systematic review seeks to address this gap in the research by identifying the factors that may limit or promote the use of evidence by philanthropists and by evaluating existing research on this issue. This will help support the development of mechanisms to address the barriers and scale up those factors that facilitate evidence-informed philanthropy. Our rationale is that enhanced access to and understanding of high-quality evidence in tandem with improved communications and sharing of knowledge will enable philanthropists to make better judgements which in turn will lead to 'better and more sustainable philanthropy' ([4] p.16). This will give philanthropists confidence that they are funding effective initiatives and interventions that will ultimately lead to the change they seek, for 'if one role of philanthropy is to solve the tough problems … we need all the answers we can get' ([13] p.2).

Objectives of the review

To identify, evaluate and synthesise appropriate and rigorous research, examining factors which act as barriers to or facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists.

Methods

This review of the barriers and facilitators to the use of evidence by philanthropists and funders was conducted according to the standards of Cochrane [14] and Campbell reviews [15]. The protocol for this review was assessed by two specialists in issues related to the third sector, to ensure that the methods and search strategy were exhaustive. The final search string was developed in consultation with an information expert (File 4). The protocol was published at (dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.wbsfane).

We did a highly sensitive search involving electronic resources, hand searching and contacting experts and initially found nineteen studies. Each of those studies was critically appraised using GRADE CER-qual, and nine studies were included in the final data synthesis. Many of the barriers and facilitators were unique, although others were reflections of each other.

This systematic review utilised both PRISMA guidelines, which stipulate a minimum standard for describing the findings of systematic reviews (see Fig. 1 PRISMA Flowchart capturing flow of studies through the review), and also employed the GRADE-CERqual (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation - Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative research) approach—see Tables S4 to 9. The GRADE-CERQual tools permit us to ascertain the level of confidence that we can have in our findings by employing four components comprising methodological relevance, coherence, adequacy and relevance to determine the level of confidence that we can have in the findings arising from individual reviews within syntheses of qualitative evidence. Finally, we utilised the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research [16] to appraise each of the included studies (see Additional File 5).

Search strategy

In conducting a systematic review of the qualitative literature, inadequate cataloguing of qualitative research means that despite combining terms and employing precise and wide-ranging search strategies pertinent studies may still be overlooked ([17] p. 5). As such, we used a highly sensitive search strategy to capture all extant research on the barriers and facilitators experienced by philanthropists seeking to utilise evidence. The following databases were searched:

1. ABI/INFORM Global

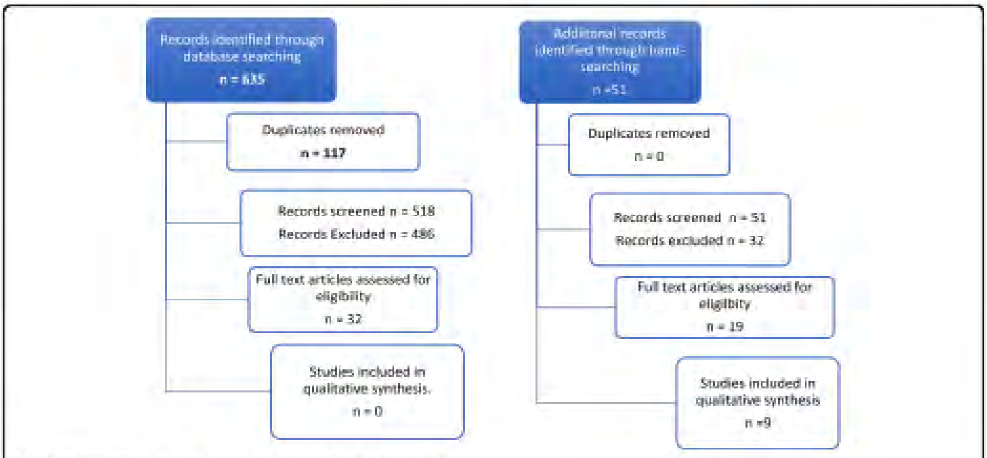

Fig. 1 PRISMA Flowchart capturing flow of studies through the review

2. Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSI A)
3. International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)
4. PAIS Index
5. Policy File Index
6. Social Services Abstracts
7. Social Science Premium Collection
8. Worldwide Political Science Abstracts
9. SCOPUS
10. Open Grey
11. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global

The authors anticipated that due to a lack of rigorous, independent research to provide an authoritative basis for our understanding of philanthropic activity [18], it would be a challenge to uncover much literature relating to the use of evidence by philanthropists. To address these limitations and also to

minimise publication bias, the authors utilised supplementary search methods which they blended with database searching. Supplemental search methods employed included hand searching of journals and the bibliographies of relevant articles, contacting experts and searching relevant websites including:

- Philanthropy Impact
- New Philanthropy Capital
- The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
- Ten Years' Time
- UBS Philanthropy
- Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)
- Nonprofit Quarterly
- Candid (comprising Foundation Centre and GuideStar)
- Association for Fundraising Professionals
- Institute of Fundraising

Study selection

To be eligible for inclusion, studies must have been published in English and be primary research or systematic reviews investigating the perceptions and/or experiences of philanthropists, high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) or funders (including grant-making organisations) relating to their use of evidence. All study designs were eligible for inclusion provided they examined factors affecting the use of evidence by philanthropists; however, such factors need not have been the primary focus of those studies. Studies investigating the perceptions of professionals (such as charity CEOs, philanthropic advisors and philanthropic consultants) as to how philanthropists (or how they perceive philanthropists to) use evidence were also eligible for inclusion. Articles were initially screened at the title, publication date and abstract level by CG using Endnote.

Population

The primary populations of interest were philanthropists, high-net-worth individuals and funders (including grant-making organisations) who make significant donations (sometimes referred to as major gifts) to fund charities or third-sector organisations (which include voluntary organisations, community-based organisations and non-profits). The secondary populations of interest were third-sector practitioners (such as charity CEOs), philanthropic advisors and philanthropic consultants.

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Definitions

This review adopted the following definition of 'philanthropist': an individual who makes donations to charities and non-profits with the intent of addressing social problems [19]. 'Funders' comprise grant-making organisations, such as trusts and foundations, which award financial grants to charities and non-profits.

This review defined 'barriers' as things or circumstances that impede the ability of philanthropists (or charity professionals) to use evidence to inform their philanthropy or grant-making. 'Facilitators' are defined as any factors or conditions that enhance the ability of philanthropists (or charity professionals) to use evidence to inform their philanthropy or grant-making. Barriers and facilitators do not need to be the primary outcome of interest of a study to be considered for inclusion.

Screening and data extraction

Studies were stored, screened and coded using NVIVO software, and all data were extracted by CG with a 20% random sample screened independently by PM. Any disagreements were resolved by consensus.

Extracted data from the final set of included studies were captured in a data extraction table (Table S2); a further table (Table S3) captured the characteristics of the excluded studies (see Additional file 1). The tables were developed by the two authors to record the following information:

- Year of publication
- Author
- Title
- Country where study was conducted
- Study aims

Methods

- Population (philanthropists, foundations or charity practitioners)

Key findings:

- Identified barriers to utilisation of evidence
- Identified factors of utilisation of evidence

Tables S4 and S5 present the methodological limitations of the included studies as they relate to each finding, using GRADE CER-Qual methods. Table S6 captures the data from individual studies that contributed to each review finding. Table S7 is a CER-Qual Quality of Evidence Profile, while Table S8 summarises our qualitative findings. Finally, Table S9 summarises our confidence in each of the individual studies. Tables S4 to S9 are attached in Additional file 2.

Data synthesis

The main purpose of this review was to identify limiting and promoting factors regarding the use of evidence as identified by philanthropists, funders and charity practitioners. Consequently, the review includes studies comprising a variety of research designs, namely quantitative, mixed methods and qualitative. In light of this, we conducted a thematic analysis to integrate the data, through which the main findings and theories were extrapolated and then ordered as either barriers or facilitators to form a narrative synthesis [20, 21]. We then listed factors identified as being either barriers or facilitators (regarding the use of evidence by philanthropists) and analysed their frequency. Ideally, simple 'vote-counting' techniques should be avoided in research as they increase the risk of bias by not typically considering study methods or study quality [22]. We have mitigated this risk by employing thematic analysis to order the individual factors and identify variations in factors 'revolving around the same underlying problem' ([23] p.2).

Quality assessment

Prior to data synthesis, the authors employed a number of critical appraisal tools to assess the credibility and rigour of the included studies and to ensure transparency in the appraisal process. However, many critical appraisal tools require the reviewers to score each of the studies against specific criteria, so studies that do not report all of the criteria will score low even though they might not merit it [24]. Hence, quality appraisal (particularly across different study designs) necessitates an element of judgement on the part of the researchers.

While this was first and foremost a narrative exercise, for studies that employed a qualitative research design, we conducted methodological assessment using the Joanna Briggs Institute's Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research [16]. The single quantitative study in our review was assessed utilising a critical appraisal checklist adapted from Crombie [25], and the two mixed-methods studies were appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018 (http://mixedmethodsappraisaltoolspublic.pwbworks.com/w/file/fetch/127916259/MMAT_2018_criteria-manual_2018-0801_ENG.pdf).

The included studies were subjected to the GRADE CER-qual assessment [12] to ascertain the level of confidence that we could have in our findings. The methodological limitations of each of the included studies are reported in Table S8 (see Additional file 2); the methods of data collection and analysis and any limitations that arose in relation to each of the specified themes are reported in Tables S4 and S5 (see Additional file 2). In addition, we highlight the contributions made by the individual studies to each of the research findings and themes, providing insight into whether particular studies contributed more or less to the thematic framework in Tables S6 and S7 (see Additional file 2).

The level of confidence awarded to each study was informed by the methods of data collection and analysis that were used, the level of methodological rigour and the total number of items fulfilled on the appraisal checklists. Studies were then ranked as either high, medium or low quality. We then used our own informed judgement, taking into consideration the value of the insights derived from the individual study alongside the study's methodology, as those "rated as 'low quality' because of methodological flaws or lack of reporting may nevertheless generate new insights, grounded in the data…" ([24] p.375).

Results

The 51 records that emerged from the supplemental hand searching were combined with 635 records which were identified through the database searching; together, these amounted to 686 records. After removing 117 duplicates, 518 studies from the database were screened at title and all 51 studies from the supplemental search were screened at title (569 in total). Four hundred eighty-six studies from the database search and 32 studies from the supplemental search were excluded following scrutiny of the title and in some cases abstracts. Thirty-two studies identified through database searching were retrieved as full text, and 19 studies identified through the supplemental search were retrieved in full. Of these, a further 42 were excluded for the following reasons: not being primary research or systematic reviews focusing on the experiences of philanthropists, funding organisations, third-sector professionals, philanthropist advisors and/or consultants; or for not being primary research or systematic reviews concentrating on the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence. Nine studies were included in the final synthesis. None of the included studies emerged from the database searches; they were all derived from the supplemental search.

Characteristics of included studies

The characteristics of included and excluded studies are presented in Tables S2 and S3 (see Additional file 1). Of the nine included studies, one was purely quantitative, two used mixed methods and six were purely qualitative. The majority (five) were conducted in the UK (55%); two were conducted in the USA (22%); and one study (11%) comprised a series of nine workshops conducted in seven countries: Dubai, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, Singapore, the UK and the USA. Eight of the studies were published between 2010 and 2018 (88%), and one was published in 2003 (11%).

Populations of the included studies

Three of the included studies had a sample size of more than 100: one administered a questionnaire to 3254 people; another sampled more than 200 participants, each of whom participated in a series of workshops; and the third study sampled more than 500 participants. Six studies had a sample size of less than 100, ranging from fewer than 10 to 99. Participants in the studies were philanthropists, including high-net-worth individuals (two studies); philanthropists and philanthropic advisors (one study); philanthropy advisors and consultants together with charity practitioners (one study); funders comprising trusts and foundations (two studies); philanthropy practitioners and consultants (one study); academics, funders and professionals working in the non-profit sector (one study); and academics, charities, NGOs, advisors, businesses and professionals (one study).

Quality of the included studies

We appraised each of the nine included studies using GRADE CER-qual methods [12] and further evaluated the six qualitative studies using the *JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research* [16]. The single quantitative study was appraised using a version of the Crombie tool [25], and the two mixed-methods studies were appraised using the MMAT version 2018 (http://mixedmethodsappraisaltoolspublic.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/127916259/MMAT_2018_criteria-manual_2018-0801_ENG.pdf). Two studies were deemed to be of high quality, four of medium quality and three were assessed to be of low quality.

Identified barriers and facilitators

All nine of the studies described at least one barrier to the use of evidence, although this was not confined to the use of evidence by philanthropists. Eight of the studies described at least one facilitator of the use of evidence. Twenty-seven unique factors were identified as barriers to the use of evidence and thirty-three factors as facilitators of the use of evidence. In a number of instances, the barriers and facilitators were reciprocal, for example:

- Too much information and insufficient synthesis of information were recognised as barriers by two of the studies [study no. 4 and 7], and improved and more readily available synthesis of evidence was identified as a facilitator by one of the studies [study no. 9].
- Insufficient knowledge dissemination and lack of availability of and access to evidence was deemed to be a barrier by five studies [study no. 2, 4–7], and five studies [study no. 2, 3, 5, 7, 9] identified knowledge dissemination, knowledge hubs and open data as facilitators of the use of evidence.

- One study [study no. 5] reported that a paucity of measurement tools proved to be a barrier to the use of evidence, and the same study reported that the provision of appropriate measurement tools would serve to facilitate the use of evidence.

The top three barriers to the use of evidence identified by philanthropists and funders included difficulties in accessing relevant and high-quality evidence (six studies). This was illustrated by one study which pointed out that the main types of evidence relied upon by funders (such as data synthesis and scoping reviews) 'are different to the main types of evidence they generate (e.g. impact reporting) and share with others (e.g. evaluations)' ([26] p.5). Problems relating to philanthropists' and funders' understanding of the evidence (three studies) and insufficient resources to identify and use the evidence (six studies) served as further challenges to engaging with evidence.

The factors cited most frequently as facilitating the use of evidence were better knowledge transfer and improved ease of access to evidence (six studies). Recognised mechanisms for knowledge transfer included 'peer-to-peer sharing of experience and practice' ([27] p.10); philanthropists and funders could also engage more 'proactively with the new What Works centres, both to share evidence for dissemination, and to seek evidence that will inform their funding' ([26] p.5). The provision of open data and feedback loops also aided knowledge sharing and improved ease of access to evidence. Access to professional advisors and experts (three studies) and a broader definition of what counts as credible evidence along with better standardisation of reporting (three studies) also facilitated the use of evidence.

Thematic analysis

The nine included studies comprised a range of research designs, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. By conducting a thematic analysis, we took an inductive, data-driven approach, which helps with both the extraction and interpretation of the complex data. Moreover, 'the use of thematic analysis ensures credibility as it is transparent, rational and uniform, allowing the reader to have confidence in the findings' ([28] p.22). This approach is in line with common practice when aggregating data from different types of research. As there is no 'gold standard' in conducting systematic reviews on barriers and facilitators, we drew on published examples of this type of review including Bach-Mortensen and Montgomery [23] and Oliver et al. [20]. Specifically, all identified factors were identified and organised into barriers and facilitators and counted by frequency. The identified factors were then categorised following thematic analysis, thus enabling the synthesis to account for the arbitrary difference of factors revolving around the same underlying problem.

Our review comprised nine studies describing at least one barrier or one facilitator and included one survey, two mixed-methods studies and six qualitative studies. Table 1 illustrates which studies contributed to the identified barriers and facilitators.

Synthesis of findings

All nine of the included studies described at least one barrier to the use of evidence, although this was not confined to the use of evidence by philanthropists. Eight of the included studies described at least one facilitator of the use of evidence.

A number of the barriers and facilitators reported in the studies were labelled differently despite their having similar underlying constructs, for example, lack of skills and insufficient staff may be part of the same underlying problem as a lack of resources. To deal with this, we organised all of the factors into six overarching categories, comprising three barriers and three facilitators:

1. Difficulties in accessing evidence (six studies)
2. Challenges in understanding the evidence (three studies)
3. Insufficient resources (six studies)
4. Knowledge sharing and ease of access (six studies)
5. Professional advisors and networks (three studies)
6. A broader definition of what counts as credible evidence and better standardisation of reporting (three studies).

Table S6 extrapolates the data from each study supporting each category (see Additional file 2).

The most commonly cited barrier to using evidence was difficulty accessing it. The reciprocal theme that was reported most frequently as a facilitator comprised those factors relating to sharing knowledge and ease of access.

Discussion

This systematic review examined the barriers to and the facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists and funders when deciding what to fund. It found that structural considerations including ease of access to high-quality evidence alongside relevance and ease of comprehension were key determinants of whether or not evidence was used.

The presumption that philanthropists seek to make pragmatic, evidence-informed decisions may not always be the case as 'philanthropic donors are often misled by nature and by their instincts' [2]. It may be that many donors do choose to apply evidence, but they do so only in a limited way, for although most donors are motivated by a desire to make a difference, many will already have

Table 1 Barriers and facilitators and participant numbers

	Quantitative study $N = 3254$ Fidelity study [4]	Mixed methods studies $N = 923$ Carrington study [2]—40 participants Tillotson study [8]—500 participants + 383 professional services firms	Qualitative studies $N = 306$ Breeze study [1]—60 participants Kail Study [6]—9 participants Ravenscroft Study [7]—13 participants Van Poortvliet Study [9]—12 participants David & Lucille Packard Study [3]—12 participants Jones et al. [5]—200 participants
Difficulty accessing evidence Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9	80% ($n = 2604$) expressed concerns that there was not sufficient relevant information to determine the credibility and trustworthiness of a non-profit or what the impact of their donation is.	$n = 40$	$n = 306$
Challenges in understanding the evidence Studies 1, 2, 5, 7, 9	65% ($n = 2115$) did not know the impact of their funding.	N/A	$n = 285$
Insufficient resources Studies 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9	N/A	$n = 923$	$n = 285$
Knowledge transfer and ease of access Studies 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9	65% of ($n = 2115$) would give more if they had at least one insight into the impact of their giving.	$n = 40$	$n = 246$
Professional advisors Studies 2, 6, 8	N/A	$n = 923$	$n = 9$
Broader definition of what counts as credible evidence and standardisation of reporting Studies 2, 5, 7, 9	N/A	$n = 40$	$n = 225$

aligned themselves to a particular cause before reading the evidence or conducting or commissioning research. By electing to support a charity that matters to them personally, rather than using evidence to identify which causes are most effective, donors may overlook more effective charities and interventions and inadvertently support organisations that have less impact (https://www.effectivealtruism.org/articles/introduction-to-effective-altruism/). Hence, what motivates philanthropists to give to one particular genre of charity over another might determine the extent to which they will seek to use evidence to underpin their giving.

Two key themes emerged as barriers to the use of evidence: difficulty in accessing relevant and high-quality data and a lack of understanding of that information. Further analysis revealed that the evidence sought and relied upon by philanthropists was rarely aligned with the evidence generated by the beneficiary charities. Moreover, much of the data that are generated by charities is deemed to be largely irrelevant to donors [26]. This is somewhat ironic given the often 'reported tendency' of many charities and non-profits to 'customise their evaluation' and reporting procedures to satisfy their funders ([23] p.10).

Another constraint relating to the use of evidence is the cost of obtaining relevant evidence. Few philanthropists and funders are willing to fund the cost of evaluations of interventions for example. Consequently, a number of studies, including our own, have highlighted the absence of impact measurement among TSOs. Despite the relatively transparent nature of British charity regulation, only a small minority of charities report on their impact to the Charity Commission [29] and a significant proportion state that they do not measure impact at all [30]. Most TSOs need help in collecting and analysing data which they can use to minimise harm and maximise effectiveness. A review of 24 previous studies conducted by one of the authors, of the barriers and facilitators to impact measurement [23] found that the most common barriers to engagement in evaluation were lack of expertise and internal capacity, mismatch between funder requirements and what TSOs perceived to be appropriate evaluation goals and the lack of financial resources to conduct evaluation. The factors most often reported as facilitators included involving stakeholders in identifying relevant outcome indicators and evaluation goals, having the appropriate training of staff to engage in evaluation and having the motivation to understand and improve the effectiveness of the delivered services. In reviewing 55 studies of the adoption of Evidence Based Interventions (EBIs) by TSOs, Bach-Mortensen et al. [31] found that the most frequently reported barriers were related to recruitment and retention of service-users, problems in adapting EBIs, lack of financial and human resources, and implementation difficulty. Facilitating factors included issues related to organisational culture (e.g. whether the EBI matched the mission of the TSO), flexibility and resources for TSOs to implement the EBI, perceived effectiveness of the EBI, organisational support and prioritisation and supportive leadership.

Further barriers relating to accessibility of evidence included a lack of scholarly research on the area in question; a lack of access to such research (particularly if it is stored behind a paywall, in which case the cost might be a deterrent); poor organisation of research; and on occasion the sheer volume of information. These problems are compounded by insufficient dissemination of high-quality and synthesised knowledge. Resource constraints emerged as an additional barrier to the use of evidence, including a lack of people, time and funding. Indeed, the cost of accessing scholarly research along with the requisite time required to 'search for and identify relevant research' may mean that such research is only used when it is deemed essential ([32] p.5). A lack of skills and tools to appraise the quality and reliability of evidence (including critical appraisal skills) and relevance (wrong or insufficient information) were also cited as barriers to using evidence.

The consequences of not using evidence were revealed in the only quantitative study in our review. It revealed that 80% (n = 2604) of donors felt apprehensive about the impact of their donation (35 p.4), which manifested as 'unease about determining an organization's credibility or trustworthiness' and 'frustrations that some nonprofits do not always explain how a charitable donation will be used' ([33] p.9). Moreover, 65% of the respondents agreed that 'at least one insight into the impact of their giving ... would influence them to give more,' which would imply either that they do not have enough evidence to determine the impact of their donation (on the outcomes of the charity), or they do not have sufficient understanding of the evidence or the skills to appraise it.

Six studies identified inadequate transfer of knowledge and difficulties accessing evidence as barriers. Inadequate infrastructure may be a contributing factor to poor transfer of knowledge, particularly the lack of any single identifiable mechanism for supporting dissemination [34]. Consequently, 'formidable difficulties' stand 'in the way of disseminating the knowledge that is available' ([5] p.1). These difficulties are exacerbated by a lack of incentives for philanthropists to share, commission or seek out knowledge [35]. Furthermore, some charities may not wish to share knowledge that communicates a failure to achieve their desired outcomes [4] or they may be reluctant to forego a competitive advantage by sharing knowledge [35]. Two studies advised that good practice in sharing knowledge expedites the use of evidence—formal and informal networks can enhance the dissemination of knowledge through collaboration, for 'many knowledge entrepreneurs in philanthropy get and give their most useful knowledge through peer-to-peer networks' so ensuring 'that knowledge has a connection to practitioner problems and needs' ([35] p.10). Philanthropists and funders can also enable learning and innovation simply by sharing their own data even if they do not have the skills or resources to analyse that data themselves ([26] p.20). Some models of knowledge dissemination are purported to be more effective than others, for dissemination strategies usually concentrate 'on the supply side of knowledge sharing, rather than the demand side' and rarely ask the question 'what knowledge do users need?' ([35] p.4). Ravenscroft suggests implementing feedback loops from beneficiaries to donors to help further inform the relevance and quality of desired evidence [26] and further recommends engaging proactively with the 'What Works Centres' (WWC) to enhance the use of evidence, which could then inform funding decisions [26]. The first of the WWCs was set up by the UK government in 2010 to facilitate access to high-quality evidence regarding what works across a number of fields. The WWCs are intended to aid 'more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels' [36]. So far, WWCs have been established in education, crime, early intervention, local economic growth, ageing and well-being. Similarly, in the USA, the What Works Clearing House (WWCH) provides a central and trusted source of scientific evidence on education interventions. The WWCH uses a systematic review process to identify all of the research on an intervention, assess the quality of each study and summarise the findings from the high-quality studies.

A number of the included studies expressed concerns that a narrow definition of what counts as credible evidence can act as an additional barrier to using evidence; however, several funders specifically raised 'concerns about the quality of evidence' ([26] p.16). As highlighted in the background to this review, what is meant by 'the best available evidence' is contested, but as Cairney points out, the most useful evidence for determining the best way to address a particular problem will largely be determined by the nature of the question being asked [9]. The David and Lucille Packard Foundation agree, cautioning that 'information is context specific'; hence, it is important to specify the question ([35] p.7). However, Schorr and Farrow point out that frameworks which tightly determine what is 'acceptable evidence' can discourage the use of evidence by limiting available knowledge ([5] p.1). They conclude that there should not be an insistence on absolute proof—their findings reveal that 'the value of many kinds of interventions can be .... Understood and acted upon without having to be proven through experimental methods' ([5] p.v). Oliver et al. agree, recommending in their systematic review examining the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers that 'all research should be based on an understanding that a broader interpretation of "evidence" than "research-based" evidence is also essential' ([20] p.9).

Difficulties accessing high-quality and relevant information also hinders the use of evidence. Breeze [37] notes that the sheer volume of data and information available to donors is a challenge, as they lack the resources needed to rationally assess it all. On the other hand, some philanthropists found it hard to access good quality data because it is not readily available [38].

Five of the studies recognised that access to high-quality information or evidence facilitates evidence-informed philanthropy. Indeed, access to high-quality information upon which to base decisions is a pre-requisite to more and better-quality giving, [33] with the quantitative study reporting that 65% of respondents (n = 2115) would donate more if they had a better understanding of the impact of their donation. One study identified syntheses of knowledge about 'what has worked and how' as a mechanism that facilitates the effective use of evidence and thus serves to 'make interventions more effective and implementation stronger' ([5] p.iv). Nevertheless, even when data are available, one study found that philanthropists and philanthropy professionals do not 'pay as much attention as they could (some might

argue should) to acquiring knowledge that could help them' ([27] p.5). This is despite the argument that, in view of the fact that philanthropy is subsidised by the Treasury (with the intention of generating public benefit through private giving), philanthropists have a moral obligation or duty to ensure that any decisions they make concerning the distribution of philanthropic funds are 'based on a full consideration of available evidence' ([27] p.6) and [39].

The studies in this review identified a number of factors which support the use of evidence, including signposting and the publication of links to research findings [13] through knowledge hubs. The creation of feedback loops [35] can help to assess the appetite for knowledge that is relevant and accessible and to inform researchers of the gaps in the research base. Several studies identified a need to reappraise what is deemed to be 'credible' evidence and in so doing enable philanthropists and funders to 'make use of all the knowledge we can muster— – from multiple sources' ([5] p.iii), for the 'idea that nothing is worth knowing unless you know it for certain has its place, but not when applied to complex social programs' ([5] p.v). One study posited that standardised reporting would facilitate the use of evidence, although that same study acknowledged that 'measuring the effectiveness of everything from protecting the environment to tackling world hunger on the same terms is tricky. New methodologies such as the Global Impact Investing Rating System (GIIRS) are emerging, but none is yet viewed as a panacea' ([40] p.35). Irrespective of sector, different Third Sector Organisations currently present outcome measures as they see fit. This is problematic as it limits comparability between providers and prevents the sharing of data collection tools and analysis methods. It may also lead to bias in the choice of outcomes and may crowd out issues that really matter to many stakeholders. Thus, a common set of outcomes (perhaps within sectors, e.g. for elderly care, for child welfare) would allow for comparability and simplicity, and economies of scale for third sector providers. Core outcome sets overcome the measurement problems above, and methods to develop them have been developed by the COMET Initiative [41] to accomplish this goal. While it is accepted that this is not an easy task, it has been achieved in many spheres and has many advantages for the sector and should not be dismissed.

Limitations

None of the included studies were derived from the systematic search of the data bases, rather they each emerged from the supplemental searching. Consequently, none of the included studies was subject to peer review although it should be recognised that many non-peer-reviewed papers are of high quality and vice versa [42]. Similarly, "scholars are increasingly recognizing instances where it seems appropriate to broaden the evidence search beyond the limits of academic journals to incorporate 'grey literature'" [43]. Moreover, the included studies were subjected to both PRISMA guidelines and the GRADE-CERqual approach to ensure that we could have confidence in the quality of the included studies.

A further limitation was that the heterogeneity of study designs made it challenging to compare quality across the studies in this review. In addition, some studies used vote-counting techniques to analyse their findings, which involved counting the number of times each factor was mentioned, without any weighting of importance. This makes it difficult to determine the impact of each factor.

The included studies had a range of methodological weaknesses. However, as this was intended to be a narrative review, even the one third of studies graded low quality were analysed, as we deemed them likely to offer valuable insights [24].

We were surprised to find that even those studies that sought to make recommendations relating to the better use of evidence in philanthropy did not employ rigorous methodology (or at least did not convey the methodology they used in their studies: we had to write to the publishers or authors of the individual reports to ascertain their methodology).

Recommendations for future research

In their study, exploring the 'Benefits of open access to scholarly research for voluntary and charitable sector organisations', Beddoes et al. [32] found that a lack of skills and tools to appraise the quality and reliability of evidence (including critical appraisal skills) and relevance (wrong or insufficient information) were barriers to using evidence. This review did not find many references to the skills or tools that would enhance the use of evidence by philanthropists and funders, but it is surmised that certain skills and tools would better equip them to engage with and critique evidence. Future research, therefore, could focus on the use or otherwise of those specific skills and tools and the extent to which they improve both uptake and understanding of evidence.

Two thirds of the studies cited challenges in accessing evidence and research, together with insufficient knowledge transfer, as barriers. Future research should therefore explore ways to enhance the transfer of knowledge and to better understand which research philanthropists and funders deem to be relevant and accessible.

Four of the included studies called for broadening what constitute credible evidence; thus, research that seeks to clarify our understanding of different types and values of evidence would be welcomed.

Two studies revealed the growth in the philanthropy advice market which 'since the turn of the century' has emerged 'with the aim of helping philanthropists give their money away well' ([2] p.6).

This finding suggests that professional advisors could be a crucial conduit to wealthy donors, and thus, the quality of the advice they offer is significant. As such, some form of professional standards and accreditation for philanthropy advisors would be welcomed in the UK to ensure that the quality of advice is of a minimum standard and is reliable. Indeed, one of the included studies [44] reports that the 12% of philanthropists who take professional philanthropy advice are responsible for 53% of the donations given by high- and ultra-high net-worth individuals in the UK and therefore concludes that philanthropy advisors should be made more readily available. However, this figure only suggests correlation, not causation, as those philanthropists who sought out professional advice may already have been donating a much higher percentage of funds to charities than their peers. Therefore, further research is needed to ascertain the extent to which philanthropic advisors are responsible for increased giving vis-á-vis their clients and also to examine whether those receiving such advice give more effectively than their peers.

Conclusions

This review has highlighted several compelling arguments for supporting and encouraging philanthropists and funders to use evidence in their decision making. If evidence-based philanthropy is to flourish, then the following steps are recommended.

First, it is imperative that all philanthropy is underpinned by a commitment to 'do no harm' (similar to the Hippocratic oath). In January 2019, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations published a statement of 'Charitable Ethical Principles' which, while stopping short of a commitment to 'do no harm', did state that all 'charities should proactively champion ethical behaviour and reflect and apply their charitable values in any activity they undertake' ([6] p.1). However, it is also important that the manner in which we collect and employ evidence (to ensure that we avoid harm) is carefully scrutinised. As recently noted in a report published by the International Committee of the Red Cross, new technologies present both risks and opportunities for humanitarian action and if we are to 'ensure that their use does not result in any harm, humanitarian organisations must develop and implement appropriate data protection standards, including robust risk assessments' ([45] p.4).

Second, the definition of evidence should be expanded, and funding decisions should be 'based on a full consideration of available evidence' ([27] p.9). Moreover, where there is insufficient evidence, funders and philanthropists should be encouraged to invest in generating new evidence [27]. We should also employ more standardised indicators and measures that can be more widely understood and easier to compare.

> If high-quality, widely accepted, readily understood, user-friendly and reliable measures and indicators are to be available where they are most needed, philanthropy ... must become more intentional about investment in developing appropriate data sources, indicators, and measures. ([5] p.6)

Indeed, in a recent letter to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, civil society groups (comprising: the Institute for Government, Full Fact, Nesta, the Open Data Institute, mySociety, the Open Knowledge Foundation, the Royal Statistical Society, the Open Contracting Partnership, 360Giving, Open Ownership, and the Policy Institute at King's College London) warned that a failure to invest in better data means the government is unable to properly understand its own operations and the quality of public services. They urged the UK Government to 'transform its use of data', or the UK will fall 'behind other countries', and pointed out that 'the upcoming *National Data Strategy* offers the chance to seize the new data environment, and use it to deliver better public services, and improve the economy and society for future generations' [46].

A number of foundations are already providing financial support to help set up new specialist research and teaching centres and funding journals and other methods of communicating about philanthropy to a wider audience. Such journals should be open access rather than their content being placed behind a paywall. Attention is also needed to ensure that philanthropists improve their understanding of reputable sources of knowledge or evidence and how to appraise evidence.

Two of the key barriers to evidence-based philanthropy are paradoxical. On the one hand, donors are sometimes confronted by overwhelming amounts of evidence and data that they cannot use effectively due to a lack of time, resources or skills. This calls for more investment in synthesising evidence. On the other hand, a number of philanthropists and funders reported a lack of data or, more specifically, a lack of high-quality evidence relating to the areas they wished to fund. Thus, in addition to encouraging the collection of more knowledge, there is a need for more sharing of existing knowledge through networks and journals, and 'state- and community-level initiatives' should be encouraged to ensure that all new programmes 'generate rigorous new evidence' in tandem with the 'development of the tools and capacities' to 'help local communities generate new knowledge at greater scale' ([5] p.6). The rise in What Works Centres both in the UK and similar organisations in the USA illustrate the uptick in acceptance that sound evidence is important to drive policy.

Finally, poor knowledge transfer and the lack of an infrastructure to facilitate such knowledge transfer, particularly when combined with a lack of incentives that might encourage charities, funders or philanthropists to share, commission or seek out knowledge, presents a considerable barrier to the use of evidence. Indeed, many philanthropists have expressed surprise that "compared with some other 'business' sectors with which they are familiar, there is less specialist research or knowledge transfer within the philanthropy sector" ([27] p.8). However, the emergence of a new generation of philanthropists (many of whom are giving away money they have made in their lifetime rather than inherited) has resulted in new models of philanthropy informed by their commercial expertise [47], as they theorise that practices employed by the commercial sector are equally appropriate for and transferable to charities [26]. Many such philanthropists not only seek to ensure that their gift is outcomes-focused but also that it is cost-effective and will produce a discernible social return [8]. Hence, they employ mechanisms to measure and evaluate the impact of their donation and as such some philanthropists are already well placed to fill knowledge gaps [27].

In conclusion, we theorise that the practice and impact of philanthropy is considerably enhanced by the application of the learning and knowledge that emerges from evidence-based research. Moreover, when resources are finite and not sufficient to meet the extensive demands made upon them, those responsible for deciding how funding will be allocated should endeavour to ensure that those decisions are informed by detailed consideration of all the accessible evidence [27].

Supplementary information

Supplementary information accompanies this paper at https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01448-w.

Additional file 1. Tables of Extracted Data.
Additional file 2. GRADE CERQual Tables.
Additional file 3. PRISMA checklist.
Additional file 4. Search Strategy.
Additional file 5. JBI Checklists.

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Authors' contributions
The research design of the study was developed by both CG and PM. CG conducted the search and screened all the studies of which PM double-screened a 20% random sample of the studies. All data extraction, quality appraisal and analysis were conducted by CG. CG drafted the manuscript with input from PM. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Publisher's Note

CHAPTER 4 – THE QUALITATIVE STUDY – PAPER ONE

Seeing is believing

The following pages reproduce a published article on the qualitative study examining how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors utilise evidence in their philanthropy. This paper which is entitled "Seeing is Believing: A Qualitative Study Examining How High and Ultra-High-Net-Worth Donors Utilise Evidence to Inform Their Giving and the Barriers to and Facilitators of the Use of Evidence," explores the nuances of evidence-based decision-making among wealthy philanthropists. The primary purpose of this study is to identify and scrutinise factors influencing evidence use in philanthropic activities. This research aligns with this thesis's overarching research question which seeks to understand the multifaceted dynamics underpinning evidence use in philanthropic decision-making. It explores the extent to which evidence influences the selection of issues or thematic areas, the choice of non-profits, the types of interventions favoured, and the methods used to justify these choices. It also considers how philanthropists measure the impact of their donations and their understanding of the concept of impact. By addressing these areas, the paper contributes strategies to bridge the gap between current philanthropic practices and a more evidence-informed approach, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in evidence-based philanthropy.

Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2024). Seeing is believing: A qualitative study examining how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors utilise evidence to inform their giving and the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 29(1), e1809. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1809

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

Seeing is believing: A qualitative study examining how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors utilise evidence to inform their giving and the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence

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Abstract

Whilst there is growing recognition across the non-profit literature, that the giving of resources ought to be informed by rigorous evidence, few studies to date have examined how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors use evidence to inform their philanthropy, the type and quality of the evidence they utilise, and how they measure the performance of the charities they support. The primary objective of this study was to examine whether and how philanthropists employ evidence to inform their decision-making. We employed in-depth qualitative research methods to elicit the perspectives of philanthropists on how they engaged with evidence and, in so doing, filled a gap in the data. We found barriers to utilising evidence included challenges in accessing evidence, difficulties in assessing the quality and appropriateness of evidence and insufficient resources to capture evidence. Facilitators of evidence use included: making evidence more accessible and enhanced access to professional philanthropy advice and advisors. Despite growing awareness of the importance of evidence, few donors employed sound evidence-based models of philanthropy.

KEYWORDS
barriers, evidence, facilitators, philanthropy

Practitioner Points

What is currently known about the subject matter?

- Philanthropists increasingly seek to assess the impact of their funding.
- To date, there is little to indicate that many philanthropists are utilising evidence to inform their philanthropy.

What our paper adds to this

- This study elicits the perspectives of philanthropists as to how they engage with evidence.
- Barriers include difficulties accessing and assessing the quality and appropriateness of evidence and insufficient resources to capture evidence.
- Facilitators include making evidence more accessible and enhanced access to philanthropy advice.

- Despite growing awareness of the importance of evidence, few donors employed sound evidence-based models of philanthropy.

The implications of our study findings for practitioners

- Non-profits rarely generate the type of evidence that potential donors seek.
- Non-profits should be transparent in how they evaluate their impact and be willing to share both what has and has not worked.
- Evidence allows us to understand whether a programme is effective and helps non-profits and donors to be more accountable.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The Coutts Million Pound Donor Report 2017 disclosed that the level of giving by High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) in the UK was growing and that 'major philanthropy' was 'on the rise'(Coutts, 2017, p. 1). This was borne out in 2021, when in response to the pandemic, donations by UHNWIs in the UK rose to £4305 billion, an increase of 36.1% on 2020 figures (The Sunday Times/CAF, 2022, p. 2). Globally, UHNWIs accounted for more than 25% of the funding awarded in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Gulliver-Garcia et al., 2021, p. 5). An UHNWI is defined as someone with a net worth of $30m+, and a HNWI as an individual with a net worth of $5m–$30m (Green et al., 2020, p. 2).

The growth of significant philanthropy and the aspirations underpinning it, did not originate in the UK. In 1889, the American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie questioned '... the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilisation is founded, have thrown it into the hands of a few' (Carnegie, 1889, p. 6). Carnegie explicated a vision of philanthropy in which the beneficiaries of great wealth would dispose of it in such a manner that it would act as a 'more potent force for the good elevation of our race than if it had been distributed in small sums to the people themselves'. (Carnegie, 1889, p. 10). Carnegie sought to tackle the root causes of poverty rather than to merely alleviate the symptoms of poverty. Carnegie's essay the 'Gospel of Wealth' (Carnegie, 1889) has been referred to as 'the intellectual charger of modern philanthropy' (Walker, 2015, para. 6).

In 2010, Bill and Melinda Gates founded 'The Giving Pledge', inviting the ultra-wealthy to give away at least half their wealth, enabling them to become 'powerful social actors engaged in the business of world making' (Harvey et al., 2011, p. 424). Like Carnegie, they believed philanthropy could 'address some of the world's biggest challenges' (The Giving Pledge, 2010). This focus on addressing and finding solutions to complex societal challenges has led to 'calls for philanthropy to be reinvented and recast' (Haydon et al., 2021, p. 353) and an intensified interest in 'strategic-philanthropy' (Sandfort, 2008) in which donors pursue 'clearly defined goals' and utilise 'evidence-based strategies' to achieve their objectives (Brest, 2012, p. 42).

Several studies confirm that philanthropists increasingly seek to assess the impact of their giving, to ensure that their money is making a difference (Aleman & Roumani, 2018; Bishop & Green, 2015; Stannard-Stockton, 2010). Evaluating impact requires philanthropists to understand the difference their funding makes and the change it will ultimately generate, necessitating a comparison between what would have occurred in the absence of the programme (the counterfactual) and what did occur, which calls for rigorous evidence. However, there is little to indicate that many philanthropists are utilising evidence to inform their philanthropy (Kassatly, 2018; Stannard-Stockton, 2010). Indeed, 'it is widely agreed that most people ... do not base their giving on any significant level of evidence' (Stannard-Stockton, 2010) and that very few donors implement 'goal-oriented, evidence-based strategies'. (2012 p. 42), leading us to theorise that philanthropists struggle to engage with high-quality and appropriate evidence.

Furthermore, research has revealed a disparity between the resources donors sought and what was available to them (Aleman & Roumani, 2018), leading some to theorise that rigorous and appropriate evidence is not readily available or easily accessible (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). To date, little research has been conducted into if and how philanthropists use evidence to inform their philanthropy or how they measure the performance of the non-profits they support. Moreover, 'systematic data' enabling us to measure the 'evidence on the ... performance of philanthropy' are 'scarce...' (von Shnurbein & Neumar, 2021, p. 186) and challenges in gaining access to elite donors means that there is a lack of substantive theoretical research examining the motives, experiences, and opinions of elite donors (Breeze, 2021).

This study seeks to fill a gap in the data by eliciting the perspectives of philanthropists on how they engage with the evidence. We sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do philanthropists seek out evidence before donating to a non-profit?
2. What are the barriers to evidence use by philanthropists?
3. What are the facilitators of evidence use by philanthropists?

Based on our review of the extant literature, we hypothesise that whether and how philanthropists utilise evidence will vary according to what is available to them, their ability to distinguish between different qualities of evidence, which evidence they perceive to be the most useful, their mindset and possibly their biographies and idiosyncratic preferences (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). We further hypothesise that many philanthropists will rely on the endorsement of their friends and peers as a proxy for rigorous evidence and that a donor's decision to make a gift to a charity may also be influenced by their social networks (Chapman et al., 2019; Scharf & Smith, 2016).

We begin by explaining how we conceptualise philanthropy before discussing why evidence matters, what we mean by it and the challenges of accessing high-quality evidence. We then explain our methodology and the data analysis employed; our findings are described in the fourth section, and in the fifth section, we elucidate those findings. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research and implications for charity managers.

2 | THE MEANING OF PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy is a contested concept. Much of the confusion surrounding how it is conceptualised arises from 'attempts to contain within it a diversity of human phenomena that resist generalisation and categorisation' (Payton, 1987, p. 1). For this study, we utilise Phillips and Jung's construct of philanthropy, which is understood as 'the use of private resources … for public purposes' (Phillips & Jung, 2016, p. 7).

2.1 | Why does evidence matter?

It has long been understood in medicine that evidence of what works is vital and should underpin all new interventions if only to ensure the avoidance of harm. This logic has only sometimes been applied to philanthropy with the consequence that not only have some philanthropists failed to achieve the impact they hoped for, but in some instances, the programmes they have funded have been detrimental. PlayPump International's 'Magic Roundabout' was one such example. This programme received funding to instal 4000 play pumps across Africa. It was believed that those mechanisms would serve to both entertain children and pump water (children playing on the merry-go-round would drive the water pump) and, in so doing, would enable 10 million people to access clean drinking water. However, the calculations relating to water demand were flawed, and the pumps were criticised for their 'reliance on child labour and … risk of injury' (Chambers, 2009, paras 2 and 6).

A lack of evidence may lead donors to fund programmes that, whilst not causing harm, are less effective than alternative programmes that address the same problem. Fiennes highlights a study by MIT that compared two programmes seeking to prevent diarrhoea in children in Kenya (a leading cause of child mortality). One supplied chlorine to people to add at the water pump: the second delivered chlorine to people in their homes. Researchers discovered that the first programme was twice as effective as the second; consequently, donors funding the first could prevent twice as many deaths as those funding the second (Fiennes, 2016). Hence donors wishing to fund effective programmes must employ robust scientific evidence and meticulous reasoning (Fiennes, 2016; Stannard-Stockton, 2010); this is referred to as EBPh and 'relies heavily on science and evaluation' (Easterling & Main, 2016, p. 81).

2.2 | What is evidence?

The definition of evidence is contested. Challenges in understanding its meaning are exacerbated because the meaning of evidence and the standard of proof—by which we mean 'the level of certainty and the degree of evidence necessary to establish proof…' (Merriam-Webster, 2011) - varies across different settings and research questions. Cairney defines evidence as: 'an argument or assertion backed up by information' (Cairney, 2016, p. 3), which may comprise a literature review, a stakeholder consultation, a randomised controlled trial (RCT) or a meta-analysis.

What we mean by 'rigorous evidence' is also disputed, particularly considering the different types and weight of evidence in the social sciences (Davies, 2000, p. 366). Rigour may be 'best thought of in terms of the quality of the research process. …: transparency … validity or credibility… reliability or dependability, comparativeness, and reflexivity' (Given, 2008, p. 43). EBM is usually underpinned by a hierarchy of evidence (below), which positions RCTs and systematic reviews at the top of the pyramid and 'expert' opinion at the bottom (Greenhalgh, 2010; Figure 1).

This hierarchy of evidence has been criticised for being overly simplistic, as whether the evidence is relevant will depend on the question and nature of the problem (Murad et al., 2016). Furthermore, such hierarchical approaches may overlook context and neglect the 'relevant world views of legitimate stakeholders' (Saltelli, 2017, p. 62), whilst simple, evidence-based approaches may fail to consider 'what works for whom' and 'in what circumstances?' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 144). An RCT might offer the most appropriate evidence for questions about effectiveness, but a 'qualitative study may be better placed to answer what and why something works' (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 2). The appropriate evidence type will thus be determined by the nature and scale of the intervention and its context. For example, programmes embedded in 'social systems … can be understood only through examination of the social rules and institutions within which they are embedded….'

FIGURE 1 A Hierarchy of evidence adapted from Murad et al. (2016).

FIGURE 2 A model of evidence-based philanthropy as described by Sackett et al. (1996, pp. 71, 72).

Hence, evaluators must 'search for the causal mechanisms that lead to program outcomes, but with the critical caveat that those mechanisms are likely to be context specific' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 405). Sackett et al. (1996) described EBM as a confluence of best research evidence, practitioner skills, and user preferences (see Figure 2).

Similarly, EBPh draws on the best available information from three different sources of evidence incorporating: (i) academic research or scientific evidence, (ii) field experience, (iii) informed opinion (Rosqueta, 2014, p. 1). The convergence of the three domains is where the decisional nexus lies (see Figure 3).

2.3 | Challenges in accessing evidence

A systematic review identified three main barriers to philanthropists using evidence: (1) inadequate knowledge transfer and difficulties accessing evidence, (2) challenges in understanding the evidence, and (3) insufficient resources (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). The data may not exist in the first instance, or a lack of infrastructure for knowledge transfer across the third sector may hinder data sharing. Second, data collection is complex, and 'the outcomes that charities are trying to affect are so varied' with little 'room for standardisation on metrics' (Kassatly, 2018, para. 7). Third, non-profits need sufficient resources (including the capacity, time, and skills) to collect, analyse and synthesise the evidence, necessitating investment. A lack of such resources may lead non-profits to focus on easier-to-measure outputs, which are 'less explicit about change achieved than outcomes' (Kassatly, 2018, para. 7).

3 | METHODOLOGY

We sought to elicit the perspectives of HNWI and UHNWI donors on how they engaged with the evidence. We wished to examine if and how they utilised evidence, their perception of what constitutes evidence and any other factors that might have impacted their decision to donate.

We adopted the perspective of social constructivists, holding the view that 'reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed' (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 12). We employed in-depth qualitative research methods designed to 'generate knowledge grounded in human experience' (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 1). We sought to understand participants' giving strategies and approaches, the factors influencing their decisions, and the mechanisms they employed to measure the success of their giving. Such an understanding was of great importance given the need to elucidate participants' perspectives and the under-researched nature of the area.

We utilised semi-structured interviews as the primary form of data collection. The interviews were based on a topic guide (Appendix A) containing a series of open-ended questions, which were 'purported to generate richer data' (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2). Our questions emerged from our examination of the extant literature. Interviews were systematically recorded and transcribed using transcription software, enabling meticulous analysis and the retention of the language and phrases used. We employed thematic analysis as such analysis 'can produce trustworthy and insightful findings' (Braun & Clarke, 2006 cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2), enabling us to compare and contrast the experiences and viewpoints of a range of participants.

3.1 | Sampling strategy

As we sought to elicit the perspectives of elite HNWI and UHNWI donors, the sample was of necessity both purposive, in which participants were chosen 'by virtue of their capacity to provide richly-textured information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation' and small 'to support the depth of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry' (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 1). Four participants qualified as HNWIs, and 13 as UHNWIs. Participants were initially recruited from a sample frame compiled from The Coutts Million Pound Donor List and the Sunday Times Giving List comprising HNWIs and UHNWIs. Inclusion in the Sunday Times Giving List depends upon inclusion in the Sunday Times Rich List and consequently may miss significant donors. The Coutts Million Pound Donor List (last published in 2017) identifies charitable donations of £1 million-plus made by UK donors in the previous year. Both lists miss philanthropists who give anonymously.

Having identified donors from the sample frame, we employed a mixture of convenience, snowball, and purposive sampling. It was convenience in style because one of the researchers was known to several participants, having sat on boards with six participants in the initial sample. Subsequently, snowball sampling was used in which initial participants introduced and endorsed the researcher to others (who met the selection criteria) in their networks. We purposively sampled from within the population to ensure that donors employing various giving strategies and different sizes of donations were captured. Recent studies have demonstrated 'the greater efficiency of

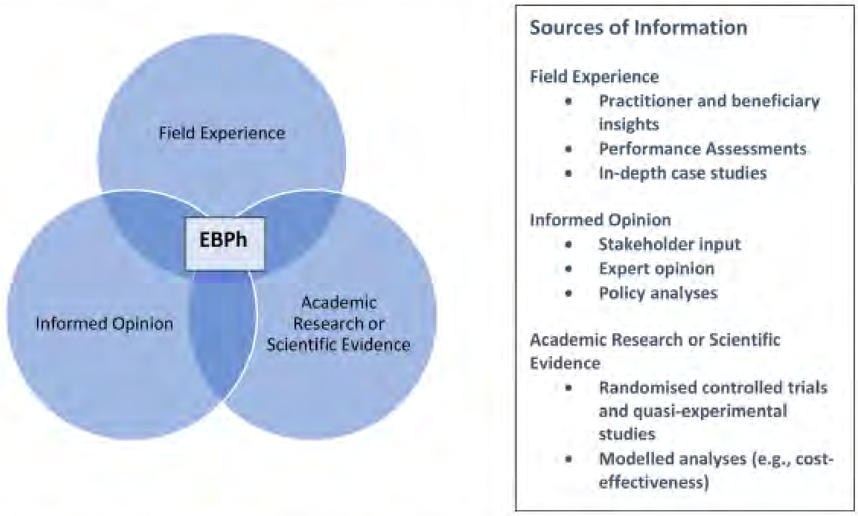

FIGURE 3 A conceptual model of evidence-based philanthropy adapted from Rosqueta (2014, para 11).

purposive sampling compared to random sampling in qualitative studies'. Indeed, purposive sampling enabled us to select 'information-rich cases' (van Rijnsoever, 2017, p. 2).

We considered our sample (comprising 17 philanthropists) sufficient for this study as it was relatively homogenous, aligned to our research objectives and was sufficient to reach data saturation, meaning the 'point at which no new codes or concepts emerge'. (van Rijnsoever, 2017, p. 1). Some deem data saturation, which 'requires a researcher to collect data from informants to the point that no further information can possibly be collected'. (Mwita, 2022, p. 414) to be a 'guarantee of qualitative rigour' (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1893), and In our study, data saturation was reached at the point at which no new information was derived from additional interviews.

3.2 | Elite interviewing

We define elite philanthropy as 'voluntary giving at scale by wealthy individuals, couples and families' (Maclean et al., 2021, p. 330). Our participants were wealthy individuals with influence within their social networks (Harvey, 2015). Interviewing elites presents different methodological challenges to interviewing non-elites (Mikeca, 2012). Procuring access may be difficult, and yet everything 'depends on … getting access to your subject' (Goldstein, 2002, p. 669) and obtaining reliable data requires researchers to 'establish a rapport with respondents…' (Goldstein, 2002, p. 669). Interviews were conducted between February 2019 and April 2020 and were usually of one-hour duration. Most were conducted in person at a venue the participants chose; however, during the Covid-19 lockdown, five interviews were conducted over Zoom.

Ethical approval was obtained from The University of Birmingham Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (ERN_18-1290) on 23 January 2019. As most participants were deemed 'elite', particular consideration was given to ensuring confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, and written consent was obtained before interviews began. All participants were offered the opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews and informed that they could withdraw from the study before publication. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and all data were stored securely.

3.3 | Data analysis

We utilised thematic analysis, enabling an inductive 'data-driven' approach (Boyatzis, 1998), allowing for rich, sensitive, and insightful data exploration, which was necessary because the primary aim of the research was exploratory and descriptive. We employed Braun & Clarke's 'reflexive thematic analysis', which they first delineated in 2006 (Braun & Clarke, 2006) but which they expanded upon in 2021 (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Although Braun & Clarke were keen to avoid rigidity, they recommended a six-stage approach to data analysis, including: '(1) data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes; (2) systematic data coding; (3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data; (4) developing and reviewing themes; (5) refining, defining and naming themes and (6) writing the report' (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 331). We used an inductive approach to our data analysis which was a 'situated, interpretative, reflexive process'

TABLE 1 Table of participants characteristics.

Participant No	Gender	Age	Nationality	Education	Net worth millions	Profession
001	Male	50–60	American	Graduate	£50–£99	Finance
002	Male	50–60	British	Graduate	£100+	Family office
003	Female	50–60	American	Graduate	Not disclosed	Journalist
004	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Family office
005	Female	50–60	Canadian	Graduate	£10–£29	Not disclosed
006	Male	60+	American	Graduate	£100+	Entrepreneur
007	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Investor
008	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£100+	Banker
009	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Medicine/BioTech
010	Male	60+	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Accountant
011	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Entrepreneur
012	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£100+	Private equity
013	Male	80+	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Businessman/Investor
014	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	£100+	Family office
015	Male	50–60	American	Graduate	£30–£49	Management consultant
016	Male	40–50	British	Graduate	£30–£49	Investor
017	Female	50–60	Canadian	Graduate	£30–£49	NED

(Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 334). and we took a 'semantic approach' to identify key themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

We warranted the reliability of our data analysis by recording each interview and through accurate transcription of those interviews. The full transcripts of the interviews were analysed using NVivo 12. The second author coded 20% of the interviews to ensure the reliability of the coding decisions; some minor modifications were made following this feedback. We ensured the validity of our data analysis by ensuring that the results were credible and authentic and that the participants' voices were accurately represented (Cresswell & Miller, 2000).

4 | FINDINGS

In this paper, we examined the responses of 17 respondents, each of whom qualified as a major donor. A major donor is someone who makes a gift 'that has a significant impact on the work of a fundraising organisation' (Fundraising, 2020, para. 1). There is no such definition of what qualifies as a major gift, 'for some it may mean a gift of $10,000, for others a gift of $10 million' (Eberhardt & Madden, 2017, p. 4). Table 1 (below) presents the characteristics of the 17 respondents who qualified as major donors, as examined in the study.

Three key themes emerged from the data, which reflected how the participants engaged with and understood the evidence and the barriers to and facilitators of evidence use. Table 2 (below) displays the three key themes and the seven sub-themes that emerged from the data, illustrating how the participants engaged with and understood the evidence, as well as the barriers to and facilitators of evidence use.

TABLE 2 Table of themes and sub-themes.

Themes		
Understanding and engaging with evidence	**Barriers to utilising evidence**	**Facilitators of evidence**
Conceptions of evidence	A lack of evidence or data	More accessible to donors
Rigorous Evidence	Insufficient skills and time	Synthesised information
	A lack of evidence synthesis	Transparency
	Insufficient knowledge transfer	Enhanced access to professional philanthropy advice and advisors.
	A lack of transparency and poor reporting practices	

5 | UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING WITH EVIDENCE

5.1 | Conceptions of evidence

Conceptions about what counted as evidence were wide-ranging; not all donors required high-quality evidence: '...if it feels good, if it looks good, you take a leap of faith... you don't have to have hard evidence to see things doing good'. (016). Eight respondents referred to using 'their gut' or applying a 'smell' or 'sniff' test: '... if they don't meet your scratch and sniff test, you don't do it'. (001). One conflated their judgement with evidence, 'due diligence is, I can judge the person like that, just accept that, hurrah. Do I know the detail? No'. (008). Another cautioned that whilst 'evidence sometimes leads you to what has happened. It may not lead you to what might happen…' (010), and one referred to the importance of obtaining clarity on 'what one knows, what … you think you know and what you don't know and making certain that we're not confusing what we think we know and calling it what we know'. (006).

Trust in an individual closely connected to the charity frequently served as a proxy for evidence: 'Somewhere, I met a researcher, enough to be really intrigued and I took a total leap in the dark after that …' (001). Fifteen respondents sought and relied upon the judgement and endorsements of trusted friends and colleagues. 'I trust Harry. … He rang up and goes I gather you're doing an environmental piece. I sit on the board of xxx I think it's really, really good. That was almost good enough for us'. (002).

Seven respondents sought to make site visits as, in their view, such visits provided 'the best evidence you're going to get'. (005).

5.2 | Hard evidence of impact

A majority of respondents sought 'hard' evidence of their impact, namely, data that was both visible and could be substantiated (Tellings, 2017, p. 584), such as annual reports and impact reports. Fifteen respondents wanted to understand the 'impact' of the programme they had been invited to fund, asking what were 'the most impactful interventions?' and 'which have the highest need of more funding?' (015). There was consensus that impact meant outcomes (the difference that will be made) rather than outputs (the services or goods that will be delivered). One donor reflected that charities themselves often conflate the two.

One respondent framed impact in a monetary sense as a return on their investment: 'we … got US $12 of impact for every US$1 that we put in'. (002). Three respondents focused on the extent and scale of impact that could be achieved. One (001) sought a systemic change to achieve impact at scale, 'If I do 10 million malaria vaccines at $2 apiece … then I can reasonably be sure that I save 10 million lives. For that same US$20 million, you could put up a human rights program … and all of a sudden, you'll not just get the malaria program but the entire health system … and you'll get better roads and better schools… Why are you wasting your money on the symptoms instead of the cause of the disease?' One described themselves as being 'cause-agnostic', I 'just think about how capital is allocated … why does it work the way it works and how could it work better?' (015). Six employed business models to inform their charitable funding and determine impact, asking: 'how much was it costing to supply a service? … What benefit were they getting?' (016). One highlighted the importance of ensuring the data's quality and integrity and understanding the charity's perception of 'what success looked like … which I find most non-profits don't know…' (006).

Most respondents acknowledged that measuring impact was difficult and that working out what to measure and how, was costly, resource-intensive, and time-consuming. 'How do we price due process … or gay marriage?' (Rhode & Packel, 2009, p. 33). There was also recognition that some charities struggle to measure and communicate impact because it may be 'ten years before you know whether you've really turned a young person from someone who is potentially very dangerous to a successful adult contributing to society'. (010). This respondent recognised the need for 'proxy measures' to capture longer-term impacts. Another (006) pointed out the risk that biases in data collection could distort the findings. Two respondents recognised that donors were often unaware of a problem's multifaceted nature and sometimes caused difficulties by asking for data that served no purpose (004 and 006).

6 | BARRIERS TO THE USE OF EVIDENCE

Respondents cited multiple challenges encountered in accessing evidence:

1. A lack of evidence or data
2. Insufficient skills and time
3. A lack of evidence synthesis
4. Insufficient knowledge transfer and
5. A lack of transparency and poor reporting practices.

6.1 | A lack of evidence or data

Most donors identified a lack of accessible evidence as a significant barrier: 'there is not enough evidence, and you can't do evidence-based giving if there is no evidence….' (014). 'I use actual data way less than I would like to… Because it's not there or not shared' (015). The same respondent highlighted the gaps between 'what researchers wanted to research and what practitioners needed to know'. Another referred to 'data devoid environments' (010), and another to a 'lag on census data in a poor neighbourhood'. (006).

6.2 | Insufficient skills and time

Nine respondents highlighted a need for more resources such as funding, staffing, and time, as a challenge to gathering evidence. One commented that charities were 'underfunded and … understaffed …' adding that 'they don't have the systems in place to interact, to monitor work, so there is no data' (009). Another hypothesised that charities do not have the resources to do more than count heads (004). Several respondents perceived insufficient time as a barrier to evidence gathering both on the part of the donors and charities; one remarked that charity staff struggle '… because their time is spread thin …' (006). Three respondents said that insufficient skills were a barrier to producing evidence. One observed that charity personnel lacked the skills to utilise their data and were 'swimming in a sea of data without any insight' (009). Skills gaps included a lack of numeracy and a 'lack of statistical understanding' on the part 'of a lot of people who are making the decisions about these sorts of things' (010). Skills gaps were perceived to be more likely when staff had no prior experience of working in the commercial world: 'I think this is inevitably a skill set gap, because … a large percentage of people that operate within the charitable sector have never worked for the for-profit sector in their lives' (009). Another respondent observed that '… research is difficult and should be done by people who are experts in social science research …' (014). However, one respondent opined that without apparent measures of success, such as profit margins or share price, assessing the impact of an intervention or service delivered by a non-profit was difficult (010).

6.3 | A lack of evidence synthesis

Two respondents identified a need for quality syntheses of information; one commented that information is 'not synthesised; it's overwhelming' (015) and that they struggled to '… understand cohort studies and case-control studies' (003). Three respondents talked of being overwhelmed by too much information: 'There is not awareness because there's too much information out there' (015). Another wryly acknowledged that reading endless reports and requests for support was not how they chose to spend their time (005).

6.4 | Insufficient knowledge transfer

Four respondents reflected that difficulties in accessing evidence were exacerbated because of a lack of mechanisms for knowledge sharing, meaning that donors often had 'no idea what else was already going on' 006.

6.5 | A lack of transparency and poor reporting practices

A lack of transparency was identified as a problem when engaging with evidence, partly because charities were 'scared stiff of being open' (007). One respondent commented that it could be challenging to persuade grantees to report trials with negative results even though they could contribute valuable knowledge (012), adding that such challenges were amplified in the health sector because negative results were rarely reported. Another commented that the quality of reporting from many charities needed to be more detailed, was frequently generic and 'didn't cover what we need to know'. In part because charities did not 'have the experience or the skill to know… to do it and to know what we want to know'. (013). Poor reporting or a failure to report created a barrier to accessing evidence and was exacerbated because of publication bias, whereby journals favour publishing 'studies that show significant results' (Ross et al., 2019, p. 187).

Four respondents posited that donors created barriers to evidence use, with one referring to 'ignorant donors' (006). One donor sought to impose their agenda upon charities they fund: 'What we'll try to do is … to change things' but acknowledged that this could lead to the 'donors preferred course of action being pursued when better alternatives might be available'. (007).

These findings aligned with those of a scoping review which concluded that barriers to knowledge use by Third Sector Organisations included: resource constraints, organisational culture and insufficient time and skills to access scholarly research and insufficient relevance (Hardwick et al., 2015).

7 | FACILITATORS OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE

Each donor identified factors that facilitated their use of evidence, many of which were reciprocal factors of barriers to using evidence.

7.1 | More accessible evidence

Thirteen respondents identified better knowledge transfer and more accessible and relevant information as ways to facilitate the uptake of evidence. Several sought to fund mechanisms for knowledge sharing or made knowledge sharing a criterion for donating. Examples of investment in knowledge transfer included the respondent, who, having identified 'data devoid environments', created a free-to-use 'database of xxx research on education because it's very hard to find evidence'. (010).

7.2 | Synthesised information

Several respondents observed that better-curated information would facilitate their use of evidence. 'It's just much better if there is a very good interpreter of all that, whose actual profession is to really look at those things and understand them and be able to evaluate them'. (003).

7.3 | Transparency

Nine respondents cited transparency in reporting as a necessary mechanism for facilitating better evidence use. One sought to encourage charities to share good and bad outcomes with them: 'If something is not working and you think that and there are good reasons for it, then please come and tell us and explain it…' (014). Another commented that transparency takes 'friction out of the system' (015).

7.4 | Access to professional advice/advisors

Two donors employed professional advisors to facilitate their giving and their use of evidence. However, not all donors were enamoured with philanthropy advisors, and one was critical of philanthropists 'outsourcing' their philanthropy rather than taking responsibility for it. 'I've got all sorts of bugbears about high-net-worth family philanthropists ... outsourcing their philanthropy to other advisors.... Outsourcing all the things ... that should engage you about giving money away....' (016). The same respondent expressed concerns that philanthropy consultants can create a barrier between the donor and the beneficiary, adding that 'their attitude drives me slightly bonkers'.

8 | DISCUSSION

Our findings suggest that donors recognised that giving resources ought to be informed by evidence (Aleman & Roumani, 2018; Bishop & Green, 2008; Stannard-Stockton, 2010) as it was 'extremely important [to show] that you are backing something that is solving a problem'. (005). Indeed, evidence of a programme's effectiveness was deemed vital to ensure that it had the impact sought and to safeguard against unintentional harm. Our findings echoed those of a scientific study by Karlan and Wood which observed that major donors were 'more likely to give and more likely to give more' (Karlan & Wood, 2017, p. 1) when receiving positive information regarding the charity's effectiveness. Indeed, 15 participants sought to comprehend the 'impact' of the initiative that their funds were supporting or being solicited for, with more than half requesting annual or impact reports to enhance their understanding of the charity's impact. Nevertheless, despite their intentions, our findings also disclosed that many participants were confused by what evidence was and what it meant, many did not know what the sources of evidence were, how it was gathered or even why it was evidence. These findings may help to elucidate the conclusions of an earlier study which found that whilst donors said that they cared 'about non-profit performance, very few actively...' donated 'to the highest performing non-profits' and which concluded that a gap existed between what HNWDs said they wanted, 'more evidence' and what they did in practice, namely, fail 'to consult evidence'. (Neighbor et al., 2010, Slide 10).

Accordingly, half of our respondents relied on their gut or what they referred to as a 'smell test' as a substitute for evidence. Furthermore, almost all participants sought the endorsement of a friend or colleague either as a proxy measure of evidence or for reassurance, echoing Bagwell et al. findings that family, friends and colleagues are the most common information source for HNWDs (Bagwell et al., 2013, p. 33). These findings support our hypothesis that a donor's social networks influence charitable giving and conform to social identity theory which 'addresses the ways that social identities affect people's attitudes and behaviours...' (Leaper, 2011, p. 362). Social identity theory has important implications for fundraising because donors who feel a loyalty to and affinity for the person soliciting their donation are more likely to make a gift as 'success in the peer-to-peer fundraising context is influenced more by champion than by the charity' (Chapman et al., 2019, p. 573). Our results also corroborated those of Chapman et al. (2019) as several respondents disclosed that they frequently donated out of loyalty to the person soliciting the funds.

One respondent remarked that much fundraising was underpinned by reciprocity which concurs with the view that elite philanthropy 'is rarely a "pure gift" motivated solely by altruism.... Reciprocity in some guise is the norm...' (Maclean et al., 2021, p. 334). These results also confirm Breeze's assertion that donors employ 'heuristics' to facilitate their decision-making, which often comprises reliance on 'third-party endorsement' and frequently encompass 'influential ... figures, and ties of loyalty' (Breeze, 2010, p. 26).

Respondents who sought to utilise evidence experienced numerous barriers to doing so, with more than half citing 'difficulties in accessing evidence' as an obstacle, confirming our assertion that philanthropists struggle to engage with the evidence. Specific challenges experienced by respondents included: poor reporting practices and an unwillingness to share adverse outcomes and failures, which made utilising evidence troublesome. Even though 'the wisdom of learning from failure is incontrovertible' and that reasons for failure may include those of 'thoughtful experimentation' (Edmondson, 2011, p. 1). Moreover, sharing failures can contribute valuable knowledge to the whole of the sector, meaning that 'people ... know something they didn't know before, and it will change what they do going forward' (Ford Reedy, 2018, para 2). One respondent believed that a reluctance to share poor results was aggravated by a highly competitive funding environment that encouraged researchers to only submit positive results for publication (012). The same respondent agreed with Ferguson and Heene's (2012) observation that publication bias—in which journals seek to 'avoid publishing null results' (Ferguson & Heene, 2012, p. 555)—could, in the case of clinical trials 'have major consequences for the health of millions' (Ferguson & Heene, 2012, p. 149).

Whilst most respondents sought evidence of impact, one of the challenges they faced in accessing such information was that few charities could demonstrate their impact because impact evaluation was expensive and required investment in training and skills. These results confirmed those of a scoping review which concluded that barriers to knowledge use by Third Sector Organisations included: resource constraints, organisational culture and insufficient time and skills to access scholarly research (Hardwick et al., 2015). It is posited that underinvestment in skills and training would remain a problem whilst charity boards and management continued to shy away from investing in research and training in monitoring and evaluation because of concerns about how their cost ratios would be perceived (Framjee, 2016). For, even though core costs borne by a non-profit are both inescapable and vital, many donors remain unwilling to fund such costs (known as overhead aversion) and may seek 'to avoid the charity that uses a portion of the donated money as overhead costs' (Yoo et al., 2022, p. 1). This aligns with Greenhalgh and Montgomery's finding that 'the cost of obtaining the relevant evidence' is a barrier to evidence use (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020, p. 8). However, an absence of investment in relevant skills leads many charities to mistakenly measure their outputs (e.g., children seen) rather than their outcomes (children helped).

Half of the respondents cited challenges in understanding the evidence as a barrier to engaging with it, with several observing that there was too much information. This finding supported previous research in which donors talked of being 'bombarded' by requests for support from charities (Breeze, 2013). Paradoxically, other donors commented on an absence of evidence. It is possible that both statements are correct, namely that there is a vast amount of information being produced by charities and forwarded to donors; however, data without insight or critical analysis does not amount to usable evidence. Several donors reinforced this point by commenting on the need for high-quality synthesised evidence to address these points. However, producing such evidence is a costly and skilful endeavour requiring investment.

Most respondents employed additional mechanisms to facilitate their use of evidence, with many seeking an endorsement from a peer as a proxy for evidence. Even those who sought rigorous evidence before deciding whether to fund a charity usually only did so after receiving or seeking the endorsement of a peer. We theorise that by employing evidence in this way, namely, only after being introduced to a charity by a peer, donors may miss the opportunity to fund the best and most effective charities. Moreover, we posit that reliance on the endorsement of a peer could result in a large proportion of funding becoming concentrated in the hands of a few favoured organisations, as those charities with significant and high-value networks inevitably 'attract more funding than they otherwise would, while those charities with weaker connections will suffer…' (Meer, 2009, p. 1).

Three respondents relied upon philanthropy advice services to expedite their giving and use of evidence. A systematic review revealed that the number of philanthropic advisors in the UK had expanded considerably since 2000 with the aim of 'helping philanthropists [to] give their money away well' (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020, p. 27). However, unlike in the USA, where philanthropy advisors can seek designation as a Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy, there is, to date, no such formal accreditation scheme for philanthropy advisors in the UK.

Several respondents posited that donors created barriers to evidence use, with multiple participants identifying 'ego' as a problem confirming Chapman et al. assertion that 'donors may give for egotistic reasons (seeking to enhance their reputation or be praised)' (Chapman et al., 2020, p. 1278). We suggest non-profits may feel obliged to 'pander' to their HNWIDs, which may lead to reporting bias or searching out evidence to support donors' perceptions or wishes. The growth of Donor Advised Funds (DAFS), which enable donors to make grants anonymously—2020 saw contributions of £610 million to UK DAFS, equal to 5.4% of total individual giving in the UK— (Dovey, 2021) could be a counter to these concerns. However, DAFS are not free from controversy and have been criticised, including for concerns about funds being warehoused and a lack of transparency and accountability.

We found that whether respondents utilised evidence, varied according to what was readily available to them, their ability to distinguish between different qualities of evidence, which evidence they perceived to be the most useful and their individual preferences, reflecting Breeze's conclusions that donors are driven by their 'own inclinations and preferences…' (Breeze, 2011). This last point accords with Cairney's belief that psychology will always impact decision-making and that it would be naïve to assume that decisions are made purely based on scientific evidence (Cairney, 2016).

9 | REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

The lead researcher and interviewer is a white, middle-class, middle-aged, cisgender, straight, non-disabled, state school-educated post-graduate female with 20 years plus board-level experience in non-profits. She has worked as a Director of Development in charge of major donors and has extensive experience working with and stewarding philanthropists. Her experience in the non-profit sector informs her belief in the importance of evidence for measuring the impact of non-profits. The second author is a male academic who focused on the 'what works' policy agenda and supervised this PhD project.

10 | LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Our sample was both small and relatively homogenous; all 17 participants were aged 45+, and all were graduates. This sample was in line with other data on donors, such as the Million Pound Donor List and The Sunday Times Giving List. The sample was appropriate for the rationale of this empirical study, as it was relatively homogenous and aligned to our research objectives and was sufficient to reach data saturation. Moreover, it was of sufficient size to enable us to derive a 'new and richly textured understanding' of the phenomenon under study' and not so large as to impede the 'deep, case-oriented analysis' that we sought (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2). Nevertheless, it is hypothesised that younger donors are likely to place more emphasis upon the need to demonstrate impact and accountability as they increasingly embrace 'a "donor as investor" view of themselves' (Fyffe, 2016, para. 1) and as such this study may perhaps not reflect their views.

Snowball sampling is a technique that relies upon existing subjects to provide referrals to recruit participants for a research study. Snowball sampling is a valuable tool for sampling from difficult-to-access populations such as the elites we examined (Ritchie et al., 2014) and hence was our primary sampling method. However, our use of snowball sampling introduced several limitations which impacted the validity of our study. Selection bias was a limitation because participants' selection depended on 'the subjective choices of the respondents first accessed'. As such, snowball sampling was 'likely to be biased towards the inclusion of individuals with interrelationships' and consequently to have over-emphasised 'cohesiveness in social networks' (Atkinson & Flint, 2001, p. 2).

Another limitation of our study was that (in response to the pandemic) a mixture of in-person and online interviews was employed, which might not be ideal. However, analysis of the data found no systematic differences in the findings. We were pleased by how well zoom worked as a medium, and the participants reported that they liked the convenience of zoom. A further limitation was the risk of social desirability impacting the participants' responses. We sought to minimise this risk by ensuring the anonymity of all participants. We concluded that as many participants were remarkably candid in their responses, not always answering questions in a way that showed them in the best light, this risk was minimised.

11 | CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the conclusions of a systematic review published in 2020 (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020), which identified a growing awareness that philanthropy should be informed by high-quality evidence. All the philanthropists in this study said they utilised evidence in some form to inform their philanthropy.

EBPh is premised upon utilising 'science and evaluation to identify effective programs' (Easterling & Main, 2016), suggesting that donors should seek to make rational decisions and depend upon logic. Like EBM, which seeks to triangulate the best available evidence with clinical expertise and patient values (Sackett et al., 1996), EBPh integrates the best available information from three sources or circles of evidence. However, whereas 'in medicine, problem identification and diagnosis is relatively uncontested', philanthropists have the added difficulty that the nature, causes, and solutions of particular problems may be contested, and therefore, they may have to contend with 'multiple framings of policy problems' (Oliver & Pearce, 2017, p. 2).

The findings of this study reveal that despite the emergence of new models of philanthropy (many of which are informed by the commercial expertise of the donors), very few donors employed entirely rational evidence-based models of philanthropy; instead, they relied on a hybrid model in which they relied on their instincts and sought out peer endorsement before engaging with the evidence. By employing evidence only after being introduced to a charity by a peer, donors may miss the opportunity to fund the best and most effective charities. Funding can also become polarised around non-profits with extensive social networks. Consequently, funds may not be deployed to their best effect.

We found barriers to utilising evidence included challenges in accessing evidence, difficulties understanding what evidence is in its different forms and insufficient resources to capture evidence. Facilitators of evidence use included making evidence more accessible to donors and enhanced access to professional philanthropy advice and advisors.

For EBPh to become mainstream, there needs to be considerable investment in the generation of high-quality, accessible evidence and the creation of infrastructures to ensure the knowledge transfer of that evidence. To succeed in scaling solutions to social problems, we need to facilitate access to and sharing of open data, which enables 'scientific collaboration, enriches research and advances analytical capacity to inform decisions' (Huston et al., 2019, para 1). We recommend drawing on the examples of several foundations (such as 360 Giving), which have initiated data sharing across open platforms to improve access to data for the social sector and grant-makers. EBPh requires us to learn lessons from failure. Sharing what has not worked or did not work as expected, contributes knowledge and can prevent others from making the same mistakes. Moreover, 'learning from failure contributes to high-quality implementation, strategic innovation and improved governance and transparency' (McQueen, 2022).

Investment is needed in publishing aggregated data on specific topics, including critical appraisal and synthesis of the existing evidence. Evidence gaps should be identified, and future research directed towards addressing those gaps. Philanthropy infrastructure organisations and big funders such as the Big Lottery are well placed and should be encouraged to invest in such platforms. Indeed, the Big Lottery encourages grantees to spend 10% of their grant on evaluation. The authors propose that such an approach should be standardised and that all donors should be encouraged to stipulate an appropriate amount to be spent on evaluation, which will generate more evidence and, in so doing, help to restore trust to a 'sector that is coming under increasing public scrutiny' (Ainsworth, 2020).

Enhanced access to professional advisors should be facilitated. To ensure that the quality of advice offered is of the best quality, we recommend the introduction of some form of professional standards and accreditation for philanthropy advisors, to certify competence in areas including ethics and governance; monitoring and evaluation of impact and effectiveness, appraising and interpreting evidence and an understanding of the multiple donor vehicles such as donor advised funds. It is further recommended that philanthropists are encouraged to fund charity overheads.

In conclusion, high-quality evidence should inform philanthropists' funding decisions to improve the impact and effectiveness of their giving. Rigorous evidence will also benefit non-profits as it will enable them to understand what does (and does not work) and to make better decisions, allowing them to fulfil their mission and meet their objectives. Specialist transdisciplinary research centres that can assist with these aims would be a valuable addition to the current academic landscape.

12 | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research suggest that the extent to which trust and relationships underpin the decision-making process of donors is not insignificant and hence would be a suitable subject for future research.

Our study disclosed that respondents felt that few non-profits had sufficient skills to monitor and evaluate the impact of their funding. Research into skills gaps in non-profits and the reasons for those skills gaps could prove a valuable topic for further study.

This study also revealed a perception that the use of evidence varies across the generations. This paper may set up further work by examining how the picture changes over the generations.

A further topic for research would be to investigate the growth in and impact of Donor Advised Funds, which have been criticised for warehousing funds and their lack of transparency (Flannery & Collins, 2022).

12.1 | Implications for managers of non-profits

Non-profits rarely generate the type of evidence that potential donors seek. Managers of non-profits should seek to be transparent in how they measure and evaluate their impact and be willing to share disappointing outcomes and what has worked. Evidence allows us to understand whether a programme is effective and can help non-profits and donors to be more accountable.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS (DONORS)

A. **Background/context**

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Education
4. How long have you been a philanthropist?
5. Do you have a family foundation or formal giving structure?
6. Does your philanthropy have a particular thematic focus?
7. Is your philanthropy grounded in a particular faith?

B. **How and when do philanthropists use evidence to inform their philanthropic practices?**

8. How do you select which causes to support?
9. How and when do you use evidence?
10. Do you consider any of the following?
    - The nature of an extent of the problems/issues (scale)?
    - What others are already doing about those issues (neglectedness)?
    - The extent to which the problem is solvable (tractability)
11. What do you think are barriers to your use of evidence?
12. What facilitates your use of evidence?
13. Have you ever received any professional philanthropy advice?
14. Are you a member of any giving circles/networks?
15. Do you have any concerns about the use of evidence?

C. **Trust and relationships**

16. To what extent does 'trust' underpin your decision to support an organisation?
17. How do you define trust?
18. Have you withdrawn funding in an organisation because your trust has been weakened?

D. **Meaning of evidence**

19. What do you understand by 'evidence'?
20. Do you distinguish between 'evidence'; 'knowledge'; and 'research'?

E. **How do philanthropists find, consume, and understand evidence?**

21. How do you find and consume evidence?
22. What criteria do you use to determine the quality of evidence?

F. **Knowledge for the charities**

23. What do you think that charities ought to know before rolling out interventions?

CHAPTER 5 – THE QUALITATIVE STUDY – PAPER TWO

How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists.

The following pages reproduce a published article on a qualitative study which examines the dynamics of trust and relationships underpinning the giving decisions of philanthropists. This paper, which is entitled, 'How Trust and Relationships Impact on the Giving Decisions of Philanthropists' is published in the *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*. It seeks to explore the extent to which interpersonal trust and professional relationships influence the way in which philanthropists engage with evidence. This study addresses the overarching research question to this thesis (which considers the barriers to, and facilitators of evidence use among philanthropists) by examining how the dynamics of trust and relationships affect the way in which philanthropists utilise evidence in their philanthropic decision-making. By examining the nuanced and complex dynamics between trust, relationships, and evidence use, this study seeks to afford a more profound understanding of how these factors interact to influence philanthropic decisions. The findings contribute to strategies that can bridge the gap between current practices and a more evidence-informed philanthropic future.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists

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Abstract

Numerous studies have sought to understand why philanthropists are not giving more to charity. Two recently published studies identified a lack of faith in charities and an absence of trust as significant barriers to philanthropy. We report on the findings of a qualitative study which sought to examine the extent to which trust, and relationships influence the wealthy to give or withhold funding to charities. We employed in-depth qualitative research methods and semi-structured, conversational-style, interviews as the major form of data collection. We utilised Braun and Clarke's 'reflexive thematic analysis' method of thematic analysis which gave rise to 4 key themes and 9 sub-themes. Findings revealed that trust underpins the relationships that philanthropists have with charities and is an important conduit to forging an ongoing relationship. Trust is frequently relied upon as a proxy for evidence and an absence of trust will usually lead a philanthropist to withhold funding.

KEYWORDS

evidence, philanthropy, relationships, trust

Practitioner Points

What is currently known

- Charities are struggling with reduced funds amid increasing needs.
- Public trust in charities is heavily informed and influenced by mass communications and the media.

What this paper adds

- Provides insight into how nuanced, personal trust affects high-net-worth individuals' (HNWI) giving.
- Establishes a clear link between trust dynamics, donor decision-making, and the underuse of evidence.
- Highlights the predominance of peer endorsements over evidence in philanthropic decisions, leading to potential inefficiencies in charity funding.

Implications for practitioners

- **Transparency and accountability**: Charities should prioritise transparency and accountability, particularly in communicating their effectiveness and areas for improvement. This openness fosters trust and can encourage more informed and sustainable giving from donors.
- **Encouraging evidence-based giving**: Philanthropists should be guided to seek out and support evidence-based initiatives, rather than relying solely on peer endorsements. This involves a commitment to understanding what works and what doesn't, and a willingness to support core operational costs to enable charities to function effectively.
- **Hybrid approach to philanthropy**: Donors should be encouraged to adopt a 'hybrid' approach to their philanthropy balancing the emotional and value-driven aspects of giving with a strong emphasis on evidence and impact. This balanced approach can enhance the effectiveness of their philanthropy while maintaining personal engagement and satisfaction.
- **Diversify funding streams**: Address the risk of philanthropy becoming an echo chamber by diversifying funding sources and focusing on inclusivity and the genuine needs of beneficiaries, rather than donor preferences alone.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The pandemic put the UK's third sector under unprecedented pressure as charities experienced substantial reductions in income (Mohan, 2022, para 6) in tandem with a surge in need. Post-pandemic, the turbulence continued, as millions of households endured the sharpest rise in the cost of living for 40 years (Boles & Strydom, 2022) exacerbating the demand for charitable support. This situation aggravated a trend of declining funding to the third sector in the UK, which predated the pandemic. Indeed, by 2013/14, government funding for the third sector had contracted to '£2.8 billion' (HL, 2016–2017, p. 41, para 178) and the number of people giving to charities had been decreasing since 2016 (Barry et al., 2022).

Philanthropists across the globe responded swiftly to the onset of the pandemic in 2020, donating circa US$20.2 billion—of which donations 'by high-net-worth individuals accounted for at least $5.8 billion' (Sato et al., 2021, p. 5). However, such support was neither universal nor sustained. Indeed, 'barely one in ten of the world's billionaires gave in response to the pandemic during its first few months' (Smith, 2021, para 28). Moreover, giving by UK-based High-Net-Worth-Donors (HNWDs), which increased initially, was not sustained post-pandemic (Macdonald, 2021).

Charities experiencing falling incomes alongside rapidly increasing demand is concerning, hence questions as to why the wealthiest are not giving more and whether they can be supported to give more effectively, are critically important. However, notwithstanding an emergent body of literature researching donor behaviours, few studies have sought to examine the extent to which trust, and relationships influence the decision-making of philanthropists. Most of the extant literature examining trust concentrates on public trust in charities, as influenced by widespread communications and the media, as distinct from the customised trust that informs the giving decisions of HNWI philanthropists. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining a more nuanced facet of trust, one which is informed by bespoke personalised exchanges between the donors, their peers, and the beneficiary charities. For though the correlation between general trust and charitable giving is well-founded, few studies have explored the extent to which more subtle aspects of trust, including personalised trust dynamics and relationships, influence giving behaviour on the part of philanthropists.

To date, numerous studies have sought to examine the barriers to giving confronting the wealthy. One such study identified a lack of trust as a barrier to the wealthy 'giving more' (Dovey, 2020, p. 18). Several studies concur; for without trust, donors 'worry that their hard-earned money is not being well spent when donated to charities' (Pinkney cited in Benton, 2019, para 7). Indeed, Chapman et al. theorised that trust 'is a prerequisite for charitable giving' (Chapman et al., 2021b, p. 1275). However, whilst trust and philanthropy appear to be correlated, it is not clear whether it is trust that fosters charitable giving, or giving that promotes trust (Chapman et al., 2021b). Nevertheless, there is consensus across the academic literature that trust is important (Bryce, 2016; McKnight & Chervany, 1996); and it is theorised that individuals with a greater level of 'general trust' are more likely to make donations of a higher value than individuals with lower levels of 'general trust' (Farwell et al., 2019; Neumayr & Handy, 2017). Hence, one can hypothesise, that an absence of trust will lead to a decline in donations. Indeed, trust in charities was already declining before the pandemic, evidenced by several high-profile scandals in the sector (Brindle, 2019), leading the Charity Commission to suggest that 'public trust in good causes' was 'being undermined' (Brown, 2020, p. 1). This implies that the perception of trust as intrinsic to the third sector is no longer applicable (Prakash & Gugerty, 2010). Furthermore, the reputational damage caused by one non-profit scandal, could generate spillover effects and so contaminate the sector as a whole (Becker et al., 2020, p. 190). Indeed, a UK survey found that only 48% of respondents agreed that charities were trustworthy (CAF, 2019) suggesting a correlation between declining donations and diminishing trust. Moreover, charities seen to be violating trust were treated more severely by the public than commercial companies (Hornsey et al., 2020). Nevertheless, a global study by

Chapman et al. concluded that 'scandals within individual organisations have not affected sectoral trust' (Chapman et al., 2021a, p. 441) and a report examining public trust in charities in the UK, revealed that post-Covid there has been a slight increase in public trust in charities but caveated that 'the journey to restoring public trust … remains a gradual one' (Yonder, 2021, p. 7).

To date, there has been some excellent research examining trust in non-profits. Sargeant and Lee sought to operationalise the meaning of trust in 'the voluntary sector context' as it related to 'donor behaviour' (Sargeant & Lee, 2001, p. 69) and they also examined the role of trust and relationship commitment in the charity sector (Sargeant & Lee, 2004). Chapman et al. conducted several studies examining the relationship between identity and charity preferences and the role of social networks in charitable giving. Becker et al. utilised a large-scale study to examine the determinants of public trust in non-profits and developed a conceptual framework predicated on 'the assumption that the public's trust in non-profit organisations depends on the aggregation of each individual's trust evaluation as well as organisational and individual trust building determinants' (Becker et al., 2020, p. 192). Two further studies which examined barriers to giving (Dovey, 2020; Savanta, 2019); identified trust as a key concern for donors.

A recent study examining the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2024) concluded that few donors employ entirely judicious evidence-based models of philanthropy but rather utilise hybrid models in which they seek out or rely upon, the endorsement of a trusted peer and their instincts before engaging with evidence. However, few studies have sought to understand the extent to which personalised trust serves to support or undermine the use of evidence by philanthropists.

This paper will make a threefold contribution to the extant literature. First, it undertakes an empirical study of the extent to which personalised trust and relationships influence the decisions of philanthropists. Second, it examines the interaction between trust and the utilisation of evidence in influencing philanthropic giving and third it seeks to detect the factors which serve to promote or hamper the fostering of trust between philanthropists and non-profits. Hence this study not only fills a gap in the research but also offers suggestions for practitioners seeking to cultivate more meaningful and effective relationships with donors.

This article reports on the findings of a qualitative study which sought to examine the extent to which trust, and relationships influenced the wealthy to give or withhold funding to charities. We commence by framing trust and why it is important, before describing the methodology employed; our findings are explained in the third section and interpreted in the fourth; we conclude with recommendations for future research.

1.1 | What is trust and why is it important?

Trust underpins a donor's relationship with a charity; in part because that which is produced by charities is frequently intangible and may be hard to quantify. Consequently, trust in charities is essential for their legitimacy, effectiveness and both financial and non-financial patronage (Bryce, 2016) and plays a key role in the fostering of enduring relationships between charities and donors (Breeze, 2013; Savanta, 2019). Waniak-Michalak and Perica however, caution that public trust is not a critical factor for donations which are also influenced by external and independent components including demographic and economic factors (Waniak-Michalak & Perica, 2021, p. 185).

There are multiple ways in which philosophers frame trust, but a basic tenet is that of reliance or expectation, for to trust someone is to rely on them to behave in a certain kind of way (Goldberg, 2016). Likewise, Frederiksen defined trust as 'an expectation that, while untoward things could happen, they are not expected to' (Frederiksen, 2014, p. 168).

1.1.1 | Trust

Trust as it pertains to philanthropic contexts is 'multidimensional' (Gilfoyle et al., 2022, p. 12), multifaceted and complex, in part because it is built up over time and multiple interactions (Dovey, 2020). Hence how trust is interpreted, and the meanings attributed to trust are contested. The Oxford English Dictionary offers a modern definition of 'trust' as a 'firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something, confidence or faith in a person or thing, or in an attribute of a person or thing' (Oxford English Dictionary). However, such a definition does not reflect the subtle nature of trust which underpins most philanthropic relationships. Mollering posits that trust requires a 'leap of faith' or 'a suspension of doubt' (Nooteboom, 2006, p. 1908). Chapman et al (citing Meyer et al 1995 and Rousseau et al 1998) concur that trust requires a 'willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of others' (Chapman et al., 2021b, p. 1276).

1.2 | How is trust conceptualised?

There is little consensus as to how 'trust is conceptualised, operationalised and measured' (Gilfoyle et al., 2022, p. 3); in part, because trust is complex and multifaceted but also because it is 'context-specific' and as such 'must be understood from the perspective of all parties and within its context' (Gilfoyle et al., 2022, p. 8). Moreover, there is a temporal aspect to trust, in which the relationship between trustee and trustor evolves over time (Jones & Shah, 2015) and so is tempered by 'long-term expectations' (Guillou et al., 2021, p. 11).

Gilfoyle et al. characterised 'integrity', 'reliability' and 'ability' as ways in which trust could be conceptualised (Gilfoyle et al., 2022) and Farwell et al. identified institutional trust, accountability, transparency and familiarity as being positively correlated with trust in charities (Farwell et al., 2019).

By critically engaging with all these aspects of trust this study reveals a framework to enhance our understanding of how philanthropy is informed by trust. It finds that trust in philanthropy rises above mere binary beliefs that someone or something is trustworthy or not. Rather philanthropic trust evolves from and is informed by continuing exchanges, social norms, and individual experiences.

1.3 | Relational trust

The construct of trust as it applies to philanthropy, extends beyond being merely transactional, and instead frames trust as 'relational' (Frederiksen, 2014; Gilfoyle et al., 2022) encompassing cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements (Lewis & Weigert, 2012). Frederiksen utilised Pierre Bourdieu's 'relational social theory' to frame 'the relational process of trusting as a merging of individual dispositions to trust and the relationships within which trust unfolds' (Frederiksen, 2014, p. 167). Frederiksen extends this notion further, positing that trust is dynamic, evolving and informed by a confluence of factors indeed, 'trust is practically never a purely dyadic phenomenon between two isolated actors; there is usually always a context and a history…' (Mollering, 2006, p. 9) and as such the trustor will usually have some justification for trusting the trustee (Frederiksen, 2014). Such a framing of trust encourages a more subtle understanding, that is informed by and contingent upon the context.

We theorise that relational trust is particularly relevant to charities, especially in the context of fundraising, with its emphasis on donor stewardship requiring charity fundraisers to nurture a bond with the donor and not do 'anything that might jeopardize it' (Burnett, 1992, p. 48). Trust plays an important role in such relationships with higher levels of trust correlated to a greater propensity to give (Burnett, 1992).

1.4 | Social capital and identity trust

Charitable giving exists within a social context and social networks through which donors 'recruit one another for good deeds…' (Putnam, 2000, p. 117). Brown and Ferris hypothesised that social capital facilitated 'pro-social behaviours' including philanthropy. They found that 'individuals with greater stocks of network-based social capital' donated more to charitable causes (Brown & Ferris, 2007, p. 20). Hence charitable giving may be predicated on and informed by the donor's social networks, moreover, the reason and the amount that someone gives may be determined by who asks them. This introduces the notion of 'identity trust' which posits that a decision to donate is not only informed by an intellectual desire to enhance public good but is also motivated by personal identities and social networks.

Scharf and Smith (2016) explored the effects of social networks upon charitable giving through the lens of relational altruism and concluded that donors 'are motivated not (just) by the desire to contribute to the public good, but also by' their personal relationship with and to the fundraiser (Scharf & Smith, 2016, p. 2). Chapman et al concurred, finding that 'success in peer-to-peer fundraising' was shaped more by the solicitor 'than by the charity' (Chapman et al., 2019, p. 573).

We theorise that trust in social capital can serve to undermine the use of evidence by philanthropists, for if donors are motivated by and prioritise their relationship to the 'solicitor' rather than paying 'attention to effectiveness … when selecting charities to support …' they are less likely to be concerned with the outcomes of the charity and therefore, 'do not need to trust organizations to deliver effective aid' (Chapman et al., 2021b, p. 1275).

Furthermore, trust in social capital can 'distort giving between charities' as those charities with extensive networks will 'attract more funding than they otherwise would, while those charities with weaker connections will suffer, irrespective of merit or individuals' true validation' (Meer, 2009, p. 1). Indeed, such is the concentration of wealth that only a very small segment of society will determine which charities and interventions are worth funding (Barkan, 2013) leading to criticism that elites primarily fund concerns of interest to elites. Consequently, philanthropy cannot be relied upon as an effective tool for poverty alleviation as is illustrated by the fact that between 2009 and 2019 British based philanthropists donated £1.04 billion to the arts but only £222 million to the alleviation of poverty (Vallely, 2020).

1.5 | Trust in a charity's mission

Trust in a charity's mission arises when there is a common interest between the charity's mission and a specified public need (Bryce, 2016). So, if a charity's perceived values are aligned to the donor's values, trust is likely to be inferred. Wymer et al. agreed that 'congruence between an individual's core values and those inferred by the nature of a charity's mission … influences an individual's trust in that charity' (Wymer et al., 2021, p. 4). Hence, trust in a charity's mission may be mediated by whether or not donors agree with its mission (Vallely, 2020).

1.5.1 | How is trust operationalised?

Chapman et al. identified four mechanisms for operationalising trust:

1. Generalised social trust relied on actors having a 'propensity to trust unknown others' which was deemed necessary for operationalising trust in charities 'when the donor cannot observe the distribution of funds' (Chapman et al., 2021b, p. 1276). They observed that people with higher levels of generalised trust were more likely to donate to charities as were people with higher levels of institutional trust.
2. Institutional trust related to the extent to which individuals trusted the 'institutions in their society' and their willingness or otherwise to trust 'non-profits to work effectively' (Chapman et al., 2021b, p. 1276).
3. Sectoral trust reflected the level of trust that individuals had in the non-profit sector as a whole.
4. Finally, organisational trust referred to the trust that a donor had in a specific charity which would inform whether or not the donor chose to support that charity.

Sargeant and Lee (2004, p. 191) operationalised four dimensions of trust buttressing a donor's relationship with a non-profit:

1. Trust could be intuited when the donor was willing to invest 'time, talent and treasure' in their relationship with the beneficiary non-profit.
2. Trust was indicated when there was reciprocity between the donor and the charity enabling them to influence each other's views.
3. Trust was implied when the donor valued meaningful communications with the charity and
4. Trust was intuited by the extent to which a donor chose to resist the opportunity to donate their funds elsewhere.

To these we would add a fifth dimension in which trust was enhanced when the charity could demonstrate competence.

1.6 | Definitions

We employed the following definitions in our research:

1. Ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI) have investable assets of at least US$ 30 million (Hayes, 2020).
2. High-net-worth-individuals (HNWI) are people with a net worth of US$ 5 million+ (Hayes, 2020)

1.6.1 | Purpose of this study

A recent study conducted by the authors, found that the majority of participants sought out the endorsement of a trusted peer ahead of deciding whether or not to fund a particular charity.

This study builds on those findings by examining the manner in which trust and relationships influence the wealthy to give or withhold funding to charities and whether trust serves to support or undermine the use of evidence by philanthropists.

2 | METHODOLOGY

Because of the importance of explicating the donors' own viewpoints, the authors employed qualitative research methods to 'generate knowledge grounded in human experience' (Sandelowski, 2004 cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 1) and so gain an understanding of 'the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience' (Seidman 2006 cited in Mears, 2009, p. 29).

The predominant method of data collection comprised semi-formal interviews which utilised open-ended questions based on a topic guide (Appendix B) informed by the authors' scrutiny of the extant literature and their systematic review. Semi-structured interviews allowed for interpretation in accordance with the participants' own understandings and the probing of complex issues (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2024).

The authors utilised Braun and Clarke's 'reflexive thematic analysis' method of (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) which employs six key stages: familiarisation; coding; generating themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and reporting.

The thematic analysis was further strengthened by the principles delineated by Creswell (2009), to ensure that data interpretation was both well-organised and reflective. This enabled a rich, nuanced, and discerning examination of the data, which aligned with the empirical objectives of this study.

2.1 | Sampling strategy

The sample frame comprised The Coutts Million Pound Donor List and the Sunday Times Giving List, both of which collate HNWI and UHNWI donors. Having identified donors from the sample frame, the researchers employed a mixture of convenience, snowball, and purposive sampling.

The sample comprised 17 elite HNWI and UHNWI donors. Determining an adequate sample size is not without controversy as, 'choosing a suitable sample size in qualitative research is an area of conceptual debate and practical uncertainty' (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young (2018:1) cited in Sebele-Mpofu, 2021, p. 11). However, as in-depth interviewing requires a purposive sample with relevant experience, such a sample need not be large for the 'goal is depth not breadth' (Mears, 2009, p. 88).

The authors deemed the sample adequate for the purposes of the study as it enabled them to reach data saturation and in so doing provided 'some degree of transparency and quality in sampling' (Sebele-Mpofu, 2021, p. 11).

2.2 | Elite interviewing

All participants qualified as 'elites'; a group that could be hard to reach compared to other social groups (Liu, 2018). The lead researcher therefore employed convenience sampling; six of the participants were known to the researcher through her work and so she contacted them directly. Snowball sampling was then utilised, by which initial participants introduced the researcher to subsequent interviewees.

Ethical approval was granted by The University of Birmingham Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (ERN_18_1290) on 23rd January. The researchers committed to keeping the identities of participants confidential and to ensure the security of the data collected, all interview recordings, transcripts and contact details were stored separately, with documents password protected.

Initial interviews were conducted in person (at a location chosen by the participant) between February 2019 and April 2020 and were typically of 1 hour's duration. From mid-March 2020 five of the interviews were conducted over zoom in response to the pandemic.

2.3 | Data analysis

The primary means of data collection were semi-structured interviews which allowed 'thick, powerful, descriptions of participant's experiences to be obtained' (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 21). Interview questions were derived from their systematic review and were augmented by a wider review of the extant literature.

Interviews were transcribed and analysed within NVIVO 12. The authors utilised Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis allowing for 'a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data' (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). To ensure dependability of the coding decisions 20% of interviews were coded by the second author [some minor modifications were made following this feedback].

2.4 | Reflexive statement

The study was conducted by two white middle-aged academics. The lead researcher was a white middle-aged post-graduate, with extensive board level experience of non-profits and experience of working with philanthropists and UHNWI donors. The second author was an academic who focuses on the 'what works' agenda.

We recognised that our research approach was informed and influenced by our backgrounds and so we engaged in ongoing self-reflection to address any inherent biases and to safeguard against partiality. We sought to critically evaluate how our identities influenced both our interactions with participants and our analysis of the data. We aimed to ensure objectivity whilst recognising our unique viewpoints and remaining aware of the power dynamics and privilege which informed this study. We believe that this reflexivity served to augment the integrity of our research.

3 | FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from our study and focuses on how trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists. Please note that throughout this section, numbers follow each quotation, each of which corresponds to individual participants. We have utilised numbers as identifiers to ensure anonymity whilst still allowing readers to distinguish between the different participants.

The 17 participants in the study comprised: six participants who identified as female and 11 who identified as male. All participants were 45+ with 52% aged between 55 and 64; all were graduates. 11 were British; two American, two held dual American-British citizenship and two were Canadian nationals. 11 qualified as UHNWIs; six as HNWIs. Three worked in finance, three were investors, one worked for a hedge fund, two ran their family offices, one was an accountant, one a management consultant, two were entrepreneurs; two were journalists and two did not disclose their profession. All qualified as 'major donors' namely someone whose gift to a charity had a 'significant impact' on that organisation (Fundraising, 2020). A table of participant characteristics is attached in Appendix A.

Four key themes and four sub-themes relating to trust and relationships emerged from our data, revealing the extent to which trust mediated the participants' relationships with charities:

1. Organisational trust
2. Trust as transparency
3. Trust in own judgement
4. Relational trust

3.1 | Organisational trust

Organisational trust comprising trust in the leadership, trust in the competence of the organisation, trust in the mission and trust in the benevolence of the organisation was sought by most of the respondents: 'It's all about the reputation of the organisation' (005). Within organisational trust there was some overlap.

3.1.1 | Trust in the charity leader or leadership

Organisational trust is 'actualised in the trust one places on individuals working on behalf of the organisation' (Wymer et al., 2021, p. 6). This framing was reflected in our findings; 16 respondents emphasised the importance of trusting in the charity leadership.

> It's all about people, in everything (007).

> How much confidence do you have in the people running the thing (019).

> If you don't believe they are really capable… if they don't meet your scratch and sniff test, you don't do it (001).

Such was the importance of trusting the charity leadership that two respondents stated that they would reassess their funding if the leadership changed (001 and 002). Some participants sought particular qualities in the charity leaders that they supported:

> So, team player, people by and large not selfish … (007)

Two participants wanted to have confidence in and to be able to trust the whole of the team:

> … we want to see everybody from the top down (014).

Trust in the leadership can on occasion serve as a substitute for due diligence:

> I'm giving it because I trust you, XXX even though I may or may not actually know anything about the organisation you represent… and so all the burden is on my trust in you (015).

> You back the individual to figure this stuff out and you know that their heart is in the right place (016).

3.1.2 | Trust in the competence of the organisation

11 out of 17 respondents sought evidence that they could trust the organisation to be competent in how it conducted its affairs.

Competence was framed as an organisation being able to 'punch above their weight in terms of what they're doing' (014) and could also be expressed as confidence in the organisation and the leadership.

> You have confidence that the people who are running it are going to be sensible … (013).

Several donors elaborated that confidence implied:

> Somebody who can explain things properly, has the right checks and balances and control, is careful with money, seems like a good administrator and who has really high-quality staff around them (001).

> It's about time allocation and prioritisation, short-term and long-term (009).

> Another cautioned that it was important to ensure that the charity was, 'well-governed' and 'solvent' (008).

3.1.3 | Trust in the mission

For many respondents their alignment to and trust in the mission was a key component in their decision to support a particular charity.

> … we have to really believe in it (001).

> You've got to be passionate about what it's doing (008).

One donor stressed the importance of understanding the mission and vision of the charity:

> You look at … what a charity wants to do, what is its mission and vision and how are you going to measure against that mission and vision, I think that's really important (004).

Not all respondents were focused on a particular mission, although seven highlighted a thematic focus. All six female respondents spoke of having at least one thematic or mission focus to their giving.

> I like to have a theme around girls and women as well as a cost cutting theme (009).

One American donor exclusively funded political candidates stating that, 'I don't think there's anything more important'. (016); another largely funded clinical trials (010).

Only one respondent expressed concern about mission drift: 'there seemed to be quite a lot of mission drift as well, which we are always very concerned about' (014).

One respondent described themselves as cause-agnostic.

> … we need to … understand what are the most important problems? … What are the most impactful interventions and … which have the highest need of more funding? … I basically said … I'm going to be cause agnostic and just think about how capital is allocated and why does it work the way it works and how could it work better? (015).

3.1.4 | Trust as benevolence

Only one respondent framed trust through the lens of 'benevolence' by which we mean, prioritising the interests of others. We hypothesise that few respondents talked of 'benevolence' because they assumed that 'prioritising the interests of others' underpinned the work of the charities that they were supporting.

> … you know that their heart is in the right place and that they want to do a good job… (016).

3.2 | Trust as transparency

Several respondents specified transparency and accountability as key factors buttressing their trust in an organisation. Respondents sought evidence of accountability and impact to affirm their trust:

Transparency extended to reporting outcomes and impact and also reporting failures.

> We learn to trust because of accountability, not because of a lack of accountability. So, we don't trust because we just feel like we ought to trust.… ultimately it is… I'm holding you accountable for something (006).

One respondent explained that a charity's willingness to explain that something they were funding was not working, served to strengthen their trust in the organisation:

> One of the things I really liked about them was that, you know, when it didn't work … they said, 'it's not working here for this … reason, so we're not going to carry on with that one'. … We don't mind if things

don't work … 'we're on a journey together and if something's not working and you think that and there are good reasons for it then please come and tell us and explain it and, you know we'll evolve what we're doing with you' (014).

Another respondent observed that transparency served to 'take friction out of the system' (006) and facilitated trust because, 'trust is built one tick at a time because there's accountability attached to every effort, every move, every objective, and everyone knows that. And so, it's okay if it's not working' (006).

However, several respondents speculated that few charities were comfortable being open and transparent; rather many were 'scared stiff of being open ….' (007). Another observed that 'Negative results are rarely reported' (012) because 'nobody wants to hear the negative news' (015).

3.3 | Trust in own judgement

Another theme to emerge was that of 'trust in one's own judgment'. This was referred to by four respondents as a 'smell test' and by another as trusting your gut.

> I feel really strongly about the importance of instinct and gut… (010)

> Just what smells right (002)

Numerous respondents expressed faith in their own ability to pick good people and one conflated their own judgement with due diligence:

> I've got a pretty good feel for people… (013)

> Due diligence is I can judge the person like that (007).

However, one respondent cautioned that the gut should only be one element of the decision-making process, 'you just have to be sensible about it. So, I wouldn't ever… just go with your gut' (014). Nevertheless, another reflected that even if good data were absent, they might still choose to fund a particular charity if their gut was telling them to.

> … where the impact isn't proven yet, but we have a strong gut feel or a view that you could create a successful outcome if only you rolled your sleeves up and helped to get there… (016).

The same respondent elaborated: 'I am a little bit of a believer in if it feels good, if it looks good, you take the leap of faith' (016).

3.4 | Relational trust

Multiple respondents sought or relied upon the endorsement of a peer as a proxy for due diligence:

> I assume that they would have done their due diligence because they're all fairly sophisticated, good, decent people and they would only ask me if they were confident themselves (013).

> Anything that XXXX does and tells us to do, we do (002)

However, two respondents cautioned that putting one's trust in an individual could serve as a barrier to utilising evidence if it stopped them from 'doing their due own due diligence' (001).

> I see what they've done in some places, and you think, 'Why in god's name?' They're very often followers of individuals rather than following the science (012).

Many respondents were initially introduced to a charity that they supported by a peer.

> I take the view if they want to support it and they're asking me to support them … I do it to support them, rather than the charity to be honest (013).

Indeed, one respondent reflected that initially, their giving was entirely in response to the solicitation of friends: 'Friends saying "would you support this charity?" … I mean it really was that sort of random. So, I think it was heartfelt but … not done very well and not done with any great thought and as a result not very effective' (014). Subsequently, they worked with a philanthropy consultant to create a strategy for their philanthropy.

Three respondents observed that solicitation was reciprocal: 'what goes around comes around and we all keep on hitting each other for different charities' (13).

> You go out and solicit, you know you kind of do the 'I'll solicit my friends, you solicit yours' (006).

In some instances, participants were supporting charities despite not believing them to be well run or whose mission they were not aligned to, because they were solicited by their peers:

> I've been giving £XXX a year and I'm sponsoring five children and I said, 'I don't agree with these kinds of programmes' and I said, 'So I'm breaking a rule to do this and so please don't get them to write to me' … I really don't like the sponsorship models at all… (005)

The majority of respondents said that they would donate to a charity if asked to by a friend or relative however, one respondent explained that they gave at a lesser level if the charity did not fit within their thematic interest: 'I'll give them £250 or £500 or something…' (005).

4 | DISCUSSION

The meanings attributed to 'trust' are numerous and contested, nevertheless there is some consensus that trust required 'some vulnerability'. Mollering observed that trust required a 'leap of faith'. This was borne out by our study in which multiple respondents referred to 'relying on' or 'trusting their gut' or utilising a 'smell test' and one reflected Mollering's words, namely that 'if it feels good, if it looks good, you take a leap of faith' (016). Certainly, many respondents were balancing their beliefs and values with what they saw which was borne out in trust. For those respondents relying on trust and instinct the emphasis was on psychodynamic rather than cognitive behaviours as they prioritised their beliefs, values and instinct over data and evidence.

Charitable giving does not take part in a vacuum but rather exists within a social context and social networks may 'provide the channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds…' (Putnam, 2000, p. 117). Such is the importance of social networks and social capital that one respondent surmised that the charities that succeed were those '…that somehow find their way into my or anybody else's social network and then it's all about social capital' (015). Multiple respondents recognised the value of their social capital to the charities they were supporting and talked both of soliciting and of being solicited by their peers to support charities. In many instances their first introduction to a charity they supported was through an introduction from a friend, relative or peer.

Brown and Ferris hypothesised that social capital facilitated 'prosocial behaviours' including philanthropy. They examined the extent to which social capital, human capital and religiosity influenced charitable giving and concluded that 'Individuals with greater stocks of network-based social capital tend to give more to religious causes and to give more to secular causes' (Brown & Ferris, 2007, p. 20).

Hence, charitable giving could be predicated on and informed by the donor's social networks, furthermore, whether and how much someone gives may be determined by who asks them.

Social identify theory was founded on the premise that an important determinant of individual behaviour was membership of a specific social group (Davis, 2014). However, memberships of groups may be fluid and subject to change, and individuals may be members of multiple social groups. Chapman et al. sought to examine how different social identities underpinned giving preferences, relationships to charities and the extent to which donors utilised 'their own and others' identities to justify their charity preferences' (Chapman et al., 2020, p. 1279). They identified multiple identities which might influence a donor's decision to donate to a charity but pointed out that 'not all identities are equally likely to inform giving' (Chapman et al., 2020, p. 1288). This was illustrated by one respondent who framed their giving through the lens of social identities:

> There are some charities, particularly home charities, that we feel are almost a tax on the community. I mean we have to give to say, the Jewish community. We have to give to the old people… So, we automatically give to these because we think that there's an obligation and frankly and it's probably not very … directional but some people who we know and like… when they ask… (013).

Chapman et al also sought to understand the extent to which social groups and networks informed charitable giving and concluded that the solicitor was the key contributory factor to fundraising success and that 'success in the peer-to-peer fundraising context is influenced more by the champion than the charity' (Chapman et al., 2019, p. 573). Their findings were borne out by our study. Multiple respondents began their relationship with a particular charity after their peers had solicited them for money on the charity's behalf. Indeed, they may have donated out of a sense of social obligation or out of a perceived need for reciprocity.

Accordingly, many donors were giving to a charity that was not allied to their own values or sense of mission; such a tension between their beliefs and behaviour could give rise to cognitive dissonance as their giving was not aligned to their preferences: 'A lot of people give because their friends ask them, but what they prefer to do is really quite different in many cases' (013).

Our findings reflect the first of Sargeant and Lee's four dimensions of trust in which a donor's giving behaviour is mediated by the extent and warmth of their relationships with their peers. They also accord with Bryce's depiction of trust in a charity's social capital as identity trust, whereby a donor shared a 'common identity' with a peer, which in turn generated trust or alternatively, led to a donor supporting a charity on the recommendation of a peer (Bryce, 2016). The extent to which a charity will be successful in raising funds may therefore be more dependent on its social capital than on its impact. Hence charities needing to fundraise may choose to prioritise limited resources on building social networks and investing in peer-to-peer fundraising programs, which was viewed as the 'most effective way to identify and engage Major Donors' by the Institute of Fundraising (2013, p. 7).

Several experimental studies examined the extent to which similarities between donors impacted on charitable giving and concluded that individuals tended to be influenced by and conform to the behaviour of their peers, or to people that they perceived as being similar to themselves. Thus, illustrating that peer pressure in all its forms was crucial, for 'one reason why the rich give is that their interest is engaged by the right person in the right way at the right time. This is fundamentally important' (Lloyd, 2000, para 10).

Accordingly, someone was 'more likely to donate (or donate more) to the same cause' if a solicited by a peer from their social networks (Tian & Konrath, 2020). More than a third of respondents to a recent survey (of 400 high net worth individuals) cited encouragement by family and friends as having influenced them to give and 24% made more significant gifts when they realised that 'their peers were major givers, highlighting the value individuals place on doing what is expected'. (Savanta, 2019, p. 12). Similarly a number of studies have found that solicitation was closely correlated to an individual's decision to make a gift (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Neumayr & Handy, 2017).

Peer influence can be instrumental in increasing the amount that is given by the wealthy to charity, however, it is not without its downsides. One respondent offered the following critique: 'White, wealthy guy defines the problem and the solution, terrible outcome' (015). Another concern is that peer influence could cause funding to coalesce around a small number of charities to the detriment of other equally valuable but less well-known charities. We hypothesise that less 'popular' or well-known charities could be left struggling to compete for a share of any residual funding as wealthy donors become, 'powerful drivers of a range of agendas' for it is the money that decides and that 'drives the solution' (Callahan, 2017, p. 19).

Furthermore, the significance of peer endorsements of charities is such, that donors may end up funding less effective or even harmful charities. The demise of the UK charity, Kids Company, was a recent example of how peer influence polarised funding towards a charity that it transpired was not sustainable. Kids Co drew support from many high-profile public figures and received almost £50 million in public funding before it collapsed in August 2015. The House of Commons' Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's (PACAC) report into the collapse of Kids Co found that: it's CEO, Ms Batmanghelidjh captivated 'some of the most senior political figures in the land, by the force of her personality' (PACAC, 2015–2016, p. 58, para 42) and held that it was unacceptable that, 'successive Ministers appear to have released funds on the basis of little more than their relationship with a charismatic leader … and anecdotes…' (PACAC, 2015–2016, p.43, para 151). Subsequently, in 2021 the High Court exonerated Ms. Batmanghelidjh and the charity (Official Receiver-v-Batmanghlidjh & Others, 2021). This finding illustrates that trust is complex and multifaceted and further demonstrates the importance of ensuring that funding decisions are informed by evidence rather than relying solely on peer endorsements and instinct.

Another theme to emerge from our data was the importance of the donor's 'trust in the mission'. Nevertheless, several studies have revealed that even when the mission of charity did not align with their own preferences, donors would still support the charity in order to 'signal loyalty to friends or neighbours' [Ideas 42 Behaviour and Charitable Giving May 2019, p. 1]. Indeed, reciprocity in social relationships was cited by several respondents as an explanation for their giving, 'well, because if someone has done you a favour … I'm very privileged, a lot of people have done me favours, I'd like to pay the favour back' (007).

Respondents' engagement with particular charities was commonly mediated by relationships with members of the charity team. Our findings concur with Wymer et al. who found that trust in a charity is enhanced when a donor has 'personal connections with members of a charity' (Wymer et al., 2021, p. 5) Certainly, many respondents sought an ongoing relationship with the CEO or senior staff to assure themselves of the integrity and competence of the organisation that they were supporting. This is an example of relational trust in which charities sought to create a distinctive and close connection to donors and their 'overriding consideration' was 'to care for and develop that special bond and not to do anything that might jeopardise it' (Burnett, 1992, p. 48 cited in Sargeant & Lee, 2001, p. 71).

The prioritising of donor relationships by charities may serve to undermine the use of evidence. Donors do not always want to hear (or the charities fear that they do not wish to hear) that a particular intervention has not worked. Hence, charities may be fearful that if they communicate bad news, they will alienate their donors, which in turn may mean that they are not as transparent as they should be or indeed as donors wish them to be. One respondent confirmed that many charities are reluctant to communicate that something is not working as they fear that if they do, the donor might 'turn off the tap' (014). However, respondents valued transparency in their relationships with charities. Farwell et al defined transparency as, 'the voluntary disclosure of information' (Farwell et al., 2019, p. 772) and Wymer et al. found that transparency was 'the strongest antecedent influence on charity trust … individuals are more likely to trust charities that communicate how they use their resources' (Wymer et al., 2021, p. 19). Indeed, a survey of 'public trust and confidence in charities' revealed that the public wanted charities to be transparent in their management of their resources and also to demonstrate their impact (Populus, 2018, p. 3). Certainly, half of donor respondents cited transparency as necessary and a way in which the friction could be taken out of the system. However, the head of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations (ACEVO) cautioned that the public have 'cognitive dissonance' in relation to charities '… it wants them to be transparent, but reacts badly to what they disclose; … it expects them to have rigorous internal processes, but resents their spending on administration; and … it thinks there are too many of them, but is suspicious of big ones' (Brindle, 2018). Indeed, several respondents expressed an aversion to overhead costs. However, one fifth of respondents proactively encouraged their beneficiary charities to share 'failures' with them and to be more open, with one pointing out that if they are informed of what's not working, then provided there are good reasons for the miss-step they would work with the charity to enable it to find a different way forward.

In tandem with transparency, accountability encompassing 'not only the reporting of financial information but also … performance evaluation, stakeholder engagement and internal commitment to the … mission' (Kearns, 1994 and Schmitz et al., 2011 cited in Farwell et al., 2019, p. 772) is closely aligned to transparency and was sought by the majority of respondents.

Several respondents wanted a degree of influence on the beneficiary charity and seven actually sat on the boards of charities they supported. This finding complies with the second of the four dimensions of trust the 'extent of mutual influence which is mediated by commitment'.

A few respondents sought out annual reports and regular updates to as confirmation that the charity was performing well, 'we ask for written reports of what's going on, so they know we're keeping an eye on it' (013). However, on occasion the communications provided by the charities were not sufficient to meet the needs of the donor or to satisfy the donor's concerns about the charity, one respondent theorised that this was because charities were frequently swimming, ‘in a sea of data without any insight’ (009). The same donor elaborated that the problem with data was that ‘most people still don't understand it in the sector, they don't know how to use it, they don't collect it properly and so … it's not fit for purpose’ (009). In such instances some donors requested further information because ‘the reports themselves don't necessarily cover what we need to know’ (013).

Such requests for and reliance upon communications from the charity were an example of the third dimension of trust namely that in which, ‘the amount of communications acceptance that is mediated by commitment’. Not all respondents complied with this dimension of trust however, two respondents observed that once they trusted a charity sufficiently to fund it, they did not require any reporting and another commented that they were happy to receive a repurposed report which the charity had written for someone else. A third complained that they received too many communications.

Although none of the respondents commented on their forbearance from opportunism, in choosing to support some charities over others and citing their criteria for the making of such choices, they were in fact demonstrating at least a degree of forbearance from opportunism.

The responses of our respondents were illustrative of three of the four dimensions of trust proposed by Sargeant and Lee and also of the fifth dimension of trust (as competence) suggested by the authors.

5 | CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding a growing awareness that ‘the giving of resources ought to be informed by evidence’ (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020, p. 1) and an emergent enthusiasm for evidence-based philanthropy, the majority of respondents nevertheless relied in the first instance on peer endorsements.

We hypothesise that trust could serve to undermine evidence, as instead of seeking out the best and most effective charities many of our participants instead sought out and relied upon the endorsements of their peers as a proxy for evidence. With a few exceptions, even those donors who sought to apply evidence, only did so after being steered to a particular charity by a peer or after seeking the endorsement of one of their peers. This in turn meant that some donors may have missed out on funding the best and most effective charities and hence they were not deploying their funds in the most optimal way. Instead of funding initiatives that scored 9 or 10 out of 10 they were only funded ones scoring ‘3 [out of 10] because somebody likes somebody’ (007). Moreover, as was illustrated by the scandals which besetting Kids Co, Oxfam and Save the Children, even well qualified peers were not always the most reliable judge of a charity's sustainability or competence.

Further problems may arise when donations to charities conform to the donations of a donor's peers. Not only may funding polarise around particular charities and issues but also in the absence of rigorous evidence, donors could end up funding charities that are not effective or even worse which cause (unintentional) harms. Moreover, when funding coalesces in this way it could fuel criticism of philanthropy. Trust is not a singular construct and in recent years there have been a number of critiques of high value philanthropy, reflecting a lack of trust of the motives of donors. One such critique is that elites only fund causes that are important to elites and as such there is a perception that philanthropy favours the wealthy (Vallely, 2020). Some commentators have highlighted the implicit power that yields to philanthropists as their giving serves to ‘skew spending in areas such as education and healthcare, to the extent that it can overwhelm the priorities of democratically elected governments and local authorities’. Such concerns may be amplified when funding is polarised around a small number of charities or causes that find favour amongst particular social networks. Indeed, a recent report revealed that most people did not trust donors to ‘do what is right with their donations…’ (Breeze, 2020, n.p.). Certainly, ‘suspicion about philanthropists and their motivation undermines the broad acceptance of the benefit of philanthropy’ (James Lisbon cited by May, 2020). With a projected £10.4bn funding shortfall for charities, there has never been a more urgent need for philanthropists to give more and to give better’ it is problematic therefore that ‘negative perceptions of philanthropists might deter people from giving more to charity’ (Breeze, 2020, n.p.).

In conclusion, trust is a multifaceted construct that is derived from numerous and varied interactions. Trust underpins the relationships that philanthropists have with charities and is an important conduit to forging an ongoing relationship. In the absence of trust, donors are unlikely to fund a particular charity and trust is frequently relied upon as a proxy for evidence.

Charities need to recognise the many components of trust and in particular be encouraged to see accountability and transparency in relation to what does and does not work as an essential component of trust and of the stewarding of donors. Donors can encourage such honest and transparent communication by engaging with the charities—seeking to understand what works and what doesn't—showing a willingness to fund core costs and not withdrawing funding simply because something hasn't worked.

In light of the pandemic, there has never been a more urgent time for philanthropists to deploy their funds and to do so judiciously, as such, donors need to be encouraged to seek out evidence-based solutions and not rely solely on the recommendations of their peers or their instinct. However, it is important to recognise that philanthropy is informed by both head and heart, and to acknowledge that whilst evidence of effectiveness is vitally important, the values and emotions that underpin philanthropy can serve to enhance donor engagement and possibly lead to a more significant gift. The effects of either approach are currently unknown and further work to test these differing approaches would be of considerable interest to the field.

This paper concludes that donors should be encouraged to take a hybrid approach to their philanthropy. Such a model is informed by the psychosocial factors that will inevitably influence their decision-making, but also ensures that their decision is informed by rigorous evidence and data enabling them to better understand and maximise the impact and effectiveness of their philanthropy.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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APPENDIX A: TABLE OF CHARACTERISTICS

Participant No	Gender	Age	Nationality	Education	Net worth millions	Profession
001	Male	50–60	American	Graduate	£50–£99	Finance
002	Male	50–60	British	Graduate	£100+	Family office
003	Female	50–60	American	Graduate	Not disclosed	Journalist
004	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Family office
005	Female	50–60	Canadian	Graduate	£10–£29	Not disclosed
006	Male	60+	American	Graduate	£100+	Entrepreneur
007	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Investor
008	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£100+	Banker
009	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Medicine/BioTech
010	Male	60+	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Accountant
011	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£50 to £99	Entrepreneur
012	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£100+	Private Equity
013	Male	80+	British	Graduate	£50–£99	Businessman/Investor
014	Female	50–60	British	Graduate	£100+	Family office
015	Male	50–60	American	Graduate	£30–£49	Management Consultant
016	Male	40–50	British	Graduate	£30–£49	Investor
017	Female	50–60	Canadian	Graduate	£30–£49	NED

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS (DONORS)

A. Background/Context
   1. Age
   2. Gender
   3. Education
   4. How long have you been a philanthropist?
   5. Do you have a family foundation or formal giving structure?
   6. Does your philanthropy have a particular thematic focus?
   7. Is your philanthropy grounded in a particular faith?

B. How and when do philanthropists use evidence to inform their philanthropic practices?
   8. How do you select which causes to support?
      a. Do you take unsolicited applications?
      b. Do you invite tenders for specific funding rounds?
      c. How do you 'find' the charities that you wish to support?
   9. How and when do you use evidence?
   10. Do you consider any of the following?
      a. The nature of an extent of the problems/issues (scale)?
      b. What others are already doing about those issues (neglectedness)?
      c. The extent to which the problem is solvable (tractability)
   11. What do you think are barriers to your use of evidence?
   12. What facilitates your use of evidence?
   13. Have you ever received any professional philanthropy advice?
   14. Are you a member of any giving circles/networks?
   15. Do you have any concerns about the use of evidence?

C. Trust and Relationships
   16. To what extent does 'trust' underpin your decision to support an organisation?
   17. How do you define trust?
   18. Have you withdrawn funding in an organisation because your trust has been weakened?

D. Meaning of Evidence
   19. What do you understand by 'evidence'?
   20. Do you distinguish between 'evidence'; 'knowledge'; and 'research'?

E. How do philanthropists find, consume and understand evidence?
   21. How do you find and consume evidence?
   22. What criteria do you use to determine the quality of evidence?

F. Knowledge for the charities
   23. What do you think that charities ought to know before rolling out interventions?

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION

1. Introduction

This discussion chapter aims to elucidate and evaluate the significance of the findings of this thesis's secondary and primary studies. Specifically, this chapter will examine the correlation between evidence use, trust and relationships and the extent to which they influence philanthropists' funding decisions. By triangulating the findings, this chapter seeks to confirm existing theoretical frameworks, corroborate extant knowledge, reveal original insights, and illuminate the complex nuances which underpin philanthropic funding decisions.

The research comprised two studies that examined how elite philanthropists use evidence to inform their giving and the barriers to and facilitators of their use of evidence. The results of these studies underscored the need for more transparent, systematic, and collaborative approaches to evidence and data use to improve their availability and accessibility. The findings observed a close correlation between the way in which donors perceived evidence, the ready availability of evidence, and the methods that charities utilised to capture data and evaluate their impact.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

The overarching research question guiding this thesis is: **"What are the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists?"** This research was grounded in the hypothesis that although philanthropists have grown in awareness of the value of 'evidence-based philanthropy', there is little to suggest that they are utilising evidence in a consistent or structured way.

The researcher theorised that philanthropists and non-profit leaders' insufficient understanding of the different types and qualities of evidence or the suitability of evidence for specific circumstances could inhibit evidence use. A deficit in understanding how to generate, analyse, and utilise evidence further impeded its use. The researcher also conjectured that philanthropists might be overly dependent upon the endorsement and approval of their contemporaries, which could serve as another obstacle to effective evidence use.

The Secondary Analysis

The systematic review sought to identify factors that promote or limit philanthropists' use of evidence and to rigorously evaluate all existing research on this issue.

It was published in Systematic Reviews in August 2020.

The Primary Analysis

The primary research consisted of a qualitative study involving 17 high-net-worth philanthropists. The study was designed to examine factors promoting and inhibiting philanthropists' use of evidence. This study gave rise to two research papers which were published in the Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing. Paper 1 was published in August 2023, and Paper 2 was published in April 2024.

The qualitative study focused on three key research questions:

1. **Engagement with Evidence:** Do philanthropists engage with evidence and if so, how?

2. **Barriers and Facilitators:** What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?
3. **Impact of Trust and Relationships:** To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?

Employing a qualitative design allowed the researcher to elicit in-depth insights into and explanations of social occurrences (Kitto, 2008). Such an approach was vital for investigating how philanthropists experience and engage with evidence (Greenhalgh, 2017, p. 20). Moreover, the researcher posited that the behaviours and experiences of elite philanthropists would be influenced by their social context, including their perception of their own and their peers' social standing (Pawson & Tilley, 1997); hence a qualitative design was used because such a design enabled the researcher to better understand the importance of context and social settings (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The findings from this study highlighted the importance of various elements influencing philanthropic decision-making, particularly the role of evidence, trust, and relationships. This comprehensive approach provided valuable insights into the complex dynamics of philanthropic behaviour, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of how to promote evidence-informed philanthropy.

1.2 Overview of the Discussion Chapter

This chapter starts by summarising the key findings of the systematic review and describes how these results address the overarching research question. It then offers thorough summaries of the two papers to emerge from the qualitative study and outlines how each paper speaks to the overarching research question. The discussion chapter progresses to a comparative analysis of the findings, before comparing and contrasting those findings with the extant literature to identify synergies, highlight discrepancies, and reveal novel insights. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the key conclusions drawn from the research, clearly stating the contribution of each paper. Finally, the societal and practical implications of these findings are discussed, providing a broader context for the work's significance.

1. Introduction
2. Summary of Systematic Review Results
    - 2.1 Overview of Key Findings
    - 2.2 Addressing the Overarching Research Question
3. Detailed Summaries of Qualitative Study Papers
    - 3.1 Paper 1: Summary and Analysis
    - 3.2 Paper 2: Summary and Analysis
4. Comparison with the Extant Literature
    - 4.1 Convergence and Divergence with Existing Studies
    - 4.2 Summary of Integration of Systematic Review and Qualitative Study's Findings with the Extant Literature

5. Synthesis of Key Findings Across the Systematic Review and the Qualitative Study
    - 5.1 Contributions of Each Paper to the Research Question
    - 5.2 Overall Implications for the Field

2. Summary of the Systematic Review Results

Greenhalgh, C., Montgomery, P. A systematic review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists when determining which charities (including health charities or programmes) to fund. *Syst Rev* 9, 199 (2020). https://systematicreviewsjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13643-020-01448-w (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020)

The secondary research comprised a systematic review of the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by philanthropists. The researcher hypothesized, that to maximise the impact of philanthropic funding, it needs to be grounded in evidence. Therefore, ahead of the qualitative study (which was designed to elicit how philanthropists engage with evidence), the researcher conducted a systematic review to identify, summarise and critically appraise research on elements that influence if and how philanthropists engage with evidence. The research question that the systematic review sought to answer was: 'What are the limiting and promoting factors regarding the use of evidence by philanthropists?'

The primary objective of the secondary research was to identify factors that promote or hinder evidence use by philanthropists and critically appraise the extant research. The researcher employed thematic analysis to integrate the data and classified findings as barriers or facilitators to create a narrative summary. The review's results apprised the specific research questions and topic guide that informed the qualitative study.

The researcher employed a systematic review because systematic reviews 'are transparent, repeatable and objective, reducing bias and maximising reliability.' Moreover, they are deemed 'much less susceptible to bias than traditional reviews, many meta-analyses and other syntheses as a result of strict guidelines and highly detailed a priori methods.' (Haddaway et al 2014 p.179).

2.1 Overview of the Key Findings

The key findings are presented below.

2.1.1 Primary Barriers to Engaging with Evidence

The review observed several barriers that hindered the effective use of evidence in philanthropic decision-making, both from the perspective of donors and the beneficiary charities.

Challenges in Accessing High-Quality Data and Evidence

Six out of the nine included studies highlighted a lack of relevant data and high-quality evidence as a barrier to the use of evidence by philanthropists to inform their giving. Obstacles to evidence use included a lack of rigorous scholarly research, difficulties in finding and accessing research, which was often locked behind paywalls, and a lack of synthesised and critically appraised information. These barriers negatively impacted the distribution of accurate, high-quality, comprehensive data, making it difficult to identify and implement key insights for donors and non-profits. Similar challenges are experienced by policymakers and third-sector organisations (Oliver et al., 2014; Hardwick, 2015).

The review also exposed a lack of alignment between the evidence sought and relied upon by donors and the evidence generated by the charities the donor intended to support.

Despite many participants highlighting a lack of evidence as a significant issue, the review counterintuitively revealed that in some instances an overabundance of information hindered engagement with evidence. The researcher posits that this phenomenon occurs when there is a lack of effective synthesis and critical appraisal of the data, rendering it less useful to donors. This is analogous with the concept of 'choice overload' in behavioural science, in which people are overwhelmed when faced with an outsize number of options while shopping, resulting in indecision and paralysis.

A lack of infrastructure to facilitate knowledge sharing further inhibited the dissemination of accessible, high-quality evidence. Moreover, few donors were motivated to pursue or support the dissemination of knowledge. Such challenges were amplified by a reluctance on the part of non-profit organisations to share data that might reveal disappointing outcomes. Other non-profits were reluctant to forfeit what they perceived as a competitive advantage (in relation to competing for funding) by sharing their knowledge with other non-profits.

Challenges in Understanding the Evidence

A third of the included studies cited difficulties in understanding the evidence as a significant barrier impeding donors from engaging with that evidence. Challenges included a lack of understanding on the part of philanthropists of different qualities and types of evidence. Moreover, few philanthropists felt they possessed the requisite critical appraisal skills to comprehend the evidence. The difficulties in understanding evidence, together with the variety of methodologies used across different studies posted, posed challenges similar to those identified by Oliver et al.

(2014), Hardwick (2015) and Lamont et al. (2020). Indeed, few donors understood that distinct research questions required diverse methodological approaches because '*evidence quality depends on what we want to know, why we want to know it and how we envisage that evidence being used'* (Nutley et al., 2013, p. 6). Whether or not something could be relied upon as good evidence varies according to the context and the research question being asked. Randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are often heralded as the gold standard for assessing intervention efficacy, as they provide robust quantitative data. However, RCTs have several drawbacks, particularly in relation to complex interventions and issues, such as those concerning PROGRESS-Plus dimensions (Place of residence, Race, Occupation, Gender, Religion, Education, Socioeconomic status, Social capital, plus other forms of disadvantage like age and disability). Indeed, the effectiveness of an intervention may vary depending on the context, which an RCT may not capture. Other limitations related to the external validity of RCTs for the highly controlled settings in which they take place could mean that their results do not translate well to real-world contexts (Deaton & Cartwright, 2018). Sampling may further complicate matters, particularly if sample populations are not characteristic of the broader population. Hence, the selection of control groups requires scrutiny to mitigate the introduction of biases or confounders and safeguard the study's integrity (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). Further weaknesses relate to ethical concerns regarding the random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups. Finally, RCTs may not have sufficient statistical power to detect effects in specific subgroups reliably.

Conversely, qualitative approaches, which are often perceived as less valuable than quantitative ones, may be more relevant and better able to engender valuable insights when the research question relates to lived experiences, social constructs, or nuanced cultural practices. A qualitative methodology can reveal complex social dynamics and attitudes that may shape the success or failure of philanthropic interventions, thereby affording a more complete picture (Green & Thorogood, 2018).

In conclusion, the fragmented approach observed in the methodological techniques applied to data and evidence gathering may undermine the integrity of the research and fall short of addressing the diverse informational needs of donors, for whom challenges in understanding the evidence emerged as a key barrier. This research identified an exigent need for a more nuanced understanding of how specific research questions should inform methodological choices to enable more effective evidence-based decision-making.

Credible Evidence

The systematic review disclosed that a narrow definition of *'credible evidence'* inhibited the use of a broader range of evidence types, limiting the decision-making process. *'Credible evidence'* is normally taken to mean empirical data that has been subjected to detailed scrutiny and peer review, but such a strict definition imposes significant limitations. Indeed, none of the nine studies to emerge from the review corresponded to the criteria of *'credible evidence'* as they had all materialised from the grey literature. The absence of peer review raised concerns about the reliability, quality, and generalisability of the included studies. However, each of the studies identified obstacles to and enablers of evidence use by philanthropists. Moreover, the application of the GRADE-CERQual checklist and the PRISMA guidelines ensured the quality of each study and allowed the researcher to critically evaluate and compare the quality of published studies. Hence, the findings of the review strengthen the case for employing a broader, more nuanced definition of *'credible evidence'*, including a wider range of evidence types. Extending the meaning of *'credible evidence'* would both strengthen academic discourse and augment evidence-based decision-making across diverse sectors.

Insufficient Resources

The review disclosed that insufficient resources, including time, skills, and financial limitations, hinder evidence use. These findings align with the extant literature, which identifies similar challenges across both non-profits, policymakers and practitioners (Strydom et al., 2010; Oliver et al., 2014; Hardwick et al., 2015). Many non-profits and policymakers were constrained from evaluating their impact because of the extent of the investment in skills and resources required to undertake evaluations. An inability to evaluate the success or otherwise of programmes due to a lack of resources served to make evidence-informed decision-making especially difficult.

2.1.2 Facilitators of Engaging with Evidence

Many of the facilitators recognised in this study closely mirror the barriers highlighted above, emphasising the interdependent nature of these factors. For example, the narrow definition of 'credible evidence' that hinders decision-making can be corrected by broadening this definition to include a wider array of evidence types (Purdey and

Wilkins, 2011; Rosqueta, 2014). Additionally, insufficient resources, which limit the ability of non-profits to engage with and evaluate evidence (Mitchell and Berlan, 2013; 2016; Bach Mortensen et al., 2018), highlight the necessity for investment in knowledge dissemination and support structures. These facilitators not only counteract the barriers but also suggest that targeted improvements in infrastructure and definitions could significantly enhance evidence-based decision-making among philanthropists.

Enhanced Knowledge Sharing

Investment in infrastructure to promote high-quality knowledge-sharing practices and to promote knowledge transfer was key to encouraging and enabling evidence use by philanthropists and non-profits. This included both formal and informal networks and feedback loops linking beneficiaries to donors. These findings concur with Louie and Twersky's observation that '*Supporting infrastructure doesn't take away from other giving; it amplifies it'* (Louie & Twersky, 2016 para 9) and supports the approach of the Fund for Shared Insight (https://fundforsharedinsight.org/#improvement) which seeks to fund and highlight '*the critical role that infrastructure plays in a growing and maturing sector'* (Louie & Twersky, 2016 para 6). Examples of knowledge-sharing initiatives in the UK include the nine 'What Works Centres' (WWC) and in the USA the 'What Works Clearing House. The researcher posits that knowledge dissemination could be augmented through both formal and informal networks, which could serve to align the knowledge with the practical needs of philanthropists and non-profits. Feedback loops linking beneficiaries to donors could also amplify the availability of relevant and useful evidence. Strategies for effective dissemination need to consider both the supply of and demand for knowledge and be informed by the users' needs.

Redefining 'Credible Evidence'

What comprises the *'best available evidence'* is a question that remains contentious. Indeed, within academia there is an ongoing debate as to which types of evidence are the most reliable and relevant to decision-making. Whether evidence is deemed to be valid and dependable will be governed by who is asking the question, the nature of the question being asked and the context (Nutley et al., 2013; Pawson et al., 2005). Indeed, Pawson et al. theorise that when evaluating complex social interventions, empirical evidence alone is often insufficient and that it should be combined with theoretical understanding and a '*focus on explaining the relationship between the context in which the intervention is applied, the mechanisms by which it works and the outcomes which are produced'* for not every intervention necessitates validation through empirical methodologies (Pawson et al., 2005, p. 21).

Notably, each of the studies captured by this review emerged from the *'grey literature'*, and so did not meet the usual standard for *'credible evidence'* (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). However, by critically appraising the studies identified by the review, the researchers were able to demonstrate their rigour.

The review concluded that widening the definition of *'credible evidence'* to embrace a more inclusive selection of data types and methodologies could make research findings and evidence more relevant and accessible to stakeholders, including philanthropists (Nutley et al., 2013, Rosqueta, 2014). Such an approach coincides with research from other fields which emphasise the importance of adaptable and context-specific evidence for informing decision-making (Sandelowski, 2000).

Standardised Reporting and New Methodologies

The review observed that employing standardised reporting could facilitate evidence use. The researcher hypothesises that introducing standardised mechanisms and flexible but rigorous appraisal approaches would augment the use of evidence within philanthropic decision-making (Hyndman & McConville, 2018). To date, no common reporting methodology has been adopted; however, several encouraging novel systems, such as the Global Impact Investing Rating System (GIIRS) have emerged (IRIS, 2008).

2.2 Addressing the Overarching Research Question

The findings of the systematic review serve to address the overarching research question: "What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of evidence by philanthropists?" By meticulously classifying, critically appraising and synthesising pertinent studies, the review distinguishes key barriers including, including challenges in accessing and understanding high-quality evidence, the limitations imposed by a narrow definition of 'credible evidence' and insufficient resources. Concurrently, the review identifies facilitators of evidence use including: enhanced knowledge sharing, widening the definition of 'credible evidence' and introducing standardised reporting procedures.

3. Summary of the Findings of the Qualitative Study

The systematic review provided a detailed secondary analysis of existing literature, which informed the primary research comprising a qualitative study. The qualitative study utilised semi-structured interviews with 17 philanthropists to examine these topics in more depth. The donors were originally identified through a purposive sampling frame drawn from The Coutts Million Pound Donor List and the Sunday Times Giving List, which feature HNWIs and UHNWIs. The selection of this sample frame was strategic and was designed to capture the views of HNWI and UHNWI donors in relation to how they engaged with and regarded evidence.

Utilising semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to discern the weighting and importance given to a variety of components influencing the participants' decision-making processes. Such interviews allowed for interpretation per the participants' understandings and enabled complex issues to be probed (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Patton, 2001). The semi-structured interviews followed a topic guide designed to ‘generate knowledge examining how philanthropists utilise evidence to inform their giving and the specific barriers and facilitators affecting this process grounded in human experience' (Sandelowski, 2004 cited in Nowell et al., 2017b, p. 1).

The research questions which informed the qualitative study were as follows:

1. Do philanthropists engage with evidence and if so, how?
2. What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?

3. To what extent do trust and relationships impact the giving decisions of philanthropists?

The data analysis gave rise to three themes which offered a comprehensive view of how participants engaged with and understood the evidence and highlighted factors that promoted and hindered evidence use. These three themes in turn generated eleven sub-themes which permitted a deeper and more academic understanding of how elite donors engage with different types of evidence and added depth to the broader discourse on evidence-based philanthropy.

1. Understanding and Engaging with Evidence
    a. Conceptions of Evidence
    b. Hard Evidence of Impact

2. Barriers to the Use of Evidence
    a. Lack of Accessible Evidence
    b. Limited Resources, Time and Skills
    c. Lack of Evidence Synthesis
    d. Deficiency in Knowledge Transfer
    e. Concerns Surrounding Transparency and Reporting

3. Facilitators of the Use of Evidence
    a. Enhanced Knowledge Transfer
    b. Synthesised Information

c. Transparency

d. Access to Professional Advisors

The findings of the qualitative study led to the creation of two papers:

Paper 1: Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2024). Seeing is believing: A qualitative study examining how high and ultra-high-net-worth donors utilise evidence to inform their giving and the barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 29(1), e1809. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1809

This paper focused on how elite donors engage with evidence and the barriers and facilitators they encounter. The analysis highlighted that while some donors emphasised rigorous empirical evidence, others relied on instinctual approaches, underscoring a range of perspectives on what constitutes valuable evidence.

Paper 2: Greenhalgh, C., & Montgomery, P. (2024). How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 29(2), e1854. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1854

This paper shifted focus from evidence use to the influence of trust and relationships in philanthropic decisions. It explored the personal dimensions of philanthropy, emphasizing the role of social networks and relationships in motivating charitable giving.

3.1 Paper 1: Summary and Analysis

3.1.1 Understanding and Engaging with Evidence

Conceptions of Evidence

The views of participants concerning what constituted *'evidence'* were wide-ranging. Whilst a few donors highlighted the importance of rigorous empirical evidence, others advocated a more instinctive approach, as elucidated by the eight respondents who spoke of a *'smell'* test or *'going with their gut'*. This dichotomy mirrors the broader discourse in policymaking, where there is a tension between empirical data and experiential knowledge or intuition (Nutley et al., 2013; Oliver et al., 2014). Trust was observed to have a crucial role in the decision-making of all participants and commonly served as a proxy for hard evidence, indeed, for many, an endorsement from a trusted individual was enough to unlock funding.

Hard Evidence of Impact

A majority of participants sought some proof of impact, and they acknowledged the importance of capturing evidence of outcomes (the tangible differences made) rather than outputs (the services or goods delivered). These findings resonate with the a 'growing interest in research impact' which 'is evident internationally' (Smith & Stewart, 2017 p.110). and with the impact agenda which emerged in the policy-making arena during the 1990s. Several participants observed that capturing evidence of outcomes and impact was challenging for both the non-profits and the donors. Similar difficulties were identified by Cunha et al. who observed that there are multiple challenges to overcome when the measuring impact of social innovations, not least the difficulties involved in ‘selecting metrics that fit its definition and goal’ (2022 p.2)

3.1.2 Barriers to the Use of Evidence

Lack of Accessible Evidence

The study found that most participants were impeded by a dearth of accessible, rigorous evidence with one referring to data-devoid environments. Few non-profits have the resources needed to capture and evaluate data to demonstrate their impact (Strydom et al. 2010, Oliver et al. 2014, Hardwick et al., 2015, Bach-Mortensen et al., 2018 and Mitchell & Berlan 2016). Additionally, the challenges of insufficient data were exacerbated by a lack of alignment between the topics studied by researchers, the data captured by non-profits and the knowledge and evidence sought by funders.

Constraints: Limited Resources, Time, and Skills

Most participants perceived non-profits to be *'underfunded and understaffed'* and lacking in rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems, contributing to data gaps. Insufficient resources, including insufficient time and funding, further inhibited the collection and evaluation of evidence (Bach-Mortensen et al., 2018; Mitchell & Berlan, 2016). Skills gaps, particularly relating to numeracy and statistical analysis, further impeded effective evidence-gathering and analysis. Several respondents were of the view that such deficits were amplified by a lack of commercial experience in the non-profit sector. The complexities of research endeavours and the challenges in assessing impact, especially when devoid of tangible success indicators, such as profit margins, served to exacerbate those barriers.

A Lack of Evidence Synthesis

Many participants voiced concern about the quantity of information they received from charities. Several felt overwhelmed and observed that such was the volume and frequency of material they received that it was difficult to be discerning or to prioritise. These observations align with those of Breeze (2013b) , who reported that donors felt *'bombarded'* by the vast number of communications they received from charities. Participants also struggled to understand more complex research frameworks like cohort and case-control studies.

Deficiency in Knowledge Transfer

A lack of infrastructure or mechanisms for sharing knowledge between donors and non-profits was a further barrier to engaging with evidence. Indeed, even in instances when rigorous and critically appraised evidence had been captured and synthesised, it could still be difficult to find and obtain access to that data. A lack of investment in the skills and resources needed to assess and synthesise existing evidence further impacted its deployment. These findings underscore the need for investment in knowledge-sharing platforms and dissemination.

Concerns Surrounding Transparency and Reporting

Evidence use was further inhibited when non-profits were unwilling to disclose and share evidence of their impact; such reluctance was amplified when there were adverse outcomes to report. Evidence use was also impeded by insufficient or generic reporting. Publication bias, in which journals favour the publication of studies with positive outcomes, further exacerbated the difficulties of accessing relevant evidence.

A lack of a collectively agreed framework for assessing impact added to funders' difficulties when seeking to critically evaluate diverse non-profits. These issues were amplified by time and funding constraints, which risked diminishing the depth of evaluations.

2.3.3 Facilitators of the Use of Evidence

This study found several mechanisms that would facilitate the use of evidence.

Enhanced Knowledge Transfer

Investing in infrastructure for knowledge-sharing platforms was identified as a key mechanism for the provision of germane and readily available information. Better infrastructure could promote the uptake of evidence through improved dissemination and exchange of knowledge across a wide variety of stakeholders. This finding supports Louie and Twersky's (2016) observation that investing in infrastructure amplifies giving.

Synthesised Information

Respondents called for better curated and quality-appraised information. They acknowledged that more professional, skilled researchers were needed to interpret and evaluate the extant data effectively. The purpose of this call for critically appraised and synthesised evidence was to 'increase the generality and applicability of those findings and to develop new knowledge through the process of integration.

Synthesis is promoted as an approach that deals with the challenge of "information overload", delivering products that further our understanding of problems and distil relevant evidence for decision-making.' (Wyborn et al. 2018 p.72).

Transparency

The findings revealed that donors sought greater transparency in nonprofit reporting. Donors expressed a wish for nonprofits to provide comprehensive reports that, in addition to reporting successes, disclosed setbacks and failures. Such transparency in reporting would enhance trust, enable better communications between the donors and the nonprofits they were supporting, and facilitate shared learning.

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Access to Professional Advice/Advisors

This study revealed a lack of consensus among respondents concerning professional philanthropy advisers. Whilst few participants had engaged or worked with philanthropy advisors, most had sought affirmation, endorsements and suggestions from their contemporaries or peers, underscoring the potential for professional advisory services. Although a few respondents thought that working with professional advisors could enhance philanthropic funding, this view was not universal, with one respondent observing that such '*outsourcing*' of philanthropy could contribute to a sense of detachment between the donor and beneficiary. This lack of agreement on the value or otherwise of philanthropy advisors might, in part, be due to the dearth of research examining the roles of philanthropy advisors within elite philanthropy. This diversity of opinions, therefore, suggests the need for further research examining whether and, if so, how professional philanthropy advice should be integrated into the practice of elite philanthropy.

3.2 Paper 2: Summary and Analysis

The second paper to emerge from the primary research explored the extent to which trust and relationships influence giving decisions. This paper explores the personal aspects of philanthropy and the complex undercurrents that influence and inform much philanthropy. Specifically, this paper examines the extent to which philanthropy is anchored in social relationships and networks and the way in which such relationships serve to motivate and support charitable giving.

Four core themes and nine sub-themes relevant to trust and relationships emerged from the data analysis, providing insights into the way in which trust influences interactions between donors and non-profit organisations:

(1) The Concept of Organisational Trust

(2) Trust as a Function of Transparency

(3) Trust in Individual Decision-Making

(4) Relational Trust in Organisational Contexts

3.2.1 The Concept of Organisational Trust

At its heart, philanthropy is dependent upon the donor's trust in an organisation, which comprises trust in the leadership, the mission, the organisation's competence, and trust framed as benevolence. This study identified four major organisational trust components as dominant themes influencing philanthropists' funding decisions.

Trust in Leadership

Donors considered trust in the leadership of the non-profit they were supporting to be essential, illuminating that a non-profit's reputation was frequently contingent upon its leadership. Indeed, the existence or absence of such trust was pivotal in shaping their decision-making process, and the evaluation of a non-profit's value and effectiveness was subject to the leadership's perceived credibility and capability. So critical was trust in the leadership that a change in leadership could trigger a reappraisal of financial support.

Trust in Organisational Competence

Trust in an organisation's competence was considered crucial, and most of the respondents wanted evidence of its ability to manage its affairs well. When such evidence was lacking, it could undermine trust. Competence was recognised as an organisation's ability to optimise its resour was strengthened by sound financial management and clearly expressed responsibilities.

Trust in the Mission

Trust in and alignment with the mission of the organisation seeking their support was critical for many respondents. Indeed, some restricted their financial support to those non-profits that shared a specific thematic focus. A donor’s particular area of interest was often informed by their background and their life experiences, which also affected the degree of their trust in and support for the organisation's mission. This finding concurs with Breeze’s observation that lifelong processes shape charitable giving and that specific giving decisions often reflect earlier life experiences, such as geographical upbringing or personal hardships (Breeze, 2010).

A donor's alignment with the mission of an organisation was informed by more than its purpose and extended to its ethics and values, alongside its mission and objectives, each of which needed to resonate with the values and beliefs of the donor for funding to be unlocked.

The researcher posits that *'alignment'* in relation to an organisation's mission is complex and draws upon several factors, including cognitive, emotional, and sensory components, each of which guide donors in their decision-making procedures.

Nevertheless, some donors applied a more logical approach to their decision making, prioritising quantifiable outcomes of effectiveness and impact of an organisation over its mission and values; those outcomes were then gauged against key performance indicators. Such an approach was illustrated by one respondent who was guided exclusively by his empirical understanding of how and where his contributions could be most impactful, he described himself as being 'cause agnostic' [15].

Trust as Benevolence

Only one respondent viewed trust through the benevolence lens (in which the charity is expected to prioritise the interests of others). The researcher theorises that this is because most of the respondents saw it as an innate characteristic of charities to prioritise others and hence, they took the benevolence of charities as a given.

3.2.2 Trust as a Function of Transparency

Transparency and accountability were deemed by several respondents to be key components of trust and were therefore critical to their decision making.

Accountability and Impact Reporting

This study disclosed that transparency was exemplified by accountability and impact reporting. Consequently, donors tended to trust in and support organisations that could evidence their outcomes through mediums such as impact reports.

Donors also expressed preferences for supporting non-profits that were truthful about their limitations and honest about their failures, as illustrated by one respondent who observed, '*We learn to trust because of accountability, not because of a lack of accountability'.* Furthermore, an absence of transparency proved to be a deterrent to some donors. However, it was acknowledged that non-profits which did disclose adverse outcomes could lose funding and suffer reputational damage.

The researcher posits that trust is fostered by transparency. Furthermore, transparency augments competence by smoothing processes and as such serves to strengthen trust at each accountability checkpoint. The intersection between transparency and accountability is key to building and sustaining trust, which is an evolving construct.

3.2.3 Trust in Individual Decision-Making

A significant finding from this research was the extent to which donors relied upon and prioritised their instincts to gauge a non-profit's trustworthiness; indeed, such *'gut feelings'* were often key determinants of funding decisions.

A donor's intuition and instincts, which were informed by and developed from years of experience, were recognised as crucial factors, and served as a personal gauge for evaluating opportunities. Such intangible perceptions, often termed a *'smell test'* by respondents, constituted an essential element in their philanthropic decision-making.

Conflation of Judgment and Due Diligence

This study observed that several respondents conflated personal judgment with due diligence, such respondents articulated an innate confidence in their ability to discern genuine opportunities based on personal interactions. Nevertheless, some participants did urge a more balanced approach, in which intuition was tempered with other practical considerations.

Taking the Leap of Faith

Despite seeking to take an evidence-informed approach to his philanthropy, one respondent was also keen to invest in *'risk philanthropy'*. He was willing to take calculated risks informed by his gut instincts, which he described as *'taking a leap of faith'*. Nevertheless, as he also integrated evidence into his thinking; he was able to balance the risk against the potential reward, so his leaps of faith were underpinned by the evidence and the data.

3.3.4 Relational Trust in Organisational Contexts

This study identified relational trust (which is derived from interpersonal relationships and social networks) as a significant influence on philanthropic decision-making.

Peer Endorsement as a Proxy for Due Diligence

For many philanthropists, peer endorsement served as a proxy for due diligence and informed not just their decision to support the charity or non-profit but also regulated the level of scrutiny they brought to bear. For some respondents, their trust in a peer's endorsement was unequivocal. Nevertheless, a few respondents did caveat that peer endorsement alone in the absence of any further due diligence was not sufficient.

Reciprocity in Philanthropic Solicitation

This study found that many donations were informed in the first instance by a request for funding from a peer, friend, or acquaintance. Indeed, high net worth philanthropy was buttressed by reciprocity, in which Donor A donated to a particular charity following a request by Donor B; in turn, Donor B reciprocated with a donation to a charity supported by Donor A. Moreover, despite the importance of trust in and alignment with the mission cited by a majority of donors, many respondents acknowledged that they did regularly support charities they were not aligned to because their support had been solicited by friends, illustrating the importance of trust and relationships in informing philanthropic funding.

4. Synthesis of Key Findings Across the Systematic Review and the Qualitative Study

This section triangulates the findings from the systematic review and the qualitative study. Its purpose is to integrate insights from both studies to enhance our understanding of evidence use in philanthropy. This can enable us to identify strategies that could bridge the gap between current practices and a more evidence-informed philanthropic future.

There is significant congruence between the systematic review's findings and the qualitative study's findings, which enhances their validity and reliability. This convergence affords a deeper understanding of how evidence influences charitable decision-making.

4.1 Contributions of Each Paper to the Research Question

Barriers to Evidence Use

Both studies highlight similar obstacles to the uptake of evidence, including a lack of accessible, relevant, and synthesized data, exacerbated by resource constraints such as insufficient skills, time, staffing, and funding. Inadequate infrastructure for knowledge sharing also limits access to high-quality evidence.

Facilitators of Evidence Use

The studies agree on the need for improved infrastructure for knowledge transfer, more accessible synthesised data, and enhanced transparency in reporting impact. The qualitative study additionally identifies the role of expert advisors in facilitating evidence use, suggesting a promising area for further research.

Perceptions of Evidence

Both studies underscore the complexity of evidence in philanthropy. The systematic review identified varied approaches to evidence, while the qualitative study revealed diverse interpretations among donors, ranging from rigorous evidence to intuition or peer endorsement.

Trust and Relationships

Both studies confirm that trust in philanthropy is multifaceted and involves vulnerability. Social capital and social networks significantly influence philanthropic decisions, with peer endorsement often playing a crucial role. Social identity also affects decision-making, with donors frequently supporting charities that reflect their social identity.

Trust in Mission vs. Peer Loyalty

Despite recognising the importance of aligning with a charity's mission, many donors choose charities based on peer influence and reciprocity, illustrating the mediating role of social interactions in giving patterns.

Donor Influence

The studies reveal that some donors seek influence over charities, such as board positions, demonstrating the importance of mutual influence in donor-charity relationships.

Transparency, Accountability, and Communication

Transparency in reporting, including both successes and failures, is crucial for maintaining trust. Both studies emphasise that accountability and openness contribute to donor trust and can prevent harmful practices.

Dimensions of Trust

The findings align with three of Sargeant and Lee's dimensions of trust: the warmth of relationships, effective communication, and reciprocal influence.

4.2 Overall Implications for the Field

The synthesis of findings from the systematic review and the qualitative study highlights the complex interplay between evidence use, trust, social networks, and transparency in philanthropic decision-making. Addressing barriers such as accessibility and resource constraints while fostering facilitators like improved infrastructure and transparency can enhance the effectiveness of philanthropic initiatives and contribute to more evidence-informed practices.

Table 2: Congruence Across the Systematic Review and Qualitative Study on Evidence Use in Philanthropy

Key Themes / Aspect of Study	Systematic Review Findings	Qualitative Study Findings	Points of Congruence / Congruent Themes
Accessibility of Evidence	Challenges include paywalls and lack of synthesised data	Need for timely evidence and synthesised data	Both highlight the need for accessible and relevant data
Resource Constraints	Insufficient time, staff, and financial resources	Inadequate funding and staffing, lack of skills	Both identify resource constraints as a key obstacle
Skills Gap	Skills gaps noted but not elaborated	Lack of numeracy and statistical skills highlighted	Both acknowledge skills gaps as challenges
Knowledge Transfer Infrastructure	Limited infrastructure hindering knowledge sharing	Lack of mechanisms for knowledge sharing	Both agree on the need for improved knowledge-sharing mechanisms
Transparency	Not extensively explored	Need for comprehensive disclosure of both good and bad results to enhance trust	Transparency issues noted, though more prominently in qualitative study
Perceptions of 'Evidence'	Inconsistent approaches and narrow definitions limit credible evidence	Diverse interpretations of evidence among donors	Both highlight the complexities in the concept of 'evidence'
Conceptualisation of Trust	Trust is multifaceted. Trust involves vulnerability	Trust is multifaceted. Trust is often informed by 'gut instinct'	Trust is complex. Trust embraces vulnerability.
Role of Social Capital and Networks	Social capital is a significant factor steering prosocial behaviours	Social capital is a key factor influencing philanthropic decision making.	Social capital is instrumental in informing philanthropic decision making.
Impact of Social Identity	Multiple identities influence giving	Choices reflect one's social identity	Social identity is influential in philanthropic decision making.
Solicitation and Peer Influence	Peer endorsement is pivotal in donations	Philanthropy often initiated by peer solicitation. Much philanthropy is underpinned by reciprocity.	Peer endorsement is hugely influential.
Trust in Mission vs. Peer Loyalty	Not specifically covered	Complex interplay affects giving patterns. Some	Trust in and alignment with the mission of the

Key Themes / Aspect of Study	Systematic Review Findings	Qualitative Study Findings	Points of Congruence / Congruent Themes
		philanthropists support charities whose mission they are not aligned with because of loyalty to the solicitor.	charity hugely important. Peer endorsement and reciprocity can inform giving.
Transparency, Accountability, and Communication	Essential for maintaining trust	Crucial for building and maintaining trust which is an evolving construct. Donors wanted charities to be candid and to extend reporting to what did not work as well as what did.	Importance of transparency and accountability for donor trust
Donor Influence	Donors sometimes seek influence such as a board seat.	Donors request tailored communications.	Donors desire a tangible influence over charities
Dimensions of Trust	Resonates with Sargeant and Lee's four dimensions of trust.	Three out of four dimensions matched	Trust is multi-dimensional, involving communication and mutual influence

5 Comparison with the Extant Literature

In this section, the researcher sought to position the findings of this research within the extant literature examining philanthropic giving. The researcher distinguishes the way in which the findings resonate with existing knowledge, to highlight any original results and examine any findings that might challenge conventional wisdom. By doing so, the researcher seeks to justify her research within the context of existing scholarship and to underscore its unique contributions and potential implications for future discourse. This exercise is key to situating the study within the ongoing academic dialogue and to ensuring that it is applicable and worthwhile.

5.1 Convergence and Divergence with Existing Studies

5.1.1 Systematic Review

The systematic review revealed that the landscape in which philanthropists engage with evidence is complex and multifaceted. The review observed several barriers and facilitators that resonate with findings from the extant literature, particularly pertaining to evidence-based policymaking and healthcare. This section provides a comparative analysis of the review's findings with related literature to highlight similarities, inconsistencies, and original insights.

Barriers to Evidence Use

Consistent Barriers: The review corroborated many barriers to evidence use identified in previous studies. For instance, challenges in accessing high-quality data were consistent with findings from Strydom et al. 2010, Oliver et al. 2014, Hardwick et al., 2015, Bach-Mortensen et al., 2018 and Mitchell & Berlan 2016. More specifically, Armstrong et al (2007) identified a 'lack of timeliness; insufficient relevant research; mutual mistrust and lack of personal contact between researchers, policymakers and practitioners; poor quality research … resource limitations' and a 'lack of expertise in evidence translation' (p.255) as barriers to the take-up of evidence. Many of these were identified by the systematic review as obstacles to the take-up of evidence, not least limited resources, including time and skills, a lack of evidence synthesis and insufficient knowledge transfer. The findings also concur with those of Bach-Mortensen et al. who observed that 'lack of time' (p.7) and 'a lack of technical capacity and skills to evaluate' (p.6) inhibited third sector organisations from evaluating their services (2018).

Information Overload: This issue was exacerbated by the overwhelming volume of un-synthesised information, a phenomenon akin to 'choice overload' in consumer behaviour, which can lead to indecision among philanthropists (Nutley et al., 2013). This challenge is particularly evident in the field of health care. Strauss et al. observe that decision-makers face a common challenge: 'the sheer volume of research evidence currently produced, access to research evidence, time to read, and skills to appraise, understand and apply research evidence' (2013, p.7). Furthermore, these challenges are exacerbated by "a lack of skill in critical appraisal of evidence" (Strauss et al., 2013, p.8).

A lack of critically appraised data may result in donors relying on the recommendations of their peers or non-profit leaders, who may also depend on poor-quality or misunderstood evidence. Breeze observed that some donors resort to employing strategies 'to cope with the bombardment' of information (2013a. p.23). Louie & Twersky referred to a 'firehose' of information reporting that foundation staff felt 'overwhelmed by the volume of information coming at them, regardless of whether they "opted-in" to receive it'. Foundation board members faced 'their own firehose of information and generally look to staff to curate knowledge about philanthropic practice; it rarely reaches them directly' (2017 para 7).

Lack of Relevant Evidence: A significant barrier to the use of evidence by philanthropists is the lack of relevant data and high-quality evidence. Six out of the nine included studies in the systematic review highlighted this issue. Several studies have observed that much of the evidence produced is not relevant to the end-user, further complicating its uptake._Straus et al. note that ‘the content of evidence resources is often not sufficient for the needs of the end-users…. For instance, when trying to use evidence from systematic reviews for clinical decision making,’ researchers observed ‘a lack of detail about the intervention, its accessibility, and risk of adverse events’ (2013, ch.1.1, p.8). This sentiment is echoed by Bach-Mortensen who observes that a commonly reported barrier is ‘the perceived mismatch between the requirements set by funders and what practitioners deemed to be valuable pursuits’ (2018, p.11).

The alignment between these observations in the extant literature and the findings of the systematic review underscores the persistent challenge of producing and disseminating evidence that meets the practical needs of philanthropists and other end-users.

Facilitators of Evidence Use

Enhanced Knowledge Sharing and Credible Evidence Definition: The review identified several facilitators of evidence use, including enhanced knowledge transfer and a broader definition of 'credible evidence.' This aligns with Schorr and Farrow's suggestion that "the boundaries which the prevailing framework draws around acceptable evidence too greatly limit the knowledge base available to policy makers, funders, program designers, and evaluators" (2011, p. 4). The need for better knowledge-sharing infrastructure and an expanded definition of 'credible evidence' is also supported by findings from Rosqueta (2014), who points to the need to broaden 'what you mean by evidence. Because no matter what issue or cause you care about, the more each source of evidence—research, informed opinion, field experience—points to the same path, the more confident we can all feel that we're headed in the right direction (Rosqueta 2014 para 16).

5.1.2 First Qualitative Paper: 'Seeing is Believing'

The findings of this paper align closely with much of the existing literature and reflect several aspects highlighted in the systematic review. The study confirmed an increasing interest among donors in capturing evidence of their funding's impact, mirroring the growing recognition of the need to understand impact as noted by Smith and Stewart (2017).

However, measuring and evaluating impact remains complex for both donors and non-profits. Key barriers, such as a lack of financial resources, technical capability, and evaluation literacy, were identified, consistent with the summary by Bach-Mortensen et al. (2018).

Like Oliver et al. (2014) and Hardwick (2015), the study revealed multiple obstacles to effective evidence use. These include difficulties accessing high-quality data, lack of critical appraisal, and an overwhelming volume of un-synthesised information (Breeze, 2013a). Furthermore, there is often a misalignment between the evidence sought by donors and that produced by charities. Additional barriers include variability in evidence requirements and differing methodologies across sectors, reflecting ongoing discussions in evidence-based decision-making (Hardwick, 2015; Lamont et al., 2020) and 'credible evidence' (Rosqueta, 2014; Puddy & Wilkins, 2011).

Knowledge-sharing platforms were identified as crucial for improving evidence uptake, aligning with Louie and Twersky’s (2016) observation that investing in such infrastructure can enhance giving. Facilitators of evidence use also included the availability of critically appraised and synthesised evidence (Wyborn et al., 2018).

The influence of trust and relationships on evidence use was evident, supporting Ostrander’s observations on the role of peer relationships in shaping engagement with evidence. Despite recognising the importance of empirical evidence, philanthropists often relied on endorsements from trusted individuals as a proxy for rigorous evidence. This reliance underscores a distinctive approach in philanthropy where personal networks and endorsements heavily influence funding decisions. Louie and Twersky (2017) also noted that peers and colleagues are central to information sharing, and research findings are likely filtered and interpreted as they move through these networks. Chapman et al. (2019) similarly highlighted the importance of relational dynamics, suggesting that trust can sometimes outweigh empirical data in guiding philanthropic choices.

Evidence in Philanthropy

The study provided valuable insights into the complex difficulties faced by philanthropists seeking to make evidence-informed funding decisions, which are well-documented in the literature. The findings concur with the view that charitable initiatives should be based on objective evidence or empirical data (Bishop & Green, 2008; Roumani & Aleman, 2018; Stannard-Stockton, 2010). Many respondents underscored the importance of evidence to prevent unintended harms and ensure effectiveness, aligning with Karlan and Wood (2017), who found that donors are more likely to contribute when shown evidence of a charity's effectiveness.

However, there was a discrepancy between the stated desire for evidence and the extent to which it was relied upon. Donors often resorted to less empirical methods, as observed by Neighbor et al. (2010), who noted that while donors professed to care about non-profit performance, few actually donated to the highest-performing organisations. This tendency to favour well-established non-profits, reflecting the Matthew Effect, indicates that donors may only superficially engage with impact data.

This divergence highlights the struggle donors face in understanding and utilising evidence effectively. The tendency to rely on personal instincts and endorsements from trusted peers aligns with social identity theory and supports findings by Maclean (2021) and Breeze (2010) on the role of reciprocity in charitable funding.

Barriers to Evidence Use

The study uncovered multiple challenges in accessing high-quality, synthesised, and critically appraised evidence. Obstacles include a lack of infrastructure for knowledge transmission and a reluctance to share failures, which reflects a broader issue in the third sector. Literature emphasises the value of learning from failure, noting that risk philanthropy involves some degree of failure (Edmondson, 2011), and that sharing both successful and unsuccessful outcomes can advance the sector (Ford Reedy, 2018). The reluctance to disclose disappointing outcomes, influenced by competition for funding, parallels publication bias, which can compromise meta-analyses (Ferguson & Heene, 2012; Ropovik et al., 2021).

Another challenge is the difficulty non-profits face in proving or articulating their impact, corroborating Mitchell and Berlan (2013; 2016) and Bach Mortensen (2018), who cited resource constraints and cultural barriers. The reluctance to invest in research and evaluation, driven by ‘overhead aversion’ (Yoo et al., 2022), further exacerbates these issues.

Respondents also reported feeling overwhelmed by excessive communication from non-profits yet lamented the absence of rigorous evidence. This dichotomy reflects that while charities produce vast amounts of data, much of it lacks actionable insights (Breeze, 2013).

5.1.3 Second Qualitative Paper: How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists

The significance of trust and relationships in philanthropic decision-making is well-documented in the extant literature, and the findings from this study align closely with established theories while offering new insights.

Trust and Vulnerability

This study underscores the pivotal role of trust in philanthropic giving, aligning with Francoise et al. (2022), who emphasised trust in fostering partnerships and engaging citizens in research. Oliver et al. (2014) also highlighted the significance of personal relationships and transparent communication in facilitating the uptake of evidence.

Within the extant literature, the foundations for trust are understood to extend beyond rational reasons, for trust involves *'vulnerability'* which may require *'a leap of faith'* (Möllering, 2006, p. 110). Möllering (2006) argues that trust becomes a meaningful construct when decisions cannot be made solely through calculative means, which is often the norm rather than the exception (p. 106). The study's findings resonate with Möllering's (2006) concept of trust involving vulnerability and a 'leap of faith'. For instance, a participant's reference to taking a 'leap of faith' underscores the idea that trust frequently relies on intuition and personal values rather than just empirical evidence. Moreover, many respondents spoke of relying on their instincts or intuition, which suggests that underlying psychodynamic processes carried more weight than cognitive ones. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that trust is derived from beliefs, values, and instincts and, as such, trust may fly in the face of empirical evidence. This perspective is further supported by Gilfoyle et al. (2022), who contend that trust should be understood contextually and from the perspectives of all involved parties.

Social Capital and Social Networks

The study's findings on the influence of social networks and social capital in philanthropic choices align with Putnam’s (2000) assertion that charitable giving is informed by social contexts and networks. Brown and Ferris (2007) theorised that social capital enhances prosocial behaviours, a view supported by this study’s observation of how donor decisions are influenced by their social networks and by Pawson and Tilly who posited that the behaviours and experiences of elite participants would be influenced by their social context, including their perception of their own and their peers’ social standing. Glucksberg and Russell-Prywata extend this discourse by analysing philanthropy within a ‘*a wider system of elite reproduction’* (2022 p.4) corroborating the study’s findings on the significant impact of social networks on philanthropic choices.

This study hypothesised that ‘trust in social capital can ‘distort giving between charities …. and that such is the concentration of wealth that only a very small segment of society will determine which charities and interventions are worth funding’ (p.9). Moreover, elites also exert donor control, which can consequently distance them from the critical evidence necessary to assess the impact of their funding. Ostrander (2007) concurred with this perspective, examining the nuances of donor control and social relations, and observing their impact on the utilisation of evidence. Ostrander emphasised that donor-controlled philanthropy restricts access to crucial evidence regarding the issues donors aim to address. This restriction arises because beneficiary groups are often unable to access the donors, which poses a significant problem. These groups possess specialised knowledge and understanding of the issues that the donations intend to address. Such knowledge could significantly enhance the likelihood of the donations having a positive effect. This study notes the power imbalances implicit within philanthropy, which are also evident in the observations made by Ostrander. These dynamics are widely recognised in the literature, highlighting the challenges arising from such imbalances. It is donors who control the supply of funds and, therefore, inevitably have relatively more power than recipients who express demands for those funds. Consequently, it is not uncommon for funders or potential funders to play a significant role in how nonprofit organisations operate, especially major donors and in certain areas of activity. This results in upward rather than downward accountability being prioritised (Schnurbein et al., 2021, p.186). Furthermore, Oliver and Pearce (2017) emphasise that regardless of the practitioner's ‘epistemological stance,’ understanding the role of power in evidence-informed decision-making is crucial. Examining who exerts power and how is fundamental to understanding how the practice of evidence use occurs in medicine and policy (p.2).

Social Identity Theory

The study's observation of social obligations and reciprocity influencing donor behaviour supports Chapman et al.'s (2020) exploration of social identities and their impact on donor behaviour. This finding resonates with Davis's (2014) review of Social Identity Theory, which suggests that social identities play a crucial role in shaping philanthropic decisions. Additionally, the study's findings align with Sargeant and Lee's (2002, 2004c) conceptualisation of trust and Bryce's depiction of a charity's social capital (Bryce, 2016). These findings suggest that the success of a charity may be contingent on its social capital and networks rather than solely on its direct impact.

Peer Influence

The study supports Lloyd's (2013) and Tian and Konrath's (2021) findings on the pivotal role of peer influence in philanthropic decision-making. The study highlights the dual nature of peer influence, both as an enabler and a risk, particularly illustrated by the collapse of Kids Company in 2015 (PACAC, 2015-2016). This nuanced understanding extends the discourse on peer influence, recognising both its potential to mobilise resources and its inherent risks .

Trust in Mission versus Peer Loyalty

The importance of a donor's trust in the mission of the charity seeking their support was emphasised by this study. However, this study also observed that peer influence can sometimes override alignment with a charity's mission. This contrasts with the general emphasis on mission alignment in the literature and highlights how loyalty to social connections can take precedence over mission congruence. This finding is supported by the Ideas Forty-two (2019) report, which notes that donors may support charities to signal loyalty to friends rather than to align with the charity's mission.

Transparency and Accountability

The study's emphasis on transparency and accountability aligns with Farwell et al.'s (2019) theory that these factors underpin charitable relationships. The study further illustrates that transparency and accountability are crucial not only for fostering trust but also for meeting donor expectations. Wymer et al. concurred observing that transparency was 'the strongest antecedent influence on charity trust … individuals are more likely to trust charities that communicate how they use their resources' (2021, p. 19)

Communication

The study corroborates Sargeant and Lee's (2002) identification of communication as a dimension of trust, noting that effective charity communications can bolster trust while poor communication can undermine it. This finding adds complexity to our understanding of the role of communication in philanthropic relationships.

5.2 Summary of Integration of Systematic Review and Qualitative Studies Findings with the Extant Literature

Triangulating the systematic review and qualitative study's findings with existing literature deepens our understanding of trust, social capital, and donor behaviours in philanthropy. It highlights the significance of social networks, personal relationships, and transparency in shaping philanthropic decisions while revealing areas where peer influence and social obligations complicate traditional notions of trust and mission alignment. Additionally, it underscores both common challenges and unique sector-specific dynamics in evidence use.

This comprehensive view offers valuable insights for both non-profits and philanthropists navigating the intricate landscape of charitable giving and can inform strategies to enhance evidence-based decision-making in the philanthropic sector.

Table 3: Triangulation of Findings from the Qualitative Study within the Extant Literature

Key Theme	Finding from Qualitative Paper	Aligned Literature	Divergent Literature	Citation
Importance of Evidence	Emphasis on evidence-based decision-making	Supports the need for empirical data in philanthropy	None	Roumani & Aleman, 2018; Bishop & Green, 2008, 2010; Karlan & Wood, 2017; Stannard-Stockton, 2010
Challenges in Using Evidence	Donors acknowledge the need for evidence but struggle to access and utilize evidence	Aligns with the concept of a gap between donor intent and action	None	Neighbor et al., 2010
Barriers to Evidence Use	Challenges include: a reluctance to share failures, high cost of impact evaluation, insufficient skills, paucity of time, and information overload	Supported by studies that detail similar barriers	None	Edmondson, 2011; Ford Reedy, 2018; Hardwick et al., 2015; Mitchell & Berlan, 2016; Framjee, 2016; Yoo et al., 2022; Breeze, 2013a
Credible Evidence	Prevailing definition of 'credible evidence' hinders the effective utilization of various forms of evidence. A more nuanced understanding could help streamline decision-making processes for both donors and recipients.	Concurs with Nutley et al who stress the role of evidence standards in advancing evidence-based policy and practice but warn against the risks of overly strict and prescriptive criteria.	None	Nutley et al., 2013
Peer Endorsement	A prevalent mechanism among donors,	Supports Meer's findings on the potential for an	None	Meer, 2009

Key Theme	Finding from Qualitative Paper	Aligned Literature	Divergent Literature	Citation
	impacting resource allocation	imbalanced funding landscape		
Philanthropy Advisory Services	Possible solution yet adds complexity due to lack of formal accreditation	Unique to the study	None	N/A
Donor Biases	Ego-driven and other motivations among donors may affect reporting	Raises the issue of appeasing High Net Worth Individual Donors	None	Dovey, 2020; Schleifer, 2019
Overarching Complexity	Multiple factors affect evidence-based decision-making in philanthropy	Supports and adds nuance to previous observations on the complexity of decision-making	None	Breeze, 2011; Cairney, 2016
Trust and Vulnerability	"Leap of faith" in decision-making	Trust as a function of vulnerability	None	Möllering, 2006
Social Capital	Emphasis on social networks and social capital in philanthropic choices	Importance of social contexts and networks in charitable giving	None	Putnam, 2000; Brown & Ferris, 2007
Social Identity Theory	Social obligations and reciprocity shape donor behaviour	Social identities and trust influence donor behaviour	None	Davis, 2014; Chapman et al., 2020; Sargeant & Lee, 2002 & 2004b; Bryce, 2016
Peer Influence	Peer influence as both an enabler and a risk	Peer influence as an enabler in charitable giving	Risk of peer influence	Lloyd, 2013; Tian & Konrath, 2021; PACAC, 2015-2016
Trust in Mission	Loyalty and reciprocity can override mission misalignment	Trust and mission alignment	Loyalty can override mission misalignment	Ideas 42 Behaviour and Charitable Giving report, 2019
Transparency and Accountability	Emphasis on accountability and influence in donor relationships	Importance of transparency and accountability in charitable giving	None	Farwell et al., 2019
Communication	Reliance on charity communications as a trust factor	Effective communication as a dimension of trust	Communication as a challenge	Sargeant & Lee, 2002

6. Theoretical Alignment

In this section, the researcher aims to demonstrate that the findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical frameworks outlined in the introduction of this thesis. By aligning the findings with Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Social Capital Theory, this section seeks to substantiate the theoretical basis of the research and highlight its contributions to understanding philanthropic decision-making.

6.1. Congruence with Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) attributed to Thibaut and Kelley (1959), provides a conceptual framework for comprehending the nature of social relationships and interactions based on reciprocal exchange. SET infers that one of the drivers encouraging people to participate in prosocial behaviours is the anticipation of commensurate rewards. The findings of this study coincided with this theoretical framework and highlighted that reciprocity underpinned much philanthropic decision making. Donors often expect outcomes related to social standing or are motivated by their social relationships. Conversely, in the absence of perceived benefits, potential donors may withhold their contributions. This reciprocity-driven behaviour underscores the applicability of SET to philanthropic practices observed in this research.

6.2 Alignment with Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory as discussed in the introduction, emphasises the importance of relationships, trust and social cohesion in the promotion of philanthropy. According to Bourdieu social capital is '*the aggregate of actual or potential resources held within a resilient network of institutionalised relationships characterised by mutual acquaintance and recognition'* (1986, p. 22). Social capital theory expounds the degree to which the social capital and resources of groups and individuals impel their social interactions, commitments, and collaborations and explains how reciprocity and trust are derived from these networks and play a critical role in strengthening collaborative efforts and propelling collective outcomes. This theory offers a lens through which to hypothesize that social networks and the relationships within those networks can influence the extent to which philanthropists employ evidence to inform their funding decisions.

This study investigated the core elements of social capital theory, namely trust, networks, and social norms, to understand the extent to which they influenced behaviours. The study found that many respondents relied upon *'trust'* as a proxy for high-quality evidence, supporting the hypothesis that trust is integral to social capital.

To sum up, the findings of this research are grounded in and supported by established theoretical frameworks which serve to elucidate the myriad complex mechanisms underpinning trust, exchange, relationships, and networks.

6.3 Theoretical Contribution

The principal theoretical contribution of this research is the application of Social Capital Theory to evidence-informed philanthropic decision-making. This application enhances our understanding of how social networks, trust, and relationships influence the use of evidence in philanthropic decision-making. The findings support the relevance of Social Capital Theory in elucidating the complex mechanisms underpinning trust, exchange, relationships, and networks within the philanthropic context.

The researcher posits that philanthropic decision-making is heavily influenced by personal networks and trust, often at the expense of more systematic evidence-based approaches.

7. Discussion

The contemporary landscape of philanthropy is a problematic one, in which the non-profit sector is dealing with a challenging fiscal environment, in tandem with ever expanding need. These difficulties have been further amplified by the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the current cost of living crisis and growing inequality, for, as Piketty has observed, the last generation has witnessed a sharp rise in the amount of wealth and income concentrated in the hands of an elite few (Piketty, 2014). Against such a backdrop, it is perhaps not surprising that elite philanthropy is enjoying a boom (Coutts Institute, 2017) fuelled in part by a belief that such philanthropy offers a better and more effective way of '*solving problems like inequality than paying more tax*' (Glucksberg & Russell-Prywata, 2022, p. 2).

This thesis focuses on elite philanthropy not least because of the disproportionately large impact that it enjoys relative to its size, particularly in sectors such as health and international development. Such is the level of influence of elite philanthropy, that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observed that '*private philanthropy is reshaping the development landscape like never before'* (Glucksberg & Russell-Prywata, 2022, p. 2).

In view of the transformative nature and influence of elite philanthropy, the overarching research question addressed in this thesis is: What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of evidence by philanthropists? Given that many UHNWIs believe that philanthropy is well placed to address society's most challenging problems, including inequality, it is crucial that we understand the extent to which evidence informs their decision making.

Moreover, in an environment where resources such as time and money are limited, the effectiveness of charitable programmes can vary significantly. Unfortunately, the solutions that we often gravitate towards are not necessarily the most impactful. Timely high-quality and appropriate evidence is vital to enable philanthropists to target their support to the most impactful charities, and it is posited that as the critical ingredient is getting the right information to the right decision makers at the right time.

This study explored the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use by philanthropists and sought to examine the extent to which trust, and relationships influenced the decision making of those same donors.

7.1 Barriers and Facilitators to Evidence Use

Several studies (Bishop & Green, 2015; Roumani & Aleman, 2018; Stannard-Stockton, 2010) concur that a growing number of philanthropists believe that '*donations should be based on evidence that they will actually make a difference'* (Stannard-Stockton, 2010 para 1). Indeed, all the participants in this study underscored the significance of evidence, with one asserting that evidence was, '*extremely important [to show] that you are backing something that is solving a problem*' (014). Almost all respondents also expressed a fervent wish that their donations should have a visible impact. These findings validated prior studies (Bishop & Green, 2008; Roumani & Aleman, 2018; Stannard-Stockton, 2010), which emphasised the importance of anchoring philanthropy in evidence. The observations of Karlan and Wood (2017), that HNWIs were more likely to donate when shown robust evidence of a charity's effectiveness, provided further support for these findings.

Nevertheless, despite this growing awareness of the significance of evidence, this study identified numerous gaps in the practical application of evidence to giving decisions and agreed with Stannard-Stockton's observation that '*most people and even most large foundations do not base their giving on any significant level of evidence'* (Stannard-Stockton, 2010 para 1).

These findings are also buttressed by Neighbor et al.'s (2010) observation of a divergence between donors' voiced preference for '*more evidence*' and their actual engagement with evidence. Such a departure from evidence-informed giving can in part be attributed to the challenges that donors face when endeavouring to access or comprehend evidence.

However, such divergence might not only be caused by inaccessible or incomprehensible evidence but could reflect a donors' bias or preference for particular types of evidence. These findings suggest that donors may indeed be seeking evidence, but their preference is for evidence that aligns with their preconceptions or interests. This preference for assenting evidence rather than more thorough, impartial evidence serves to widen the gap with evidence-based philanthropy.

The data from this study identified a nascent trend in which respondents relied upon the endorsements of peers or their own intuition as a proxy for rigorous evidence, which may in part be fuelled by the difficulties outlined above. However, such findings also correspond with social identity theory which posits that loyalty, reciprocity, peer networks and social groups all have a significant impact and bearing upon the decision or otherwise of a donor to donate. These results are further supported by those of Maclean (2021) and Chapman et al. (2019).

This study observed numerous obstacles which hindered donors in their attempts to engage with evidence. Barriers cited included: a dearth of evidence, data gaps, a lack of data synthesis or critically appraised evidence, poor charity reporting practices and an unwillingness to disclose poor outcomes. The competition for funding and the pitfalls of publication bias further amplified a lack of transparency and hampered donors in their quest for rigorous high-quality evidence.

The narrow application of impact evaluations in the non-profit sector, and the resulting dearth of evidence concerning program effectiveness, could be seen as a wider systemic failure in which direct service delivery is prioritised over evaluation. This viewpoint is validated by Mitchell and Berlan (2016) and Yoo et al. (2022), which suggests that the challenge is not confined to the high costs of evaluations but is rather symptomatic of a failure to recognise the value and significance of the role of evaluation within the non-profit sector. This failure to value evaluation is amplified by resource constraints, including insufficient investment in training and skills, and an unwillingness to fund overhead or core costs. Such a framing highlights an innate predilection for service delivery over the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the services delivered.

Multiple respondents spoke of being bombarded by overwhelming amounts of information, which coincide with Breeze's findings (Breeze, 2013b). This study found that despite a ready availability of a vast quantities of data, the value of such data was limited and remained inaccessible to the end user because it was not curated, critically appraised or synthesised.

Finally, some barriers to evidence-use were deemed to be self-inflicted, two respondents talked of the extent to which the donor's ego could distort donation decisions. Other respondents acknowledged that in attempting to satisfy some donor's demands for particular types of information, non-profits could be prevented from commissioning higher value evidence; this supports Scutari's observation that elite donors, '*can see that they generate maximal impact by asking grantees to report performance metrics or award restricted project grants aligned to their interests'* (2023 para 16).

This study also identified numerous mechanisms that could facilitate and promote evidence use by philanthropists.

Recommendations to improve the uptake of evidence included: investment in platforms and organisations to facilitate knowledge transfer. Mechanisms to enable exchange of insights include knowledge sharing hubs, feedback loops, open-source data, informal networks, workshops, webinars, or online forums. The best-known examples of knowledge sharing hubs in the UK are the ten What Works Centres in the UK, which work across a number of different areas of social policy to facilitate the creation, dissemination and adoption of high quality, critically appraised evidence, to inform policy and decision making in the UK. By conducting gap and needs analyses, capturing and synthesising the extant evidence, commissioning new research as needed and publishing that evidence in accessible formats, they simplify access to evidence for their end-users and thereby inform best practice across several thematic areas.

The Ten What Works Centres in the UK are:

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE):
2. Education Endowment Foundation
3. College of Policing What Works Centre for Crime Reduction
4. Foundations: Addresses issues related to children and families.
5. What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth
6. Centre for Ageing Better
7. What Works Centre for Wellbeing
8. Centre for Homelessness Impact
9. Youth Futures Foundation
10. Youth Endowment Fund

The provision of open data and feedback loops was also observed to facilitate evidence informed decision making by philanthropists, as exemplified by 360Giving, the Listening Fund and DataKind UK.

- 360Giving was founded by the philanthropist Fran Perrin to encourage grant makers to share information about the grants they have made on their platform to better inform charities and funders to identify funding gaps and to collaborate.

- The Listening Fund seeks to make the youth sector more accountable to young people.

- DataKind UK's purpose is to improve the impact of social change organisations by building their capacity through data science. To date, DataKind UK have conducted data science projects with more than 80 charities in the UK.

Access to philanthropy advisors and donor advised funds were also identified as mechanisms which could promote evidence use. Experienced professional advisors could steer philanthropists both to the evidence and help them to interpret and apply such evidence. However, this is subject to the caveat that there is no formal accreditation for philanthropy advisors in the UK, which means that it may be hard to identify high quality philanthropy advisors. Donor advised funds are run by third party organisations to govern and manage philanthropic donations made by individuals, families, or organisations. The advantage to the donor is that they receive a tax break when they transfer their gift to the DAF and they may also receive guidance and advice from the organisation overseeing the DAF, which will oversee the governance, compliance, and due diligence. However, DAFs are not free of criticism, not least that they are criticised for warehousing funding, postponing giving, and lack of transparency (Schleifer, 2019).

Finally, the researcher of this study theorised that a broader definition of what constitutes credible evidence would also serve to improve evidence use. The researcher posits that evidence drawn from the grey literature, including working papers, non-profit evaluation and impact reports, and white papers, could enhance our understanding of complex issues and enable timely insights. Although grey literature is not subjected to peer review (which is a lengthy process affecting the speed with which the evidence can be disseminated), it can add significant value to our knowledge in rapidly developing areas and enable us to obtain context-specific knowledge or to capture the experiences of stakeholders. To ensure the quality of the evidence derived from the grey literature, this study recommends utilising one or more of several critical appraisal tools, such as CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) Checklists and the ROBINS-I, a tool for assessing the risk of bias in non-randomised studies of interventions.

In summary, despite a stated enthusiasm for evidence-informed decision-making, the extent to which philanthropists employ evidence is informed by multiple barriers and their own personal inclinations. Cairney (2016) hypothesises that psychology heavily informs the decision-making of the decision-maker, and therefore, allowances need to be made for a variety of psychological factors which influence the uptake of evidence, not least the decision-maker's underlying values and beliefs when considering how people engage with evidence.

These findings also align with *'bounded rationality'*, which submits that decision-makers are constrained by partial information, their own cognitive capacity and time. Consequently, they employ a variety of heuristics to help inform their decisions.

7.2 The Role of Trust and Relationships

The results of this study revealed the critical role that trust plays within philanthropic networks. The data revealed a complex relationship underpinning the values and convictions of the donor and the extent of the influence of their peers and social networks. Hence, non-profits that were successful in amalgamating the networks of existing donors could exploit the social capital of those donors to leverage more funding.

This study's results concurred with Chapman et al.'s (2020) finding that an individual donor may be influenced by multiple social identities (for example, someone may be a member of a livery company, a parent at a school and aligned to a political party) but that not all social identities conferred the same degree of influence on that individual. This was illustrated by one respondent who spoke of supporting his synagogue and his community and family. Moreover, a majority of respondents to this study acknowledged that at least some of their donations to charity were driven by social obligation or reciprocity (Bryce, 2016; Lloyd, 2013) and so illuminated the extent to which philanthropy was modulated by social networks and relationships. The researcher posits that the gravitational pull of such peer driven funding can serve to direct funding to ineffective charities or in the worst instances to fund charitable programmes that cause harm, as exemplified by the downfall of the UK charity Kids Company (D. Callahan, 2017; PACAC, 2015-2016b). There may also be an opportunity cost whereby more effective charities that do not have the advantage of a supporter base with a high level of social capital are starved of funding.

Furthermore, peer-driven funding influenced by reciprocity and loyalty to their own social networks can prompt donors to fund organisations whose missions are not aligned to their own values (Ideas Forty-two, 2019; Wymer et al., 2021). This is in contradiction to our findings that an alignment to the mission of a charity was a key determinant in unlocking funding. Hence, relational trust presents a quandary as it can serve to undermine an emphasis on transparent and evidence-informed giving.

This study observed that trust was correlated to transparency, in which information is disclosed voluntarily (M.M. Farwell et al., 2019, p. 772) and accountability, both of which were cited by several respondents as being a key factor reinforcing their trust in an organisation. Indeed, it has been conjectured that transparency is one of the strongest precursors of trust with donors *'…more likely to trust charities that communicate how they use their resources'* (Wymer et al., 2021, p. 19). However, Brindle has observed some cognitive dissonance in relation to transparency, for despite professing to want charities to be transparent, few donors were supportive of the overhead costs involved in facilitating such transparency and were also disappointed by the disclosure of poor results (Brindle, 2018; M.M. Farwell et al., 2019).

In sum, this study explicates the multiple ways in which trust informs the landscape of philanthropy. Consideration needs to be given to the way in which we can leverage such insights to generate a more knowledgeable and effective environment for evidence-informed philanthropy.

7.3 The Interplay of Trust and Evidence in Philanthropic Decision-Making: Synergies and Tensions

Philanthropy has long sought to harmonise the empirical rigour of high-quality evidence with the subtle nature of relational trust. The findings of the systematic review observed a growing recognition of the role of evidence in guiding philanthropic decisions and highlighted the complex relationship between trust and evidence.

An evidence-based approach to philanthropy implies a rational and methodological approach to charitable giving which uses scientific evidence to distinguish impactful and effective programmes (Easterling & Main, 2016). In a similar vein to evidence-based medicine, evidence-based philanthropy seeks to amalgamate the best highest quality evidence with relevant knowledge (Sackett et al., 1996). Unlike medicine however, philanthropy frequently operates in a challenging terrain of contested societal issues which draw upon a multitude of frameworks and consequently relies more heavily upon personal intuition, values, and trust (Oliver & Pearce, 2017).

Tensions arise when donors choose to be guided by relational trust such as peer-endorsements to inform their decision making. Many donors employ such a hybrid approach in which they utilise evidence but also seek the endorsements of their peers.

However, a palpable risk exists when relational trust takes precedence over empirical evidence. There are multiple examples of instances in which donors have emphasised peer endorsement above evidence, which have resulted in controversies such as the downfall of Kids Co and the scandals pertaining to Oxfam. Such examples bring into question the integrity and credibility of the philanthropy sector and reinforce concerns that philanthropy favours elite interests and seeks to bypass democratically decided priorities (Vallely, 2020a).

Nevertheless, trust and evidence can augment each other and serve to enhance decision-making. For when prudently employed, trust can act as a valuable signpost through a plethora of philanthropic choices and when anchored in accountability and transparency, trust can act as a catalyst and drive philanthropy forward; this is especially relevant when there is a dearth of evidence or evidence is not easy to find. Conversely, rigorous evidence can strengthen trust and reassure donors that their funds are having their intended impact. Such equilibrium is important particularly when barriers to employing evidence, such as those relating to its accessibility and understanding, persist.

To sum up, the dynamic forces of trust and evidence which buttress philanthropy can complement each other but can also undermine one another. While trust is fundamental to philanthropic giving, if philanthropy is to progress, such trust needs to be amalgamated with high-quality evidence to achieve equilibrium and so facilitate impactful giving.

8. Identification of New Insights

This section summarises original and new insights emerging from the systematic review and qualitative study, focusing on the barriers and facilitators of evidence use by philanthropists.

8.1 New Insights from the Systematic Review

Reframing Failure: The systematic review suggests that reframing failure could enhance the uptake of evidence. Emphasising the value of learning from both successful and unsuccessful outcomes can promote a more transparent and open culture within the philanthropic sector. This perspective aligns with the concept of 'epistemic integrity,' which encourages the generation of socially relevant knowledge and promotes social justice (Daher et al. 2023).

Reluctance to Share Negative Outcomes: A unique barrier identified is the reluctance of non-profits to share negative outcomes due to competitive fundraising pressures. This reluctance mirrors publication bias in academic research, where negative results are often withheld (Jooper et al. 2012). Addressing this issue requires a cultural shift towards greater transparency and learning from failures.

Hybrid Models of Philanthropy: Few donors employ purely evidence-based models of philanthropy. Instead, they use hybrid models that combine endorsements from trusted peers and personal instincts with evidence. This finding highlights the complex interplay between empirical evidence and personal judgment in philanthropic decision-making.

Role of Philanthropy Advisors: The review theorises that access to professional philanthropy advisors can facilitate evidence use. These advisors can help philanthropists clarify objectives, review past giving, and increase knowledge of areas of need, thus enhancing the overall impact of philanthropic funding.

8.2 New Insights from the Qualitative Study

Trust Beyond Empirical Evidence: The study reveals that trust in non-profits often relies on personal intuition and values rather than empirical evidence. This finding challenges the primacy of rational, evidence-based approaches and underscores the importance of personal relationships and social networks in philanthropic decision-making.

Peer Influence as a Double-Edged Sword: While peer influence is generally seen as a facilitator of charitable giving, it can also pose risks. The collapse of Kids Company illustrates how reliance on peer endorsements without further due diligence can lead to negative outcomes. This insight adds nuance to the understanding of peer influence in philanthropy.

Loyalty versus Mission Alignment: The study finds that loyalty to social connections can sometimes override alignment with a charity's mission. This complexity suggests that social bonds and obligations can significantly influence donor behaviour, sometimes at the expense of mission congruence.

Social Capital and Charitable Success: The success of a charity may be more closely tied to its social capital and networks than to its direct impact. This insight highlights the importance of understanding social dynamics and leveraging social capital in philanthropic strategies.

Transparency and Accountability as Trust Builders: Transparency and accountability are critical for fostering trust and meeting donor expectations. Effective communication and comprehensive impact reporting, including the disclosure of setbacks and failures, can enhance trust and facilitate better donor-non-profit relationships.

9. Concluding Remarks

This study has illuminated the intricate interplay between trust and evidence in the realm of philanthropy. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of evidence in ensuring impactful and effective philanthropic giving, trust remains a cornerstone of philanthropic relationships. This duality underscores the need for philanthropists and non-profits to be supported in adopting a more evidence-informed approach to funding decisions. Such approaches require philanthropists to transcend peer endorsements and to scrutinise rigorous evidence to inform their decisions. Moreover, non-profits need to enhance transparency in their reporting of outcomes and evaluation of their impacts to foster trust, which will, in turn, facilitate evidence-informed philanthropic decisions.

In summary, this study highlights the need for a balanced approach that integrates trust with robust evidence in philanthropic decision-making. By adopting these strategies, the philanthropic sector can enhance its effectiveness, foster greater accountability, and ensure that philanthropic efforts achieve their intended impacts. The journey towards evidence-informed philanthropy is ongoing, but with the right support and commitment, it holds the promise of transformative change for society's most pressing challenges.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, a growing understanding has emerged of the importance of evidence-based philanthropy, particularly amongst philanthropists, charity leaders and policy makers. An evidence-based approach to philanthropy requires philanthropic practices to be grounded in data and research, to ensure the optimal allocation of resources to the most impactful charitable endeavours. Nevertheless, despite such a persuasive rationale, few donors have integrated such an evidence-based approach into their philanthropy.

As highlighted earlier in this thesis, ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, non-profits were already struggling to meet the needs of their beneficiaries, especially those serving the most marginalised communities. Their struggles were exacerbated by the subsequent global economic downturn, which saw a considerable increase in inequality both within and between countries (World Bank, 2022 chapter 1). These challenges have served to increase the reliance of non-profits on private elite philanthropy, to the extent that elite philanthropists are now key influencers of the future and shape of philanthropy.

Fields including medicine and indeed public policy are informed by and acknowledge the importance of evidence-based approaches. Masic et al. define Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) as '*the conscientious, explicit, judicious and reasonable use of modern, best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients*' (2008, p. 1). Similarly, Evidence Based

Practice (EBP), which is purported to be '*derived from evidence-based medicine (EBM)*' (Oliver et al., 2014, p. 1), is grounded in the belief '*that the best possible way to guarantee that something works is to scientifically prove that it works*' and furthermore, that '*it is not only desirable, but also possible to prove that interventions work (or do not work)*' (Tellings, 2017, p. 582). The researcher of this study posits that there is a compelling need for philanthropy to adopt such an evidence-based approach to philanthropy, in order to ensure not only that philanthropic funds are directed towards the most effective and impactful initiatives, but also to avoid funding unintentional harms such as those inflicted by PlayPump International's 'Magic Roundabout'. PlayPump International received substantial philanthropic funding to finance the installation of 4000 water pumps throughout Africa. The laudable intention underpinning this initiative was that the pumps (which were driven by a children's roundabout) would entertain children and provide a ready supply of clean and accessible water. However, the initiative was based on flawed projections and concerns also emerged relating to the dependency on child labour and the risk of injury which emanated from the roundabout (Chambers, 2009).

2. Reiteration of Research Aim and Objectives

This research was prompted by the observation that evidence-informed decision making within philanthropy remains rare. The researcher therefore sought to explore why so few philanthropists adopted such an evidence-based approach to their philanthropy and it was this rationale that informed the research questions which examined:

- If and how philanthropists engaged with evidence?
- What were the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use?
- The extent to which trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists.

A review of the extant literature revealed that whilst there were a number of studies analysing the factors motivating elite philanthropists, few studies probed how such philanthropists engaged with evidence when making decisions. The researcher sought to address this gap in the literature by utilising qualitative methods to interrogate the way philanthropists interacted with and employed evidence.

3. Significance of this Research

The findings of this study contribute several novel insights to the nascent field of philanthropic studies. By demonstrating how traditional trust-based approaches to philanthropy can be blended with the emerging paradigm of evidence-informed philanthropy, the findings of this research have contributed to an evolving discourse that is both more cohesive and effective.

By adopting a two-tiered methodological approach, incorporating a systematic review and a qualitative study, the researcher sought to capture the many nuances relating to and apprising philanthropic giving. The results of the initial systematic review (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020), which categorised the barriers to, and facilitators of, evidence use by elite philanthropists, served to inform the research questions of the subsequent qualitative study, which sought to deepen our understanding of both the tensions and synergies underpinning the relationship of trust and evidence within philanthropy.

The key implications which demonstrate the significance of this research are portrayed below:

3.1 Philanthropy Should be Grounded in Ethics

The research's focus on ethical considerations is a distinctive contribution to the discourse. This study proposes that philanthropy should be grounded in ethical considerations and buttressed by a commitment to '*first do no harm*', like the Hippocratic oath informing medicine (Moody et al., 2022; Polet, 2019). Philanthropists need to be supported to identify and fund effective initiatives to advance social good in ways that are sustainable, and which consider the responsibility to avoid potential harm to beneficiaries (Reid, 2023).

A commitment to avoid harm would require donors, endowed with both the capacity and authority to address a particular problem, to proceed with caution and respect (Polet, 2019). Moreover, donors should consider the agency and authority of the beneficiaries whose lives are being affected. Donors should also ensure that they are informed of the nature of and the mechanisms impacting that problem and they should seek out research to ensure that potential solutions do not aggravate the very problems they are endeavouring to address. Finally, donors should acknowledge that not every societal issue is a problem that philanthropy must, or even can, resolve (Polet, 2019).

In sum, philanthropists should be supported to identify and fund effective initiatives to advance social good in ways that are sustainable, and to consider the responsibility to avoid potential harm to beneficiaries (Reid, 2023).

3.2 Broaden the Definition of 'Credible Evidence'

This research has observed the imperative that high-quality evidence informs philanthropic decision making. Within the discourse of evidence-based philanthropy, the conventional definition of 'credible evidence' is one that relies upon quantifiable data and rigorous peer-reviewed academic research. However, such metrics, although valuable, do not always offer a complete picture when taken in isolation. Hence, if we are to enhance our understanding of what works in philanthropy, we need to integrate both quantitative and qualitative evidence into our analysis. Such evidence should be derived from both the peer-reviewed rigorous academic evidence and draw on the grey literature, with the caveat that the integrity of data derived from the grey literature should be ensured, by subjecting it to critical appraisal (for which a variety of critical appraisal tools can be employed). Embracing both quantitative and qualitative evidence will enable a more subtle and holistic approach to and understanding of philanthropy which will in turn enhance its effectiveness and impact. However, such a re-evaluation of our understanding of evidence will require all stakeholders to judiciously consider how best to measure and define impact.

The researcher proposes an expanded definition of *'credible evidence'* – the revised framework would:

- **Incorporate Qualitative Insights:** to capture the subtleties and complexities informing human relationships and interactions. Such narratives can capture insights that may be overlooked by quantitative approaches and can add richness and depth to the likely impact and effectiveness of a particular intervention.
- **Balance Quantitative Metrics:** Whilst Quantitative data is a vital component of *'credible evidence'*, it is important to recognise that our understanding should not be limited to the data itself but should also extend to the implications of that data. As such both the objective and subjective outcomes need to be evaluated and understood. Whilst quantitative date affords tangible measures of performance and/or impact those insights are enhanced and given nuance when informed by the wider project goals and personal narratives. Such descriptions help to inform our understanding of people's personal experiences and so add depth to the quantitative data enabling us to achieve a more holistic understanding of the programme's impact.
- **Recognise the Complexities:** Focusing exclusively on data and metrics risks overlooking the multifaceted and nuanced human interactions that have a significant bearing. Accurate and credible evidence should incorporate such complexities, even when not aligned with traditional metrics.
- **Embrace Grey Literature with Rigour:** Drawing on evidence emerging from the grey literature acknowledges its potential to offer rich insights that may be absent from peer-reviewed publications. However, evidence derived from the grey literature should be subjected to rigorous quality appraisal so ensuring that evidence drawn from such sources is rigorous, valid and reliable. The use of established critical appraisal tools will offer a mechanism for assessing the validity and reliability of evidence from grey literature and so ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to its evaluation.

3.3 Overcoming Traditional Challenges with Innovative Mechanisms

This research has made an original contribution to the extant literature and filled a gap in the knowledge through its identification of mechanisms that serve to obstruct or promote evidence use by philanthropists. The most cited barrier to evidence use was that it was inaccessible either because it was hard to find or difficult to comprehend. This study also disclosed a data paradox, namely that whilst some donors talked of a lack of evidence, others spoke of being overwhelmed by vast quantities of data. The researcher posits that this paradox reflects the reality that vast quantities of data are generated by non-profits and other bodies but, because that raw data is not subjected to any rigorous appraisal or synthesis, a majority of recipients of that data find it of no value whatsoever.

This study also identified a lack of investment in infrastructure for robust knowledge sharing as an impediment to evidence use. The study highlighted examples of effective knowledge sharing hubs which included the nine What Works Centres in UK and identified several exemplars of feedback loops which could be replicated elsewhere. This study suggests that such mechanisms and constructs could offer one way in which evidence informed philanthropy could be supported.

3.4 Shaping Professional Standards in Philanthropy

This study observed an emerging trend for philanthropy advisors in the UK and therefore suggests the adoption an accreditation system for professional philanthropy advisors. Such a system could introduce a rigorous set of competencies to inform the profession and so ensure that professional philanthropy advice is effective and ethical.

3.5 Synthesising Trust and Evidence for a Holistic Approach

This study highlights the advantages of employing a hybrid model integrating both trust and evidence to inform the philanthropy discourse. A hybrid model transcends the limitations inherent in each archetype when taken in isolation. For trust affords a more subtle and nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural complexities influencing philanthropy, whilst robust evidence allows for a more systematic explanation of the moderators influencing effectiveness.

In summary, the findings of this PhD contribute several original insights to our understanding of philanthropy and so serve to fill a gap in the extant academic literature. The study also lays the groundwork for future research and policy formulation by identifying several gaps in the research that would benefit from further examination.

4. Reflective Journey

The research journey embarked upon by the researcher was both a transformative and memorable one. During the duration of her research, the researcher's outlook evolved, particularly in relation to her ontological position. The researcher's intention at the outset was to examine the ways in which elite philanthropists engaged with evidence, but it soon became apparent that the topic was both multifaceted and complex, informed as it was by varied social and cultural interactions. This awareness apprised the researcher's methodological perspective and served to enhance her understanding of the multifaceted nature of the relationship between evidence and decision-making within philanthropy.

The researcher applied an interpretivist lens to her research, which informed her view that reality was both socially constructed and subject to interpretation by the individual. This view was derived from the semi-structured interviews which the researcher conducted with the elite participants. Established relationships with some of the participants facilitated trust and so afforded the researcher the opportunity to witness and interrogate the often-disregarded influence of social standing upon philanthropic decision making.

In early 2020, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns necessitated a pivot away from in person interviews to virtual interviews that were conducted over Zoom or Teams. It quickly transpired that rather than hindering the research, such mechanisms benefitted the study, as participants were more readily available. A further advantage, which it is theorised stemmed from the lockdown, was that participants were more generous with their time than they might have been in another setting and those longer interactions enabled the researcher to mine richer data.

The researcher holds an MSc in Evidence Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation, and she adheres to Popper's theory that nothing in empirical science can be proven, but it can be disproved (Leplin, 2007, p. 72). Nevertheless, despite subscribing to the perspectives of a subtle realist and social constructivist and having a stated preference for evidence-based interventions, the researcher's findings revealed that philanthropy relies on more than just empirical data and instead employs a hybrid model incorporating intuition, personal experience, and social networks in addition to empirical data. Hence, when examining the drivers of evidence-based philanthropy, it is necessary to recognise both objective phenomena and make allowances for the role of subjective experiences.

As touched on above, the researcher's ontological position evolved over the duration of this study. At the outset, the researcher applied a post-positivist, structured lens to understanding the world. However, her understanding of the depth of human experience was broadened through the immersive methodologies she employed. Consequently, her ontological view was modified to embrace several alternative paradigms including pragmatism, post-positivism and interpretivism.

This research was subjected to several constraints and limitations, not least arising from challenges surrounding obtaining access to the elite participants. Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, the knowledge derived from this study was both valuable and original.

In sum, the researcher's research journey which has led to her adopting a new epistemology framework and view of the world that reflects the multifaceted and convoluted nature of the factors that underpin philanthropic decision making and practices.

5. Study Limitations

The research comprised a systematic review and a qualitative study, both of which were subject to several strengths and limitations, which need to be critiqued so as not to weaken the integrity of its findings. An awareness of the limitations can also guide and inform future research.

In this section we will initially consider the limitations of the systematic review (section 5.1) followed by the limitations of the qualitative study (section 5.2).

5.1 Limitations of the Systematic Review

The primary limitation of the systematic review was that none of the included studies emerged from systematic database searches, instead they were all derived from supplemental searches. Even though each of the included studies was subjected to PRISMA guidelines, and appraised utilising GRADE-CERQual so ensuring a minimum standard of quality, a lack of peer-review caused concerns relating to their academic rigour and generalisability.

A further worry related to the heterogeneity of the study designs, which rendered comparisons of quality difficult. The diversity of approaches, such as the use of vote-counting techniques across the studies, made it challenging to assess the actual impact of individual factors across the studies.

Furthermore, even those studies professing to provide recommendations in philanthropy lacked rigorous methodology. In such instances, the researcher was obliged to communicate directly with authors and publishers to ascertain their research methods, but this added an additional layer of complexity and potential bias to the review.

5.2 Limitations of the Qualitative Study

The qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews in which the researcher prioritised depth and richness of understanding over quantity. The small sample size however, diminished the transferability of the results. A further limitation of the study was the homogeneity of the sample demographic, each of whom was a graduate and aged over 50. Consequently, this study failed to capture the perspectives and experiences of a younger demographic, who it is theorised are more likely to adopt an *'investor mindset'* and as such may place more emphasis on impact measures and accountability (Fyffe, 2016). Hence, a key drawback of this study is that it does not reflect this evolving demographic.

A further criticism is that despite employing measures to ensure anonymity, there was nevertheless the risk that social desirability might affect a participant's responses, which could in turn introduce bias into the data.

A focus on elite donors introduced issues of power dynamics, as many elites can limit unsolicited inquiries by employing gatekeepers and other mechanisms to protect their privacy and prevent scrutiny. Such barriers can make them difficult to observe and study. Researchers may also struggle to create a sufficient rapport with their elite subjects so that those subjects will open up and share candid responses with the researcher. Fortunately, the researcher's background, age, and prior experience of working with HNWI and UHNWI donors facilitated introductions and minimised any perceived power imbalances, so enabling her to be an *'insider'* within the conversation.

There are multiple advantages associated with interviews as a method of data collection, including that they can enable valuable in-depth insights into a person's mindset, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviours. However, interviewing is also subject to a number of inherent limitations including the risk of researcher bias. Researcher bias can arise if the interviewer's line of questioning, manner or behaviour inadvertently influences the participant's responses. The risk of bias is amplified if the interviewer holds fixed or preconceived opinions about the topic under investigation.

Another limitation of interviews is that they are time and resource heavy, hence they are typically conducted on a small sample, which can limit the generalisability and the external validity of the findings.

Finally, interviews can cause ethical concerns, particularly in relation to vulnerable populations, sensitive topics, and confidentiality. Such considerations need to be addressed in advance to ensure that the welfare of the subjects is safeguarded.

Several efforts were made in this study to abate researcher bias, these included utilising open-ended questions and by recording and transcription of interviews to ensure the integrity of the language and expression of participants was maintained.

Notwithstanding the limitations outlined above, this research contributes valuable insights into the way in which elite philanthropists engage with evidence. However, further research into this subject should endeavour to address these limitations to contribute findings with greater external validity.

6. Societal and Practical Implications

This section explores the practical implications arising from the findings of this PhD thesis for non-profits and high-net-worth donors. By addressing the evidence generation gap, enhancing transparency, and strengthening accountability, non-profits can improve their impact and effectiveness. For donors, the emphasis is on informed giving, ethical considerations, and fostering collaboration. Additionally, the broader societal and practical implications for enhancing skill sets, facilitating knowledge transfer, and promoting transparency are discussed to foster a more evidence-informed philanthropic sector.

6.1 Implications for Non-Profits

Evidence Generation Gap

The gap between the types of evidence produced by non-profits and the evidence sought by elite philanthropists suggests that non-profits need to reconsider the nature and quality of the evidence they generate. They should evaluate their frameworks, the quality of their evidence, and the data they rely on. Incorporating both empirical and qualitative data, where appropriate, can bridge this gap.

Transparency and Sharing of Outcomes

Transparency is crucial in strengthening donor engagement and commitment. Non-profits should commit to openly sharing both successes and setbacks to enable supporters to obtain a holistic view of their impact. This openness can build trust and foster stronger donor relationships.

The Role of Evidence in Accountability

Evidence plays a significant role in enhancing accountability, which in turn strengthens donor engagement and commitment. Non-profits can enhance accountability by ensuring a shared understanding of impact from the outset, as suggested by Starr (2023), who defines impact as a measurable change in the world. Fostering a culture that supports evidence-based evaluations will improve programme effectiveness, increase accountability, and boost credibility with stakeholders.

6.2 Implications for High-Net-Worth-Donors

Informed Giving

Elite philanthropists should be supported and encouraged to align their philanthropic practices with rigorous evidence. While psychosocial factors will influence decision-making, understanding the importance of grounding decisions in high-quality evidence is crucial for maximising philanthropic impact. As Starr (2023) posits, the responsibility for analysing the impact of funding rests with the philanthropists, for whom impact is a moral obligation.

Accountability and Collaboration

Elite donors should ensure their philanthropy is underpinned by ethical considerations and integrated accountability. Adhering to strict standards of accountability and transparency can make market dynamics more efficient, ensuring that funding is directed to the most impactful non-profits, thereby lifting the entire non-profit sector. Adopting the doctrine, 'first do no harm,' is recommended for elite philanthropists.

6.3 Societal and Practical Implications

Enhancing Skill Sets

Insufficient skills and experience, along with a lack of appropriate tools, hinder philanthropists in appraising and utilising evidence (Beddoes et al., 2012). Investing in training to enhance the appraisal of evidence, including courses and workshops focusing on critical appraisal skills, evidence synthesis, and decision-making processes, can empower philanthropists to discern the quality and relevance of evidence, fostering more informed and impactful giving.

Facilitating Knowledge Transfer

Insufficient knowledge transfer is a barrier to evidence use. Strategies to facilitate the uptake of high-quality evidence include the formation of third-sector research centres or hubs that host seminars on best practices. These centres could serve as a nexus for disseminating research findings, fostering a culture of evidence-informed practice among donors and practitioners. Digital media formats such as podcasts, webinars, and online forums can enhance accessibility and understanding of research findings.

Developing a Centralised Evidence Database

Creating a centralised, accessible database of high-quality, critically appraised evidence could significantly enhance evidence-based philanthropy. This database should include peer-reviewed articles, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and grey literature. Making this resource available to philanthropists, advisors, and non-profits would bridge the gap between evidence production and utilisation.

Accredited Philanthropy Advisory Services

Introducing an accreditation system for philanthropy advisors in the UK could ensure the quality of advice provided. Accreditation would standardise the qualifications and competencies required for philanthropy advisors, promoting best practices and enhancing the credibility of advice given to philanthropists. This system could include certification programmes, continuous professional development requirements, and adherence to a code of ethics.

Promoting Collaborative Networks

Encouraging collaborative networks among philanthropists, non-profits, researchers, and policymakers can enhance the sharing of best practices and evidence. These networks could host regular meetings, conferences, and collaborative projects to foster a culture of evidence-based practice.

Encouraging Transparent Reporting and Accountability

Philanthropists should advocate for and support initiatives promoting transparency and accountability within the non-profit sector. This includes requiring rigorous reporting standards for funded projects, supporting third-party evaluations, and publicising the outcomes and impacts of funded initiatives. Transparency builds trust and ensures that philanthropic funds are used effectively.

Broader Definitions of Credible Evidence

Confined definitions of credible evidence might inhibit understanding and exclude rich data sources. Equipping philanthropists, advisors, policymakers, and non-profit leaders to appraise evidence from grey literature, narrative accounts of beneficiaries, and grassroots organisations is essential. Recognising that lived experience offers unique insights, frameworks for rigorously appraising and integrating such qualitative evidence into decision-making are crucial.

Establishing Ethical Guidelines for Evidence Use

Developing ethical guidelines for evidence use in philanthropy can ensure responsible and ethical application of evidence. These guidelines should address data privacy, consent, and the ethical implications of funding decisions based on evidence.

By addressing these societal and practical implications, this research aims to foster a more robust and inclusive approach to evidence use in philanthropy, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and impact of philanthropic activities.

7. Recommendations for Future Research

Addressing the Skill Gaps in Non-Profits

It is recommended that future research focuses on identifying skill gaps within non-profits, particularly as they relate to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their programmes. Once skills gaps have been clearly identified, measures addressing those gaps could be introduced.

Generational Disparities in Evidence Utilisation

This study observed that the evolving landscape of philanthropy is affected by multiple factors including the different perspectives that distinct generations have in relation to how evidence informs their decision making. It is advised that future research should examine the way in which distinct generations perceive and engage with evidence, and in particular with technology, to inform their decision making. Such research could help us to identify evolving trends in philanthropy.

Efficacy of Philanthropic Advisors

A study by Breeze (2010) disclosed that the 12% of UK philanthropists who sought advice from philanthropy advisors contributed 53% of the donations made by HNWI and UHNWI donors. It is recommended that further research is undertaken to update these findings and to explore the nature of the correlation between professional philanthropy advisors and the extent and impact of philanthropic giving.

Transparency in Donor-Advised Funds

It is further recommended that in light of the growing popularity of Donor Advised Funds that research is conducted examining the criticisms of DAFs as lacking transparency and accountability. Such an investigation may be able to make recommendations on the need or otherwise for reform.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Philanthropic Initiatives

Conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of philanthropic initiatives that have been guided by evidence. Compare the outcomes of these initiatives with those that have not utilised evidence-based approaches.

Integrating Community Voices in Evidence Use

Research methods for effectively integrating the voices and experiences of beneficiaries and community members into the evidence base used by philanthropists. Assess the impact of community-driven evidence on philanthropic outcomes.

Developing Standards for Grey Literature

Investigate the development of standards and best practices for incorporating grey literature into evidence-based philanthropy. Evaluate the reliability and validity of grey literature and its role in informing philanthropic decisions.

Skill and tools for critical appraisal

The findings of this study disclosed that a lack of skill sets and tool kits to enable critical appraisal of data and research findings inhibited evidence use. It is recommended that future research examines which specific skills would better equip end-users to interpret and understand evidence and which tools should be deployed to improve levels of engagement with evidence.

Enhancing Knowledge Transfer

This research observed multiple challenges inhibiting evidence use, one of which related to a lack of infrastructure to support knowledge sharing. Future research should scrutinise mechanisms for knowledge transfer.

Broadening Credible Evidence

Considering the researcher's recommendation that the definition of credible evidence is broadened, it is recommended that future research considers the inherent value and appropriateness of a diverse range of evidence types and explores mechanisms for appraising different types of evidence.

8. Final Reflections

At the conclusion of this thesis, it is valuable to reflect on and consolidate its most significant contributions, which have implications for philanthropists, non-profits, and policy makers alike.

The purpose of the research was to interrogate the factors underpinning evidence-informed philanthropy; its findings have deepened our understandings of both the obstacles to and drivers of evidence-based philanthropic approaches.

The systematic review reported on multiple obstacles that inhibited philanthropists from engaging with evidence. The qualitative study not only corroborated those findings but also highlighted the extent to which trust, and relationships influenced decision making by philanthropists.

The similarities of the findings across both studies bolster the credibility of the research, for when two methodologically distinct studies produce analogous results, it strengthens their validity and transferability. Such congruence demonstrates that the observed trends are not derived from research methodologies, but rather authentically reflect the factors influencing evidence-based philanthropy.

Amalgamating empirical evidence with trust provides a strong foundation for informed philanthropic decision making. Robust empirical evidence equips philanthropists to make decisions informed by data, research, and proven outcomes, thus mitigating the risk of

funding well-intentioned initiatives that produce poor outcomes. Moreover, evidence can serve to enhance risk philanthropy by incorporating calculated, data-driven methodology to inform the proposal and so ensure a higher likelihood of impactful, sustainable results.
In the same vein, funding systemic change is feasible when one can accurately gauge its progression and outcomes.

Conversely, trust can provide colour and context, adding depth and nuance that might be missing from empirical data and so serve to ensure that philanthropic decision making is also grounded in and informed by real life experience.

This thesis has highlighted the drawbacks of philanthropists relying solely on relational trust as illustrated by the scandals at Kids Co and Oxfam, but it is also vital to recognise that exclusively relying on empirical evidence that is lacking context can lead to poor outcomes.

The researcher theorises that by adopting a hybrid model which integrates high-quality, rigorous empirical evidence in tandem with trust, into their decision-making, elite philanthropists will be able to maximise their impact. Grounding philanthropy in data and empirical evidence will enable the gap between donors' expectations and the realities of non-profits to be spanned, and a shared collective understanding of impact will enhance accountability. Rigorous evidence will empower donors to target their funding at those non-profits and interventions that can demonstrate positive impact, whilst trust will allow their funding to be informed by the lived experiences of the beneficiaries. To conclude it is theorised that for evidence-based philanthropy to flourish, it is essential that the significance of the relationship between trust and evidence is acknowledged. Merging the quantitative rigour of empirical evidence with the qualitative insights of trust will allow philanthropists to navigate the difficulties of some of society’s most complex challenges and so generate more effective, impactful, sustainable and scalable solutions.

Appendix 1

Charities Act 2011

2. Meaning of 'charitable purpose'

(1) For the purposes of the law of England and Wales, a chartable purpose is a purpose which -

(a) falls within section 3(1), and

(b) is for the public benefit.

3. Descriptions of purposes

(1) A purpose falls within this subsection if it falls within any of the following descriptions of purposes—

(a) the prevention or relief of poverty;

(b) the advancement of education;

(c) the advancement of religion;

(d) the advancement of health or the saving of lives;

(e) the advancement of citizenship or community development;

(f) the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science;

(g) the advancement of amateur sport;

(h) the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity;

(i) the advancement of environmental protection or improvement;

(j) the relief of those in need because of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or another disadvantage;

(k) the advancement of animal welfare;

(l) the promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown or of the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services;

(m) any other purposes—

(i) that are not within paragraphs (a) to (l) but are recognised as charitable purposes by virtue of section 5 (recreational and similar trusts, etc.) or under the old law,

(ii) that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to, or within the spirit of, any purposes falling within any of paragraphs (a) to (l) or sub-paragraph (i), or

(iii) that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to, or within the spirit of, any purposes which have been recognised, under the law relating to charities in England and Wales, as falling within sub-paragraph (ii) or this sub-paragraph.

(2) In subsection (1)—

(a) in paragraph (c), "religion" includes—

(i) a religion which involves belief in more than one God, and

(ii) a religion which does not involve belief in a god,

(b) in paragraph (d), "the advancement of health" includes the prevention or relief of sickness, disease or human suffering,

(c) paragraph (e) includes—

(i) rural or urban regeneration, and

(ii) the promotion of civic responsibility, volunteering, the voluntary sector or the effectiveness or efficiency of charities,

(d) in paragraph (g), “sport” means sports or games which promote health by involving physical or mental skill or exertion,

(e) paragraph (j) includes relief given by the provision of accommodation or care to the persons mentioned in that paragraph, and

(f) in paragraph (l), “fire and rescue services” means services provided by fire and rescue authorities under Part 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

(3) Where any of the terms used in any of paragraphs (a) to (l) of subsection (1), or in subsection (2), has a particular meaning under the law relating to charities in England and Wales, the term is to be taken as having the same meaning where it appears in that provision.

(4) In subsection (1)(m)(i), “the old law” means the law relating to charities in England and Wales as in force immediately before 1 April 2008.

Appendix 2

Tax Relief on Giving

'Tax reliefs on charitable donations do make the price of giving cheaper – if you don't pay tax, it costs £1 to donate £1, whereas a lower-rate taxpayer need only pay 80p for the charity to end up with £1, and a donation of the same size costs a higher rate taxpayer just 60p. But in all cases the donor is still 'down' on the deal – tax reliefs reduce the price of giving but there's no legal means of enriching yourself through philanthropy' (Breeze, 2013c).

Chapter 3.2 of the Income Tax Act 2007

(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-detailed-guidance-notes/chapter-3-gift-aid)

Gift Aid for individuals from 6 April 2000

3.2.1 The Gift Aid Scheme was originally introduced by section 25 Finance Act 1990 but was substantially amended by Finance Act 2000 and later Finance Acts. The current legislation is at sections 413 to 430 Income Tax Act 2007.

A donation qualifies for Gift Aid if it's a gift consisting of a 'payment of a sum of money' by an individual who's paid, or will pay UK tax, to a charity and satisfies all the following conditions:

- the gift isn't subject to a condition as to repayment
- the gift isn't a Payroll Giving donation

- the gift isn't deductible from income for tax purposes
- the gift isn't part of an arrangement for the charity to acquire property from the individual or a connected person
- any benefits associated with the gift are within the statutory limits (read section 'Donor benefits')
- the gift isn't a 'disqualified overseas gift' (this applies only to payments made before 6 April 2010)

3.2.2 A Gift Aid donation is treated as being made after the deduction of the basic rate of Income Tax in force at the time the donation is made and it's that tax that the charity can reclaim provided the following conditions are met:

- the charity must have a Gift Aid declaration made by the donor which covers the donation (read paragraph 3.6)
- the charity must have evidence that they've explained to the donor the personal tax implications of making a Gift Aid donation - this can be done by including an explanation on the Gift Aid declaration or separately
- there must be an audit trail linking the donation to the donor and their Gift Aid declaration
- The donor must be charged with Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the year of donation at least equal to the tax treated as deducted from their donation. If more than one Gift Aid donation has been made in the tax year, they must be added together to work out the tax the donor must be charged with. If the donor isn't charged with sufficient tax to cover the Income Tax deducted from their Gift Aid donations then they will owe the amount of the difference in tax to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) read paragraph 3.5.

Exempt Purposes – US Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3)

The exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3) are charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and preventing cruelty to children or animals. The term *charitable* is used in its generally accepted legal sense and includes relief of the poor, the distressed, or the underprivileged; advancement of religion; advancement of education or science; erecting or maintaining public buildings, monuments, or works; lessening the burdens of government; lessening neighbourhood tensions; eliminating prejudice and discrimination; defending human and civil rights secured by law; and combating community deterioration and juvenile delinquency.

Appendix 3

Charities by income category

https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/sector-data/charities-by-income-band

Main income category	Charities	Total income and endowments	Total expenditure
Donations and legacies	3,774	£20,321,470,832	£17,705,113,893
Charitable activities	5,213	£38,160,432,800	£37,464,054,459
Other trading activities	263	£2,103,239,523	£2,005,027,186
Investments	467	£2,183,060,319	£4,399,525,635
No single category	3,274	£19,243,279,712	£17,463,026,608
Total	12,991	£82,011,483,186	£79,036,747,781

Appendix 4:

Additional Files from Systematic Review

Additional File 1: Tables of Extracted Data

Included Studies

1. Breeze, B. 2013 *How donors choose charities: the role of personal taste and experiences in giving decisions.*
2. Carrington, D. 2009 *The Application of Learning and Research to the Practice of Philanthropy*
3. David & Lucille Packard Foundation 2003 *Marketing your knowledge: A report to philanthropy's R&D organisations.*
4. Fidelity 2017 *Overcoming Barriers to Giving*
5. Jones, T, Dewling, C. Alexander, J. 2018 *Future of Philanthropy Insights from Multiple Expert Discussions Around the World*
6. Kail, A. Johnson, S. & Bowcock, M. 2016 *Giving more and better – How can the philanthropy sector improve?*
7. Ravenscroft, C. 2013 *The Secrets of Success? How charitable funders use and share evidence in practice.*
8. Tillotston, C. 2016 *Learning to give: lessons for advisers and would-be philanthropists.*
9. Van Poortvliet, et al.2011 *Foundations for Knowledge: Sharing knowledge to increase impact: a guide for charitable funders.*

Table 2. Characteristics of included studies

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
1.	Breeze, B. 2013 UK	How donors choose charities: the role of personal taste and experiences in giving decisions	Study seeks to explore the role of personal taste and experience in determining which charities donors choose to support.	Qualitative study utilising semi-structured interviews.	60 participants - philanthropists	• Decision to donate to a particular charity is primarily driven by the donor's tastes and personal background. • Inertia and path dependency account for many decisions to support particular charities. • Donors frequently support charities that promote their own preferences despite subscribing to the belief that charitable giving should be directed to the needy.
2.	Carrington, D. 2009 UK	The Application of Learning and Research to the Practice of Philanthropy	Study explores the availability and use within Europe of research into philanthropy and social investment and how a stronger and more	Mixed methods study combining qualitative methods utilising semi-	40 participants drawn from academia and research	• Perception that the philanthropy sector is uninterested in and unwilling to pay for research into their own behaviour, effectiveness or impact; and for practitioners to perceive academics as being prone to the 'over collection' of data and inclined to be dismissive of many of the questions that practitioners would like studied.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
			effective framework could be built to enhance and extend opportunities for study and for learning in order to improve the practice of philanthropy.	structured interviews and a quantitative audit.		• Neither the philanthropy sector nor the academics that study it were sufficiently committed throughout their practice to knowledge transfer
3.	David & Lucille Packard Foundation 2003 USA	Marketing your knowledge: A report to philanthropy's R&D organisations	Explores how good ideas are circulated in philanthropy.	Qualitative study in which 12 participants were interviewed.	Interviewed 12 individuals working in philanthropy and worked with 10 participant organisations.	A number of obstacles—in norms, structure and practices are a barrier to accessing evidence. Some of these obstacles are systemic. Others are caused by poor practice and can be changed. Barriers identified include: • Incentives of philanthropy don't encourage players to openly share knowledge or even seek it in the first place.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						• Philanthropy's structure—fragmented, highly decentralized, hardly standardized—makes it difficult terrain for circulating new information. • Limited professionalization and a low supply of practice standards rob philanthropy of some avenues used by other industries to share what works. • Some practitioners might seek to share their knowledge, but the majority are far less likely to use the knowledge of others. As the cause, some cite an undercurrent of competitiveness, a bias against ideas or practices "not invented here," especially—and ironically—among foundations. • Collective amnesia of philanthropic organisations • Non-profits don't want to communicate bad news or failure.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
4.	Fidelity 2017 USA	Overcoming Barriers to Giving	Study seeking to understand what holds donors back from giving more to charity and whether there are ways to overcome the barriers they face.	Quantitative study utilizing a survey.	3254 participants who give to charity and itemize charitable deductions on their tax return.	• 65% would give more if they knew the impact of their donations. • More than 80% of respondents had concerns about how their donation will be used and if it will make a difference. • 21% revealed that they were not sure who to seek advice from. • 17% revealed that they cared about certain causes but didn't know where to donate.
5.	Jones, T Dewling, C. Alexander, J. 2018 Published in UK	Future of Philanthropy Insights from Multiple Expert Discussions Around the World	Study drawing on workshops and 'conversations' with expert participants. The study provides an overview of the collective debate and, where useful, includes	Qualitative study utilising in person discussions and 9 workshops which together	200 + participants in workshops drawn from academia, business, government, advisory, charities	• One driver of change is knowledge and its practical application. A common complaint from donors is the lack of understanding around the real impact of a particular donation: • Challenges include lack of resources: – there aren't enough people with the necessary skills to be able do the analysis. In addition, issues such as difficulties of attribution

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
	Study conducted in Dubai, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, Singapore, UK and USA		references to other areas of research.	had more than 200 participants.	and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs)	or the time-lag between intervention and results further complicate the matter. • Donors can sometimes lack the information they need to understand the impact of their donation and to make informed decisions around future giving. • Data driven philanthropy: Often enabled by digital technology, donors are increasingly able to follow their money, see change, and directly link results to their donation. Greater transparency enables more focus on areas that can make the most difference. However, the increasing dependency on data and the widespread sharing of personal information presents risks around privacy and freedom of expression. It also means that areas of need that are not 'measurable' may well be neglected. • Although emotion may drive the initial choice of cause, for most donors, particularly those with a business background,

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						some sort of quantified metrics, however sketchy, will be increasingly welcome when it comes to tracking the direction and impact of the gift.
6.	Kail, A. Johnson, S. & Bowcock, M. 2016 UK	Giving more and better – How can the philanthropy sector improve?	Report is a summary of findings from a project funded by the Hazelhurst Trust and managed by NPC (New Philanthropy Capital). Examines how philanthropists are influenced and encouraged or discouraged in their giving.	Qualitative Study incorporating 9 interviews and workshops.	9 participants largely philanthropy professionals and one academic	• Insufficient information concerning the effectiveness or otherwise of charities. • Good quality information upon which to base decisions is a pre-requisite to better quality giving.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
7.	Ravenscroft, C. 2013 UK	The Secrets of Success? How charitable funders use and share evidence in practice.	Discussion paper exploring how a small group of UK funders use and share evidence in practice. What evidence they draw on, how they find and use it. And how they share evidence to inform the future decisions of others – funders, practitioners, policymakers.	Qualitative study utilising semi-structured interviews.	Semi-structured interviews with 8 participants Consultations with 5 participants	• Funders draw on a wide range of evidence sources. • The evidence funders rely on differs from the evidence they generate. • Funders are keen to know and share what works but may have limited knowledge about the relative impact and cost effectiveness of different interventions. • Grantees may be nervous about sharing evidence with funders and their evidence can be of variable quality – funders need mechanisms to help address this. • Funders could make better use of the evidence they do hold by sharing it more widely.
8.	Tillotson, C. 2015 UK	Learning to give: lessons for advisers and	Study exploring why the UK's HNWI's and UHNWI's	Mixed methods study	Sampled 500 of UK based HNWI's also sampled 383	• On average the UK's wealthy population gives a score of just 5.9 out of 10 for the philanthropy advice experience they receive from their professional advisers.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
		would-be philanthropists	give so little in the context of their overall wealth.		professional services firms offering philanthropy advice. Interviews with 22 professional participants working in philanthropy.	
9.	Van Poortvliet, et al.	Foundations for Knowledge: Sharing	Research explored the extent to which knowledge is shared across the third	Qualitative study featuring a literature	Semi-structured interviews with 12 UK foundations.	• The infrastructure for knowledge sharing across philanthropy is underdeveloped. • No single mechanism for sharing knowledge.

Study No.	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
	2011 UK	knowledge to increase impact: a guide for charitable funders.	sector and also sought to highlight examples of good practice to share with funders.	review and semi-structured interviews		

Excluded studies

Table 3. Characteristics of excluded studies

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
1.	Aksoy, B. Krasteva, S. 2018 USA	When Does Less Information Translate into More Giving to Public Goods	Study exploring the impact of information provision on voluntary donations.	Experimental study.	360 participants in the online experiment and 303 participated in the laboratory experiment	Information increases average contributions of less generous groups. Information reduced average contributions from more generous group
2.	Barclays Wealth and Ledbury Research 2010 UK	Barriers to Giving A white paper in co-operation with Ledbury Research	Seeks to understand what is holding the wealthy back from giving more to charity.	In-depth quantitative survey of 500 high net worth individuals	500 high net worth individuals participated in a survey.	The first barrier is a lack of financial security, which is even more acute given the turbulent financial markets. The second barrier is based on the wealthy's values, where they may be missing one of the three key motivators: Familial,

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						Societal or Religious reasons. Concerns about how charities are run are a growing issue for the wealthy. The current tax system and welfare policies have a complex relationship with wealthy philanthropists: they need to be supportive, without being interventionist.
3.	Beddoes, D. Brodie, E. Clarke, R. Hoong, S. C. 2012	Benefits of open access to scholarly research for voluntary and	Research examining the benefits of open access to scholarly research outputs to voluntary and community sector organisations.			Voluntary and charitable sector has an appetite and need for scholarly research that it cannot currently satisfy. VCOs have identified a consistent set of barriers to accessing research.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
	UK	charitable sector organisations.				Existing OA routes and sources of support should be publicised widely to the VCS. Open Access repositories should be accessible to the voluntary and charitable sector. All publicly funded organisations should make their research available easily and at no cost to the VCS. Advice, support and training resources should be developed and made widely available to the sector to help it access (in the widest sense) research. Intermediaries should be engaged in a broad discussion about how they might

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						provide additional support to the sector. Research should be done into the characteristics of effective relationships between the VCS and academic researchers/institutions.
4.	Brody, S. Koester, A. Markovits, Z. Phillips, J. 2016 USA	Moving the Needle: What Works Cities and the use of data and evidence	Explores how cities better leverage data and evidence to inform their decision making as it relates to improving the lives of their residents.	Quantitative study utilising survey which tracks 152 indicators scored on a 5-point Likert scale	Data collected from an initial 28 cities plus a second group of 39 cities with populations of between 100,000 and 1,000,000	Found that city leaders wanted to foster innovation and solve problems by utilising data but that their cities lacked the policies, performance management systems and organisational culture of using data and evidence to turn positive intentions into results.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						Barriers to utilising such evidence included: Lack of staff, Lack of financial resources, Limited knowledge and expertise, Lack of trust in the data, Old and incompatible systems for data collection and Challenges in communicating the importance of this work to stakeholders.
5.	Buchanan, P. 2019 US	Giving Done Right: Effective Philanthropy and	A practical guide to philanthropy	Offers intellectual frameworks, data-driven insights, tools, and practical	Buchanan has been working with givers for close to 20 years. His platform has been	There is a moral imperative to do the most possible good with the resources with which givers are entrusted (p.50).

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
		Making Every Dollar Count' Public Affairs Books		examples to facilitate understanding of what it takes to make an effective philanthropic gift.	the CEP, a research and consulting non-profit organization of which he is the founding president. CEP provides data and insights to what it calls "philanthropic funders" with the goal of increasing their effectiveness and impact.	Particularly for philanthropists who have benefited from a tax break for their gift. For when the treasury subsidises philanthropic giving its aim is to create a public benefit through private giving and hence the philanthropists have a moral responsibility to give responsibly and well.
6.	Butera, L. Houser, D. 2017 USA	Delegating Altruism: Towards an understanding	Explores the economics of agency in the context of giving decisions. In particular, how competing agency and	Laboratory experiment		That agency plays a small role in the promotion of giving. Donors do not reduce donations when algorithms guarantee efficient

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
		of agency in charitable giving	information costs determine donors' selection into delegated giving, and how this affects levels of giving.			recipients but limit the donor's control over recipients. Giving circles or giving groups appeal to donors who would otherwise not make informed decisions.
7.	Fiennes, C. 2012 UK	'It Ain't What You Give, It's the Way that You Give It'– Making charitable donations which get results' – Giving Evidence	Explores how best to ensure donors secure the greatest social benefit from the resources they channel through charities to effect social change.	Not applicable.		Identifies common practices of donors that cause problems for charities. Not all charities are equally good, and their performance can vary widely. Donors' resources should flow in large part to the *best* performers.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
8.	Hardwick. R. Anderson, R. Cooper, C. 2015 UK	How do third sector organisations use research and other knowledge - A systematic scoping review.	Systematic search of electronic databases carried out. Literature then narratively summarised to describe how TSOs use knowledge in their decision making.	Scoping review exploring what is known about how health and social care TSOs use research in their work.		Retrieved ten qualitative and mixed methods studies. TSOs seek to make 'evidence-based' decisions. Organisational context influences their preferences for particular kinds of research and knowledge and how they utilise it. Barriers to research use include time, staff skill, resources and the contextual nature of some academic research. Facilitators of evidence use include: using research intermediaries and involving TSOs in research.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
9.	Kassatly, A. 2018	How philanthropy infrastructure can promote evidenced-based giving	Explores why smaller grant-making organisations have yet to fully embrace data-driven philanthropy, what the potential benefits of data are and how it should be used, and how philanthropy infrastructure organisations could help.	Not applicable		There are a number of challenges that prevent this evidence-based approach from really taking off among smaller grant-making institutions. The first is capacity. Many smaller foundations do not have the capacity to do extensive analysis of impact reports on different interventions, nor do they have the in-house expertise or funding to support charities in collecting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data. The second is motivation. Many philanthropists and smaller private foundations are more inclined to fund causes or organisations that they feel a

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						personal connection to, not because evidence suggests they are effective. The third is focus area. A common refrain is that problems that are complex, address the future, or involve multiple stakeholders are nearly impossible to collect accurate monitoring and evaluation data or prepare comprehensive impact assessments about. The fourth challenge is availability of data. Good quality data on successful interventions is still not widely published.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
						The fifth is ease. Collecting data on social issues is difficult. When the outcomes that charities are trying to affect are so varied, room for standardisation on metrics and on what data to collect is minimal. Further, to date, there has been more of a focus on outputs, which are easier to measure, though less explicit about change achieved than outcomes. Evidence-based philanthropy is more talked about than done. Philanthropy support organisations can help to remedy this.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
10.	Oliver, K. et al., 2014 UK	A systematic review of barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers'	Systematic search of electronic databases carried out.	Systematic search of electronic databases carried out. Studies included if they were primary research or systematic reviews about factors affecting the use of evidence in policy.		Most frequently reported barriers to evidence were: Poor access to good quality and relevant research evidence and Lack of timely research output. Most frequently reported facilitators were: Collaborations between researchers and policy makers and relationships and Improved relationships and skills
	Schorr, L. B. and Farrow, F. 2011 USA	Expanding the evidence universe: doing better by knowing more	Paper seeking to address issues and provide recommendations with a view to expanding the knowledge base necessary to	Not applicable		The boundaries which the prevailing framework draws around acceptable evidence too greatly limit the knowledge base available to policy

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
			improve outcomes for children, families and communities.			makers, program designers, and evaluators.
11.	Steer, L., & Baudienville, G. 2010 UK	What drives donor financing of basic education? Overseas Development Institute. Project Briefing 39.	Explores why, despite the rhetoric of political support for EFA, the sector has not attracted the necessary funding and suggests ways in which external support for basic education could be increased.	Large number of semi-structured interviews with donor agencies and NGOs and case studies on two countries. Draws on the findings of a recent research study commissioned by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.		Six key factors appear to influence donor decisions around financing basic education. The most significant relate to donor prioritisation and leadership, evidence and advocacy and aid architecture, followed by the absorptive capacity of partners, partner demand and donor capacity.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
12.	US Trust 2018 USA	The 2018 US Trust Study of High-Net-Worth Philanthropy Portraits of Generosity	The 2018 U.S. Trust Study of High-Net-Worth Philanthropy (the "Study") is the seventh in a biennial series of reports on the giving and volunteering practices of wealthy households in the United States. The Study is an authoritative source of information on wealthy Americans' philanthropic attitudes and practices.	Based on a nationally representative random sample of wealthy households. The wealth threshold for inclusion in the Study is a widely recognized standard based on the qualifying level for certain types of financial investments: an annual household income greater than $200,000 and/or net worth greater than $1,000,000 (excluding	The total Study population in 2018 comprised 1,646 households. Forty-nine percent of respondents identified themselves as men, while 51% identified themselves as women.	Giving is being shaped by a diverse donor universe of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and gender identities. Women are at the forefront of philanthropic engagement and impact. An opportunity for non-profits and advisors is highlighted by the fact that only 49% of donors have a strategy for their giving.

	Author, Year Published, Country	Name	Description	Study Design or Focus	Participants	Key Findings
				the value of the primary residence.		
13.	Wallace, J. Nwosu, B. and Clarke, M. 2012 UK	Barriers to the uptake of evidence from systematic reviews and meta-analyses: a systematic review of decision makers' perceptions	A systematic review of the barriers to the uptake of evidence from systematic reviews and meta-analyses	The focus of the study was to identify barriers to the uptake of evidence from systematic reviews.	27 unique published studies included n=10218 of which 64% physicians.	The most commonly investigated barriers were lack of use (14/25), lack of awareness (12/25), lack of access (11/25), lack of familiarity (7/25), lack of usefulness (7/25), lack of motivation (4/25) and external barriers (5/25)

Barriers to the use of evidence

Table 4: Barriers to the Use of Evidence

BARRIERS TO THE USE OF EVIDENCE							
Review Finding 1: Philanthropists and third sector professionals encounter difficulties in accessing evidence to inform their decision making (8/9 studies)							
STUDY	METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS	METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS				
			Was ethics approval granted?	Is there an appropriate description of researcher reflexivity?	Is the sampling method appropriate?	Is the method of data collection appropriate?	Is the method of data analysis appropriate?
Study 1 **2010**	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the telephone. Participants were recruited by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). CAF randomly selected 60 charity account holders from its	The full transcripts of all 60 interviews were analysed inductively and out of this process 12 key themes emerged; the data was coded to these 12 themes.	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Yes	Yes	Yes

	database, filtering by postcode as a method of selecting approximately equal numbers of high-, medium- and lower-income donors.	Efforts were undertaken to ensure the reliability of coding decisions through consultations with academic colleagues with expertise in qualitative methods.					
Study 2 **2009**	Mixed methods study combined qualitative methods utilising semi-structured interviews with a quantitative audit. The latter was intended to draw on published and web-based material to provide a basic 'map' of what philanthropy research and training is	Bridget Pettitt (BP Research Consultancy) assisted the data gathering and analysis by collating the information provided to us and web-searching for examples of universities and other organisations involved in	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in study but the report was commissioned with the support of The Adessium Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Pears Foundation. The Network of European Foundations (NEF) administered the funding of the work on the study.	Yes	No	Unclear (not clearly described)

	currently being undertaken within Europe. Web search and desk top data collection. The author 'spoke' with 40 participants	philanthropy research and teaching. The material collected for the quantitative audit was used to inform the report and its conclusions but the data – without further verification –was offered to the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and to the European Research Network on Philanthropy (ERNOP)					
Study 3 **2003**	Qualitative study in which 12 individuals working within philanthropy were interviewed – 10 participant organisations also contributed to the study.	Unclear (not reported)	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Yes	Yes	Unclear (not described)

Study 4 **2017**	Quantitative study seeking to understand what holds donors back from giving more to charity and whether there are ways to overcome the barriers they face.	Report is based on a 2016 survey conducted among 3254 participants in the US who give to charity and itemise charitable deductions on their tax return. The study was conducted by Artemis Strategy Group an independent research firm.	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Yes	Yes	Unclear (not clearly described)
Study 5 **2018**	A qualitative study drawing on workshops and 'conversations' with expert participants. The study provides an overview of the collective debate and, where useful, includes references to other areas of research.	The authors of the report conducted a number of workshops across seven countries with more than 200 participant 'experts'. It is unclear what qualifies someone as an expert.	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Yes	Yes	Unclear (not clearly described)

Study 6 **2016**	Qualitative study incorporating 9 interviews and workshops.	Unclear (not reported)	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Yes	Yes	Unclear (not clearly described)
Study 7 **2013**	Semi-structured interviews with 8 participants. Consultations with 5 participants	Unclear (not reported)	Unclear (not reported)	Moderate amount of reflexivity. The author commented that she came to the project '*with some starting assumptions, based on my previous experiences with funding. Among my inspirations is a motto of Give Well, a US donor advisory service: "Information about how to help people should never be secret". I am confident that funders would agree with this principle – the real questions are about how this is done effectively, and sensitively, in practice*.'	Yes	Yes	Unclear (not clearly described)

				The study was developed on behalf of the Alliance for Useful Evidence and was discussed by funders at the Intelligent Funding Forum in May 2013			
Study 9 **2011**	Qualitative study featuring a literature review and semi-structured interviews.	Unclear (not reported)	Unclear (not reported)	Not described in the study.	Unclear (not reported)	Yes	Unclear (not reported)

PRISMA Checklist

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.	1
ABSTRACT			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number.	2 + 3
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known.	4,5,6,7
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS).	7
METHODS			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address), and, if available, provide registration information including registration number.	7
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered,	8,9,10

		language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale.	
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched.	8 + 9
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated.	8 and SearchSearch Strategies section
Section/topic	**#**	**Checklist item**	**Reported on page #**
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review, and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis).	8
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators.	11
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made.	11
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis.	12 + 13
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means).	n/a

Search Strategies

Search String Employed:

noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND stype.exact("Conference Papers & Proceedings" OR "Newspapers" OR "Encyclopedias & Reference Works" OR "Reports" OR "Books" OR "Working Papers" OR "Blogs, Podcasts, & Websites" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses") AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Research Topic" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Front Page/Cover Story" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Biography" OR "Front Matter" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Transcript" OR "Report" OR "Reference Document" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "General Information") AND la.exact("English")

Saved: 30 March 2019

The following databases were searched:

1. ABI/INFORM Global
2. Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)
3. International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)
4. PAIS Index

5. Policy File Index
6. Social Services Abstracts
7. Social Science Premium Collection
8. Worldwide Political Science Abstracts
9. SCOPUS
10. Open Grey
11. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Search Strategy for ABI/INFORM 04.06.2019.

Returned 47 studies of which one read in full (46 excluded after reading title and abstract)

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S1	noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence*) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND stype.exact("Conference Papers & Proceedings" OR "Working Papers" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses") AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Annual Report" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Literature Review" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Report" OR "Statistics/Data Report" OR "Reference Document" OR "Case Study" OR "Conference Proceeding" OR "Article") AND la.exact("English")	ABI/INFORM Global, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts	47

Search Strategy for Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) 15.06.2019.

Returned 9 studies

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S2	noft((barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*)) AND noft((facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*)) AND noft((evidence OR knowledge)) AND noft((philanthropy OR philanthropist*)) AND stype.exact("Magazines" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses") AND at.exact("Report" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Statistics/Data Report" OR "Case Study" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Article") AND la.exact("English")	Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)	9

Search Strategy for International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) 04.06.2019

Returned 36 articles of which 6 duplicates leaving 30.

S3	noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND stype.exact("Newspapers" OR "Reports" OR "Books" OR "Scholarly Journals") AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Front Page/Cover Story" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Biography" OR "Front Matter" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Feature" OR "Transcript" OR "Report" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "General Information") AND la.exact("English")	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)	30

Search Strategy for PAIS Index 15.06.2019

Returned 7 studies

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S4	noft((barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*)) AND noft((facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*)) AND noft((evidence OR knowledge)) AND noft((philanthropy OR philanthropist*)) AND la.exact("English") AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Report" OR "Bibliography" OR "Statistics/Data Report" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book") AND stype.exact("Conference Papers & Proceedings" OR "Reports" OR "Books" OR "Scholarly Journals")	PAIS Index	7

Search Strategy for Policy File Index 15.06.2019

Returned 7 studies including 1 duplicate.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S5	Searched for: noft((barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*)) AND noft((facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*)) AND noft((evidence OR knowledge)) AND noft((philanthropy OR philanthropist*)) AND rtype.exact("Report") AND la.exact("English")	Policy File Index	7

Search Strategy for Social Services Abstracts 15.06.2019

Returned 1 study

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S6	Searched for: noft((barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*)) AND noft((facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*)) AND noft((evidence OR knowledge)) AND noft((philanthropy OR philanthropist*)) AND at.exact("Report" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Statistics/Data Report" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "Editorial" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book") AND la.exact("English")	Social Services Abstracts	1

Search Strategy for Social Science Premium Collection 15.06.2019

Returned 287 studies – after title screening 15 screened by their abstracts.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S7	noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Research Topic" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Front Page/Cover Story" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Biography" OR "Front Matter" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Transcript" OR "Report" OR "Reference Document" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "General Information") AND la.exact("English") AND stype.exact("Books" OR "Working Papers" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses")	Social Science Premium Collection	287

Search Strategy for Worldwide Political Science Abstracts 15.06.2019

Returned 6 studies.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S8	noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Research Topic" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Front Page/Cover Story" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Biography" OR "Front Matter" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Transcript" OR "Report" OR "Reference Document" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "General Information") AND la.exact("English") AND stype.exact("Books" OR "Working Papers" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses")	Worldwide Political Science Abstracts	6

Search Strategy for SCOPUS 15.06.2019

Returned 124 studies – after reading titles 6 were screened at abstract.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S9	TITLE-ABS-KEY (barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR in terfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR infl uen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR enab le* OR enhance* OR expedite* OR help* OR initiat* OR medi ator*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (evidence OR knowledge) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (philanthropy OR philanthropist*))	SCOPUS	124

Search Strategy for Worldwide Political Science Abstracts 15.06.2019

Returned 6 studies.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S8	noft(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND noft(facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND noft(evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*) AND at.exact("Book Chapter" OR "Research Topic" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Front Page/Cover Story" OR "Government & Official Document" OR "Working Paper/Pre-Print" OR "Literature Review" OR "Biography" OR "Front Matter" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Conference" OR "Transcript" OR "Report" OR "Reference Document" OR "Review" OR "Case Study" OR "General Information") AND la.exact("English") AND stype.exact("Books" OR "Working Papers" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses")	Worldwide Political Science Abstracts	6

Search Strategy for Open Grey 15.06.2019

Returned 0 studies.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S10	(barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*) AND (facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*) AND (evidence OR knowledge) AND noft(philanthropy OR philanthropist*)	Open Grey	0

Search Strategy for ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Returned 111 studies.

Set#	Searched for	Databases	Results
S11	noft((barrier* OR challenge* OR constrain* OR difficult* OR interfer* OR obstruct* OR problem* OR restrain* OR restrict* OR disincentive* OR factor* OR block*)) AND noft((facilitate* OR facilitator OR benefit* OR enhanc* OR influen* OR motivat* OR promot* OR aid* OR catalyst* OR Enable* OR Enhance* OR Expedite* OR Help* OR Initiat* OR Mediator*)) AND noft((evidence OR knowledge)) AND noft((philanthropy OR philanthropist*)) AND stype.exact("Magazines" OR "Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses") AND at.exact("Report" OR "Dissertation/Thesis" OR "Statistics/Data Report" OR "Case Study" OR "Conference Paper" OR "Book" OR "Article") AND la.exact("English")	ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global	111

111 returned studies – 2 duplicates = 109 studies after screening titles 2 abstracts were read.

List of 32 studies drawn from database search read in full after title and abstract screening:

a) Reconciling Community-Based Versus Evidence-Based Philanthropy: A Case Study of The Colorado Trust's Early Initiatives

Easterling, Douglas, PhD; Main, Deborah, PhD.**The Foundation Review; Grand Rapids** Vol. 8, Iss. 4: 81-107,110.

b) Nonprofits and evaluation: Empirical evidence from the field

Carman, Joanne G; Fredericks, Kimberly A. **New Directions for Evaluation** Iss. 119 (October 2008): 51-71.

c) Evaluating Nonprofit Databases

Gronbjerg, Kirsten A. **American Behavioral Scientist** Vol. 45, Iss. 11, (July 2002): 1741-1777.

d) How Social Entrepreneurs in the Third Sector Learn from Life Experiences

Scheiber, Laura.**Voluntas; Baltimore** Vol. 27, Iss. 4, (Aug 2016): 1694-1717.

e) Addressing Deep and Persistent Poverty: A Framework for Philanthropic Planning and Investment

Aron, Laudan; Jacobson, Wendy; Turner, Margery Austin.*Urban Institute, Dec 2013, 32 pp*.1-36. Urban Institute, 2013.

f) Philanthropic Motivation in the 21st Century

Dolan, John F. Drexel University, Drexel University. 3669449.

g) Why philanthropy matters: how the wealthy give, and what it means for our economic well-being

Acs, Zoltan J.xv, 249. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

h) Gifts on a High Note: A Case Study of Major Donors to Music Programs in Higher Education

Barascout, Roger. 2012.

i) The role of evaluations in community foundations

Watts, Brad R. AAI3492984. 2011.

j) The New Altruism: Patterns of Private Giving and the Transformation of Welfare Solidarity

Bode, Ingo; Brose, Hanns-Georg. **International Sociological Association.** 1998.

k) Searching for Enduring Donor Relationships: Evidence for Factors and Strategies in a Donor/Organization Integration Model for Fund Raising

Chung-Hoon, Tanise L; Hite, Julie M; Hite, Steven J. **International Journal of Educational Advancement** Vol. 6, Iss. 1, (Nov 2005): 34-53.

l) Data for Good: Unlocking Privately Held Data to the Benefit of the Many

Alemanno, Alberto. **IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc; St. Louis**, 2018.

m) An Examination of Motivational Factors Affecting African American Alumni Philanthropy at a Historically Black University

Beamon, Ann McCabe. North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. 10264412. 2017.

n) The Rising Price of Objectivity: Philanthropy, Government, and the Future of Education Research

Feuer, Michael J; Harvard University, Graduate School of Education. *Harvard Education Press*. 208. Harvard Education Press, 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138, 2016.

o) Moving the Needle: What Works Cities and the use of data and evidence

Brody, Simone; Koester, Andel; Markovits, Zachary; Phillips, Jacob.**arXiv.org; Ithaca**, 2016.

p) A Case Study on Moving Philosophically Diverse Funders to Common Priorities. Education Funders Research Initiative

Hilliard, Thomas J; Education Funders Research Initiative; Center for an Urban Future; Philanthropy New York. **Education Funders Research Initiative**, (Jul 2015).

q) Giving to Excellence: Generating Philanthropic Support for UK Higher Education. Ross-CASE Report 2016
Jain, Yashraj; Council for Advancement and Support of Education. **Council for Advancement and Support of Education**, (Apr 26, 2016).

r) Women and Philanthropy in Higher Education: A Collective Case Study of Major Donors
Lahti Tunnell, Michele Lynn. University of the Pacific, University of the Pacific. 10117036. 2016.

s) Philanthropy & policy change: Exploring the role of private charitable foundations in the policymaking process.
Franklin, Jason. AAI3642618. 2014.

t) "Moneyball" for Education Using Data, Evidence, and Evaluation to Improve Federal Education Policy
Hess, Frederick M; Little, Bethany; Results for America; American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI). **American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research**, (Mar 2015).

u) Can We Identify a Successful Teacher Better, Faster, and Cheaper? Evidence for Innovating Teacher Observation Systems
Gargani, John; Strong, Michael. **Journal of Teacher Education** Vol. 65, Iss. 5, (Nov 2014 - Dec 2014): 389-401.

v) Funding for Change: Factors Affecting Foundation Funding of Pre-Collegiate Education Policy in the United States Following the Charlottesville Summit and No Child Left Behind
Klopott, Shayna Melinda.Columbia University, Columbia University. 3702315. 2015.

w) Leveraging core competencies in corporate philanthropy: Cisco's exemplary strategic philanthropy
Shannon, Nancy Colleen. Capella University, Capella University. 3615448. 2014.

x) Non-traditional aid and gender equity: Evidence from million-dollar donations

Okonkwo Osili, Una.*World Institute for Development Economics Research, United Nations University, Aug 2013, 33 pp*.1-33. World Institute for Development Economics Research, United Nations University, 2013.

y) Awaking the Public Sector with Strategic Corporate Philanthropy: Revitalizing the Public Servant's Organizational Knowledge, Innovative Capability, and Commitment

Jackson, Janese Marie. 2011.

z) Women healthcare philanthropists: Sharing their resources with community healthcare systems.

Abraham, Diane M. Marian University, Marian University. 3468984. 2010.

aa) Evidence-Based Programs in Action: Policy and Practice Insights from a Success Story. Research-to-Results Brief. Publication #2010-08

Uninsky, Philip; Child Trends. **Child Trends**, (Apr 2010).

bb) What Program Providers Want Researchers to Know. Research-to-Results Practitioner Insights. Publication # 2009-03

Moore, Kristin Anderson; Child Trends. **Child Trends**, (Jan 2009).

cc) Benchmarking 2009: Trends in Education Philanthropy

Bearman, Jessica; Kilgore, Gin; GRANTMAKERS FOR EDUCATION. **Grantmakers for Education**, 2009.

dd) Implementing Evidence Based Practices: Six "Drivers" of Success. Part 3 in a Series on Fostering the Adoption of Evidence-Based Practices in Out-Of-School Time Programs. Research-to-Results Brief. Publication #2007-29

Metz, Allison J. R; Blase, Karen; Bowie, Lillian; Child Trends, Inc., Washington, DC. **Child Trends**, (Oct 2007).

ee) CASA: Case study of a community college-based outreach program

Rodriguez, Nelly.Pepperdine University, Pepperdine University. 3202403. 2005.

ff) Expert inquiry and health care reform in New Era America: Herbert Hoover, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and the travails of the disinterested experts

Parks, Douglas R. The University of Iowa, The University of Iowa. 9525181. 1994.

JBI Checklist

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research

Reviewer Caroline Greenhalgh Date 30.06.2019

Author Beth Breeze Year 2013 Record Number

	Yes	No	Unclear	Not applicable
1. Is there congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	☐	☐	☒	☐
2. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?	☒	☐	☐	☐
3. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	☒	☐	☐	☐
4. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?	☒	☐	☐	☐
5. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	☒	☐	☐	☐
6. Is there a statement locating the researcher culturally or theoretically?	☐	☒	☐	☐
7. Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice- versa, addressed?	☐	☒	☐	☐
8. Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?	☒	☐	☐	☐
9. Is the research ethical according to current criteria or, for recent studies, and is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?	☐	☐	☒	☐
10. Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis, or interpretation, of the data?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Overall appraisal: Include ☒ Exclude ☐ Seek further info ☐

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

Appendix 4

How trust and relationships impact on the giving decisions of philanthropists

Table of Characteristics

Participant No:	**Gender**	**Age**	**Nationality**	**Education**	**Net Worth Millions**	**Profession**
001	Male	50 -60	American	Graduate	£50 - £99	Finance
002	Male	50-60	British	Graduate	£100 +	Family office
003	Female	50-60	American	Graduate	Not disclosed	Journalist
004	Female	50-60	British	Graduate	£50 - £99	Family office
005	Female	50-60	Canadian	Graduate	£10 - £29	Not disclosed
006	Male	60+	American	Graduate	£100 +	Entrepreneur
007	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£50 - £99	Investor
008	Male	70+	British	Graduate	£100 +	Banker
009	Female	50-60	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Medicine/BioTech
010	Male	60+	British	Graduate	Not disclosed	Accountant
011	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£50 to £99	Entrepreneur
012	Male	60+	British	Graduate	£100 +	Private Equity
013	Male	80+	British	Graduate	£50 - £99	Businessman/Investor
014	Female	50-60	British	Graduate	£100 +	Family office
015	Male	50-60	American	Graduate	£30 - £49	Management Consultant
016	Male	40-50	British	Graduate	£30 - £49	Investor
017	Female	50-60	Canadian	Graduate	£30 - £49	NED

Appendix 5:

Interview Topic Guide for Participants (Donors)

A. Background/Context

2. Age

3. Gender

4. Education

5. How long have you been a philanthropist?

6. Do you have a family foundation or formal giving structure?

7. Does your philanthropy have a particular thematic focus?

8. Is your philanthropy grounded in a particular faith?

B. How and when do philanthropists use evidence to inform their philanthropic practices?

9. How do you select which causes to support?

a. Do you take unsolicited applications?

b. Do you invite tenders for specific funding rounds?

c. How do you 'find' the charities that you wish to support?

10. How and when do you use evidence?

11. Do you consider any of the following?

a. The nature of an extent of the problems/issues (scale)?

b. What others are already doing about those issues (neglectedness)?

c. The extent to which the problem is solvable (tractability)

12. What do you think are barriers to your use of evidence?

13. What facilitates your use of evidence?

14. Have you ever received any professional philanthropy advice?

15. Are you a member of any giving circles/networks?

16. Do you have any concerns about the use of evidence?

C. Trust and Relationships

17. To what extent does ‘trust’ underpin your decision to support an organisation?

18. How do you define trust?

19. Have you withdrawn funding in an organisation because your trust has been weakened?

D. Meaning of Evidence

20. What do you understand by 'evidence'?

21. Do you distinguish between 'evidence'; 'knowledge'; and 'research'?

E. How do philanthropists find, consume and understand evidence?

22. How do you find and consume evidence?

23. What criteria do you use to determine the quality of evidence?

F. Knowledge for the charities

24. What do you think that charities ought to know before rolling out interventions?

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