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Charity Starts ... at Work? Conceptual Foundations for Research with Businesses that Donate to Food Redistribution Organisations

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Abstract: As global concern about sustainability, food waste, and poverty increases, there is an urgent need to understand what motivates businesses to adopt pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours. This paper suggests that food redistribution organisations hold both pro-social and pro-environmental aims, due to their concern with reducing food surplus and food insecurity. To achieve this, they must motivate food businesses to donate their surplus food. However, little is known about the values, attitudes, and motives of food industry donors. The purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical and conceptual overview to set out principles from which empirical data on food redistribution will be analysed or critiqued. Specifically, it explores pro-social and pro-environmental literature, as these fields have examined the motivations behind donations and reducing environmental impact. This review highlights that charitable giving of food is different to other inorganic material, such as money. Thus, future research is needed to capture the unique temporal, emotional, social, and environmental factors that motivate food donations. This information may contribute to the development of strategies that target and motivate people from the food industry to become food donors. Alternatively, it may reveal concerns about food donations, and highlight the need for other approaches to food waste and food insecurity.

Keywords: food redistribution; commercial food waste; philanthropy; charitable giving; pro-social behaviour; pro-environmental behaviour; motivations

1. Introduction

The vast amount of food waste generated by the global food system is a problem that is receiving increased attention due to its environmental, economic, and social impacts [1–3]. The social impacts of food waste are intertwined with its environmental consequences, which stimulate both the academic and political discourse surrounding food security. According to the United Nations' mid-range predictions of population growth, there will be an additional three billion mouths to feed by the end of this century [4,5]. These estimates raise key questions about how to produce enough food to feed a growing population on a planet with finite resources. These questions are then furthered and confounded when the wastage of excess food and surplus resources are observed. Thus, government reports and academic studies recognise that “the challenge of feeding a growing population includes addressing the issue of food waste” [1,5–8].

Food redistribution, also called food recovery or food rescue, has been identified as one of the key ways for commercial food businesses to address food waste as part of this broader food supply challenge. It is the practice of collecting surplus edible food, which would otherwise be discarded to a landfill, and delivering it to charity agencies that feed people in need—the food insecure [9]. Over the last decade, the growth of food redistribution has been significant [10]. There are currently food redistribution organisations in over 25 countries on six continents [9,11]. However, there remains a paucity of research on food redistribution in Australia, and without first knowing what the motivations and impacts of food redistribution organisations are, they cannot be developed or enhanced as a commercial food waste reduction strategy.

This paper is part of a broader research study that explores the impact of Australian food redistribution organisations, and the experiences of all stakeholders involved in food redistribution—the food industry donors, the staff and volunteers at the food redistribution organisations and charity agencies, and the food recipients. This paper, however, limits its focus to one group of stakeholders—the food industry donors. There are many assumptions made as to why food businesses decide to donate their surplus food, but it is yet to be empirically examined. Making decisions to donate surplus food through food redistribution has significant consequences for the food donors themselves, the food recipients, the environment, and society more broadly. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical and conceptual overview to set out principles from which future empirical data on food redistribution could be analysed or critiqued.

There are several fields of research that are pertinent to understanding what motivates people from the food industry to donate their surplus food; however, this paper suggests that food redistribution organisations are presented as organisations that hold both pro-social and pro-environmental aims. Thus, in the scope of this paper we explore two fields of literature that have examined the motivations behind donations and the motivations behind reducing environmental impact: pro-social behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour. Previous theories and frameworks of pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours will be reviewed to set out principles and guide much-needed future research with people from the food industry, in order to analyse and critique their motivations to donate. This information may contribute strategies to target and motivate people from the food industry to become food donors. Alternatively, it may reveal concerns about food donations, and highlight the need for other strategies to address problems of food waste and food insecurity.

2. Literature Review

Knowledge about the food industry's engagement with food redistribution organisations is currently based on assumptions. Anecdotal evidence suggests several reasons why people from the food industry may be motivated to donate their surplus food. For example, food businesses may decide to donate their surplus food to avoid paying increasing landfill costs. Some may decide to donate due to their concern for the environment and/or for people in need. Others may see their donation as form of corporate social responsibility, or as a marketing strategy to be viewed favourably by the public. It is likely that it is a combination of the above reasons, and food businesses may have other reasons altogether. Pro-environmental and pro-social behaviours were identified as key fields of literature to explore the motivations behind donations and reducing environmental impact. The authors searched online databases in order to find relevant articles for the purposes of this research. Systematic literature reviews in these fields were also identified, which aided the search and review of prominent literature. However, before the literature on pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour can be considered for its merit in understanding the motivations behind food donations, food redistribution needs to be situated in its wider context and debate.

Firstly, an important distinction must be made between the food waste and food insecurity of developing and developed countries. In developing countries food waste occurs during the upstream—production, harvesting, distribution, and storage stages of the food system, whilst in developed countries it occurs downstream throughout the food retail, restaurant, and catering industry, and by consumers at a household level [5,12,13]. Furthermore, while FAO reports focus on global malnutrition, often in developing countries, research has shown that people in affluent societies also suffer from food insecurity. In the US, approximately 14% [14] and 5%–8% of Australians indicated that over the past 12 months they had experienced food insecurity at least once [15,16]. It is in this Western context that food redistribution organisations have been established, and so it is the focus of this review.

Secondly, food redistribution is a contested topic. The efficacy of food redistribution has mainly been debated in the United States and Canada. Riches [17] argues that the fast development of food redistribution could be a revealing symptom of our society where growing income inequality is causing some demographics to lack the income required to feed themselves. Other scholars suggest that food redistribution highlights the inefficiency of our food system—geared towards overproduction, with food redistribution assumed to be a “moral” form of disposal [9,18,19]. In a separate paper we demonstrate that the discourse surrounding food redistribution generally reflects two distinct viewpoints, which we refer to as the advocate perspective and the critical perspective. Food redistribution is generally understood by the layperson as the most successful way of saving waste and feeding those that are food insecure. Advocates of food redistribution argue that it offers a win-win solution to the problems of food wastage and food insecurity, with benefits for both society and the environment. In Australia, organisations such as OzHarvest, Foodbank, SecondBite, and Fareshare hold this advocate perspective, and have attracted broad approval from political representatives, food businesses, and the general public. Hawkes and Webster [20] explain that food businesses utilise food redistribution as a tool to improve their waste management and “are increasingly keen to become involved in such schemes as alternatives to disposing of waste”.

In contrast to the advocate perspective, the academic literature provides several long-standing critiques of charitable food relief. Janet Poppendieck best outlines five major critiques of emergency food relief in her prominent work *Sweet Charity* [19]. Her critiques can be summarised as: (1) the failure of food banks to cope with increasing hunger, as the amount of food that is redistributed is not enough to feed everyone that asks for support; (2) the lack of communication between food redistribution organisations and the recipients because the food often does not meet the recipient's food preferences, be they religious, cultural, or dietary; (3) the nutritional inadequacy of the food, which fluctuates due to the needs of corporate and individual donors; (4) the disorganisation of an inefficient system of food collection, reprocessing, and redistribution, which is backed by a large amount of volunteer work; (5) the costs to human dignity and the social othering that occurs when one receives charity. Poppendieck's critique of food redistribution provides valuable insight into the limitations of charitable food relief, and is reflected in other academic literature on food redistribution [21–25]. However, one of the major critiques of food redistribution is that it perpetuates and enables the problems of food waste and food insecurity by effortlessly fitting into the “Big Food” structure of the modern food system.

The concept of “Big Food” is perhaps most pertinent to our discussion on what motivates people from the food industry to donate their surplus food. The chief concern about “Big Food” is that a small number of players are responsible for a large percentage of the food supply chain [26]. This places these big businesses in a very powerful position, with the ability to influence and impact producers and consumers [27]. They can also impact the food waste disposal industry and food redistribution organisations. This is due to the supply-driven nature of food redistribution, which limits its ability to respond to the needs of the food recipients [23,28–30]. By donating food, the critical perspective argues that “Big Food” businesses can only provide a temporary “Band-Aid” solution to the problems of food waste and food insecurity. Furthermore, by donating food, food businesses can distract the focus from their role in producing and furthering the problems of food waste and food inequality.

These two distinct perspectives on food redistribution illustrate the polarisation in both the approach and construction of the problems of food waste and food insecurity. The first is the culturally dominant perspective, whilst the second is more common in the academic literature. We believe that both perspectives make valuable points. The advocate perspective argues that people are hungry and there is food to give them, while the critical perspective claims that people are hungry because of unequal social and economic structures, so to truly feed them requires structural change. For the critical perspective, these issues are a perennial problem in welfare more broadly, and it is important to situate food redistribution in this wider philosophical context. However, both perspectives also have limitations. The advocate perspective may be contributing to the continuation of food redistribution for the wrong reasons—unintentionally at best, and disingenuously at worst. The critical perspective, in fact, often uncritically adopts a political activist viewpoint without considering the self-representations and self-understanding of the people involved in each stage of food redistribution [31].

A recent study by Lindberg *et al.* [32] on the Australian food rescue organisation SecondBite noted that there were tensions around the way SecondBite staff described the “food waste problem” and “people in need”. It appears that in the context of food redistribution, the problems of food waste and food insecurity are constructed as “two birds” that can be “killed with one stone”. The critical perspective argues that they cannot, but is the “two birds with one stone” attitude part of the success in

motivating volunteers, staff, and food business owners/managers to donate? The recent growth of food redistribution organisations suggests they have indeed been successful in recruiting food producers, chefs, caterers, and food retailers to become food donors. This is a revealing tension and merits further enquiry into the motivations, experiences, assumptions, perspectives, and decision-making processes of people from the food industry when deciding to donate their surplus food.

However it is important to distinguish between “surplus food” and “food waste”. Garrone *et al.* [33] defines “surplus food” as edible food products that, for various reasons, are not consumed by the intended customers or people for whom they were produced, processed, distributed, purchased or served. In contrast, “food waste” represents the part of surplus food that is not recovered for human consumption, feeding animals, or for producing goods or energy. Food that is diverted from landfill through food redistribution is therefore defined as surplus food, and so the remainder of this article will align with these definitions of the terms. With this in mind, this paper will now review the previous literature on pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours to determine principles from which future empirical data on food redistribution can be analysed and critiqued.

2.1. *Philanthropy/Pro-Social Behaviour*

Social psychologists are especially interested in researching pro-social behaviour. Pro-social behaviour is described as “people taking action towards strangers in order to be kind and helpful, in settings where such helping and caregiving are not part of their professional role” [34]. A pro-social behaviour can refer to giving up one’s seat on a crowded train, helping an elderly person across the road, letting a driver in from a side road in heavy traffic, and so on. It also includes acts of philanthropy, such as giving money to charities and doing volunteer work for a “good cause”. The literature on philanthropy has been extensive in the social sciences. Charitable giving has been explored from a variety of disciplines, such as marketing, economics, sociology, social psychology, biology, political sciences, anthropology, and neurology [35,36]. Much of this research has focused on finding out how many donors give, how much they give, and understanding why people decide to donate money to charitable organisations. The focus of this previous research is understandable, as knowledge about the distribution and patterns of donations has been greatly required by the charity sector [35,37]. However, it has neglected many significant questions about the meanings and motivations behind specific giving decisions.

A systematic review of studies on philanthropy by Bekkers and Wiepking [38] explores the predictors of philanthropy in terms of eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving. These eight mechanisms are (a) awareness of need; (b) solicitation; (c) costs and benefits; (d) altruism; (e) reputation; (f) psychological benefits; (g) values; (h) efficacy. These mechanisms focus on the individual donations of money to an organisation, but they can provide a basis to determine principles from which research on food donations can be analysed and critiqued as well. Although corporations and food businesses make donations; there are individuals and groups within those businesses that make the decisions to donate. These are the people that need to be asked about their motivations to donate surplus food. It is also imperative to present why charitable giving of food is different to giving other inorganic material. There are many reasons why food is different, but this paper argues that food is the universal gift. Not every culture gives clothes, shelter, money, and/or other inorganic materials, but

throughout history, and across all cultures, there are ancient customs of sharing food with strangers [39]. In this way, food has great social and cultural significance. It can be a source of identity, health, status, and wellbeing, and it can hold deep-rooted connections to culture and communities [40,41]. Donating food differs from donating other inorganic materials, and so we need to understand what the giving of food means to the donors. Thus, the following eight mechanisms may be useful to capture and understand the motivations behind food donations.

2.1.1. Awareness of Need

First and foremost, Bekkers and Wiepking [38] argue that an awareness of need is an essential requirement for any form of philanthropy. People must become aware of a need in order to support it. “Neediness” is identified in the previous research as an important motivation for charitable giving, with those who are needy “through no fault of their own” (such as children, the sick, and disaster victims) being perceived as the most appropriate recipients of charity [42]. The impact of need is mainly explored in the field of social psychology, starting in the 1960s with several field experiments [43–45]. These studies examine a range of helping behaviours, from blood donation to practical assistance, and some consider the donation of money. The findings of this research commonly show that “the degree of need for help is positively related to the likelihood that help will be given” [38]. The previous research identifies awareness of need as a significant factor in motivating charitable giving. However, a recent study by the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy (CCGAP) [42] reveals that awareness of need is not the most important factor in decisions to donate. This study explores how donors choose charities, and the extent to which assessments of need influence people’s decisions to give. Although there is a general belief that charities function primarily to help people in need, and that meeting those needs is the main motivation when people choose charities, this study finds that people are more likely to support causes that “mean something to them”, rather than giving to the most urgent needs [42].

In the context of food redistribution, there is a need to explore the extent to which “meeting need” is a key factor in people from the food industry’s decisions to donate their surplus food. Food redistribution organisations are promoted as a way to “feed people in need”, but previous studies indicate the negative impact food redistribution has on the recipients of donated food [46,47]. It is important to clarify who the recipients of the donated food are, as there are usually three steps to food redistribution. Firstly, a food business donates their surplus food to a food rescue or food bank organisation. Secondly, these food rescue and food bank organisations store or distribute this food to several charity agencies. Thirdly, these charity agencies give this food to individuals and families that are struggling with food insecurity. The charity agencies commonly give out the food through a soup kitchen or food pantry model. Clearly, there are several recipients of surplus food as it is directed through the food redistribution chain—the food rescue and food bank organisations, the charity agencies, and the individuals and families that are food insecure. In this paper we refer to “the recipients” as individuals and families at the end point of the food redistribution chain, who are given the food to consume. With this in mind, future research should explore whether decisions to donate are based on assessments of the neediness of their recipients, as the previous philanthropy research has indicated, or what other factors lie behind their giving decisions. In the current food redistribution

model, the recipients are absent from the context in which the food donation is made, so it will be beneficial to explore how food businesses perceive the recipients of their food, and what donors believe their recipients' needs are. Poppendieck's [19] research presented the nutritional and social impacts of receiving charity food. In her interviews with recipients, she described how the food provided rarely catered for their religious, cultural, or other food needs. This information is important when considering whether the distant relationship between the food donors and the food recipients has an impact on the donors' awareness of need, and if this affects their food donations. It may be that the food industry donors are simply unaware of the needs of the food recipients. The broader literature on emergency relief highlights the changing demographics of food redistribution recipients, including more children, seniors, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds [48]. Thus, understanding how food businesses perceive the recipients of their food may help to improve the recipients' experiences, and enhance the overall aims of food redistribution. For example, food redistribution organisations may need to better communicate their recipients' needs to the donors, or this information may be useful to target and motivate specific food businesses to become involved in food redistribution.

2.1.2. Solicitation

Solicitation denotes the simple act of being asked to donate. Research on solicitation has appeared in journals from various disciplines, such as marketing, psychology, and economics. It shows that the majority of donations occur as a response to a solicitation, and that the way the potential donors are solicited determines whether the solicitation is effective [38]. Much of this research has explored the impact of the number of solicitations businesses receive [49–51], the causes of “donor fatigue” [52], and the effectiveness of direct (a personal request) *vs.* indirect (a letter) solicitation [38]. Examining the various ways that food redistribution organisations approach and solicit food businesses to donate their surplus food will be interesting to determine whether solicitations for surplus food differ to solicitations for money. A successful food business is generally understood to be well organised and to have the ability to sell enough of its produce to make a profit, but not purchase too much product to incur a loss. Thus, when a business owner donates money, it can signal that their business is successful, and that they have made enough profit to give some of that profit to charity.

David Evans' [53] study on the social and material contexts of everyday food waste practices, explains that in public dialogue about food waste, there is a tendency to blame the individual for their prolificacy and lack of culinary competence. Although his work focuses on household food waste in the UK, when a food business wastes food, the owners or managers may feel they are to blame for the problem. Thus, when a food business is solicited for their surplus food it may be viewed negatively, because food businesses may view their surplus food as evidence that their business has not been as successful as they anticipated it would be, or that they mismanaged their supply and demand. There is also a moral and “taboo” aspect of food waste [54], so understanding how food redistribution organisations solicit food may reveal some interesting tensions around concepts of surplus food and food waste in the commercial and industrial sector. For example, if food waste is viewed negatively, food business owners may decide not to donate their surplus food because they may not want it to be seen by others. They may want their surplus food to remain a hidden or private issue.

2.1.3. Costs and Benefits

The material costs and benefits associated with donating is the third motivation of philanthropy. Research into the impacts of costs and benefits is greatly documented in economics [55,56]. In this work, material costs and benefits are broadly defined as the “tangible consequences that are associated with monetary value” [38]. Clearly, giving money costs money, and previous research finds that giving increases when the costs of a donation are reduced [57,58]. However, the costs of a donation sometimes involve more than just money. Smith and McSweeney’s [59] study shows that physical discomfort deters philanthropy, and that people are more likely to give when they perceive that there are fewer obstacles.

In terms of food redistribution, this paper defines the costs and benefits as the objective, physical, and tangible consequences associated with donating food. Future research is needed to explore how food businesses consider the costs and benefits associated with donating their surplus food, and the impact this has on their donations. The cost and benefits of donating are likely to be a very important factor in people from the food industry’s decisions to donate. Commercial food outlets may choose to donate their excess food simply because it is cheaper than dumping it. The industry costs of dumping, transport, and administration are considerable. For example, in South Australia, the price to dump food waste is approximately \$100 (AUD) per tonne. This cost is one hundred percent more than it was in 1990, and it is likely to increase as landfill sites become more remote and rare [60]. Thus, by donating their excess food, food donors gain significant savings in terms of storage, transport, and landfill charges. Additionally, in several countries, food redistribution organisations have the status of deductible gift recipients (DGRs). All food donations are tax-deductible at the market value on the day of donation, and this applies to all the donors in the food supply chain—the retailers, wholesalers, manufactures, and primary producers [61]. It is likely that there are several other costs and benefits associated with donating surplus food. Determining other costs and benefits of donating food is important to understand what motivates food businesses to become involved and what the barriers to donating food may be.

2.1.4. Altruism

A fundamental reason why people may choose to donate to charities is because they sympathise with the organisation’s efforts, or care about the consequences of donations for the recipients [38]. This motive has been of great interest to economists, who refer to it as “altruism” [62]. Altruism is defined as “a motive to increase another’s welfare without conscious regard for one’s self-interests” [63]. It is acting for the benefit of others as an end-in-itself, when no benefits are offered or expected in return [34,63]. Sometimes an altruistic act can involve an active avoidance of a reward, such as when a donation of money is given anonymously. True altruism exists when there is no ulterior motive. Some benefits may still subsequently arise from the behaviour, but those benefits were not the motivation. However, findings from several studies suggest that selective incentives and private benefits for donations frequently dominate altruistic motives [38,64,65]. In terms of food redistribution, future research should explore the extent to which altruistic motives impact the decisions of people from the food industry to donate their surplus food.

2.1.5. Reputation

Reputation refers to the social consequences of donations for the donor [38]. Giving is commonly viewed as a positive thing to do [66,67], particularly when giving reduces inequality [38,68]. Thus, when an individual or business gives to a charity organisation, a social consequence of the donation is that they receive positive recognition and approval from others. Gaining reputation for donations is of great interest to psychologists and economists. This research shows that not giving can injure one's reputation, and that the majority of people, if given the choice, prefer their donations to be acknowledged by others [69]. This practice has been conceptualised as "conspicuous compassion" [70,71], and is related to Veblen's [72] classic study on "conspicuous consumption". Much of the previous research shows that being watched by others has a positive impact on donations [73,74]. Charitable giving can also improve the public's perception of an industry. Brammer's [75] comprehensive study of the potential relationship between corporate giving and reputation shows that environmentally or socially damaging industries tend to have a poorer reputation, but this is mitigated by a company's level of corporate giving [76]. There is great potential for upcoming studies on food redistribution to investigate the extent to which reputation impacts people from the food industry's decisions to donate their surplus food. In particular, it will be useful to determine whether food business owners have considered building the public image and reputation of their businesses through their food donations. It will also be beneficial to explore whether food redistribution organisations encourage or provide tools for food businesses to display their involvement to customers. However, as surplus food is being donated and not money, it will be interesting to examine whether the negative perspectives of commercial food waste (as discussed in the solicitation section) have an impact on the positive reputation that is generated from donating. Alexander and Smaje's [77] analysis of the food redistribution sector shows that receiving recognition from donating surplus food is not as straightforward as the recognition received from other non-food donations, such as monetary donations. They explain that when a food item is branded, the conditions that accompany the donated item throughout its food redistribution trajectory are very strict. This is due to the fact that if these branded items are misused, it can have a negative impact on the retailer's brand value. This raises some interesting conceptual questions about the nature of both "the object being exchanged and the exchange itself" [77].

2.1.6. Psychological Benefits

In addition to positive recognition, giving can produce positive psychological benefits for the donor. Most research on the psychological benefits of charitable giving is conducted by social psychologists. These studies show that donating may help to construct the identity of the benevolent person [34]. Donating can also contribute to one's self-image as an altruistic, empathetic, socially responsible, agreeable, or influential person' [38]. Research suggests that an emotional response almost automatically accompanies giving. Neuropsychological studies show that donations to charity stimulate neuron activity in areas of the brain connected to reward processing [78]. Batson and Shaw [79] label these positive emotional responses as "empathic joy", while in economic models of philanthropy, it is described as the "warm glow" or "joy of giving" [69]. Previous studies identify several reasons why

giving produces pleasurable psychological experiences in humans. These reasons include reducing feelings of guilt (avoid punishment), feeling good for following a social norm, or feeling good about acting in accordance with a specific self-image. The joy of giving appears to be a strong motivator in charitable giving. Benson and Catt's [80] findings suggest that telling potential donors that giving will put them in a good mood actually increases donations.

Giving can also increase one's self-image. Ickes, Kidd, and Berkowitz's [81] study shows that giving enhances self-esteem, and that people may be motivated to give in order to increase their self-esteem. When an individual gains these positive psychological benefits from giving, they are said to have positive personal norms [82]. Personal norms can reinforce social norms. Therefore, if giving to charity is a social norm, people that feel bad about themselves for breaching the norm are more likely to give. Bekkers and Wiepking's review also suggests that not giving can lead to "feelings of guilt, shame, and dissonance with one's self-image" [38]. In this way, feelings of guilt can promote donations, because feeling guilty leads to a greater feeling of responsibility [83]. Wasting food is frequently associated with feelings of guilt and shame [84–87]. It will be interesting for future research to investigate the extent to which the feelings of guilt associated with food wastage impact the decisions of people from the food industry to donate their surplus food. Food redistribution therefore provides a unique context, where donors may experience both feelings of guilt and the "joy of giving" when they donate their surplus food. Exploring how the feelings of guilt and the "joy of giving" intersect will be useful to understand their motivations to donate.

The literature on the psychological benefits of giving indicates that food industry donors are likely to feel the "joy of giving" when they donate their surplus food. However, Marcel Mauss notes that "to give is to show one's superiority, to be more, to be higher in rank ... [but] to accept without giving in return, or without giving more back, is to become a client and servant, to become smaller, to fall lower" [39]. Thus, although the food industry donors may be motivated to donate their surplus food in order to receive psychological benefits, this mechanism fails to consider the negative psychological impacts that may be exchanged when food is received. Research on the recipients' (the individuals and families that are given the surplus food to consume) experiences of food redistribution is limited. Poppendieck [19] originally explained the loss of dignity recipients felt when asking for and receiving food. Other socio-cultural studies also reflect these findings. Tarasuk and Beaton [23] found that a large proportion of female food bank clients experienced embarrassment, degradation, humiliation, and shame when they first visited a food bank. McPherson's [88] research on food banks in Canada indicates that people feel humiliated when asking for food, and they therefore delay their application for food bank support. In a more recent study, van der Horst, Pascucci, Bol, Griffith and Caraher [47] interviewed recipients at soup kitchens in the Netherlands. They found that being a recipient of food has a perceived negative status, connecting people with the perception of "being poor, crazy, lazy, and socially weak", in addition to feeling responsible for their predicament. Thus, future research into the psychological benefits of charitable giving should also take into account the psychological impacts the recipients may face when receiving the surplus food.

2.1.7. Values

Philanthropy is a means to achieve a desired situation that is closer to one's perspective of the "ideal" world [38]. Donors commonly view their support to charity organisations as a way to make the world a better place, although what this "better world" looks like depends upon one's value system. In this way, the attitudes and values that an individual or business holds can make giving to certain organisations more attractive than giving to others. Research on the effects of values on charitable giving is mainly documented in journals of sociology, psychology, and philanthropic studies. Bekkers and Wiepking [38] explain that charitable giving generally follows from pro-social values, but research into the impact of social values on philanthropy is limited because it is extremely difficult to manipulate and measure values. However, some experimental studies have explored the impact of specific values on charitable giving. These studies show that people who hold altruistic values [89,90]; who are generally less materialistic or who advocate postmaterialistic political goals [91–93]; who are religious or hold spiritual beliefs [94]; who care about social order, consensus, or social justice in society [94–96]; or who feel socially responsible for the recipient organisation [97] or for society as a whole [98,99] are more likely to donate to charity organisations because "they are motivated to make the world a better place" [38]. Donating to an organisation that changes the world in a desired direction is a major motivation for giving, but it has received very little attention in the literature. One exception is Porter and Kramer's [100] work on "shared value", which explores the role of corporate giving and social responsibility. They argue that businesses need to relink commercial success with social success, and that the creation of shared value should take precedence over competitive advantage. In the context of food redistribution organisations, understanding values as a motivation is significant to tackling the larger global problems of food waste and food insecurity. In order to identify suitable ways to raise awareness about food waste and food insecurity, and to encourage food businesses to donate, there is a need to understand the food donors' social and environmental values. In particular, it is necessary to determine people from the food industry's perspectives on food waste and food insecurity, and to explore whether they view their food donations as a way to address these issues. Furthermore, exploring food, economic, social, and environmental values in this context may produce some interesting findings about the way food businesses negotiate profit, donations, and the temporal aspects of food. Alexander and Smaje [77] suggest that food businesses juggle the conflicting aims of extracting as much profit as possible from their food products, and not delaying a food donation too long so that it is no longer edible. The concept of "shared value" may be beneficial to understand what motivates people from the food industry to donate their surplus food as it allows for exploration into the way businesses balance the pursuit of profit and purpose, commercial and social success.

2.1.8. Efficacy

In studies of philanthropy, economics, and psychology, efficacy refers to the donor's perception that their contribution has made a significant impact on the cause they support. Research on efficacy has been extensive in broader helping behaviour literature, but very little research has examined efficacy as a motivation for philanthropy. The research that does exist suggests that donations increase with the perceived efficacy of donations [101]. In particular, the effect of presenting donors with information

about the effectiveness of their contributions has positive effects on philanthropy [102–104]. According to Parsons [104], financial information is especially important to committed donors. Donors often have an overestimated view of the effectiveness of their contributions [105], but research is yet to explore whether this could make them donate more or less. Bekkers and Wiepking's review highlights that "perceptions of efficacy are related to charitable confidence and perceptions of overhead and fundraising costs" [38]. Thus, donors that have greater confidence in their chosen charity think their contributions are less likely to be spent on fundraising costs and overheads [92,93].

It will be worthwhile for future research to investigate the extent to which efficacy is a motivation for food businesses to donate their surplus food. In particular, research should explore how food businesses view the efficacy of their food donations, in contrast to monetary donations. Future research is also required to examine the impact that food donors believe their contributions have on recipients. This will provide information that could enable improved donor recruitment strategies, or it may highlight the need for other approaches to food surplus and food insecurity. However, it is inappropriate to purely examine the donors' perceived efficacy of food redistribution without examining the actual efficacy of food redistribution organisations. This information is significant because, as discussed earlier, the efficacy of emergency food relief is debated in much of the previous literature. It is essential that future research examines whether food donors are aware of these criticisms, and if there is disconnect between the donors' perceived efficacy and the actual impact of food redistribution. There is a need to determine if food redistribution has unanticipated negative consequences, which should be countered. At the same time, there may be unidentified benefits that could be developed, or enhanced to support the overall aims of food redistribution.

It is evident from the above review of the previous philanthropic and pro-social behaviour literature that these eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving set out principles from which empirical data on food redistribution organisations can be analysed and critiqued. However, future research with people from the food industry will also need to explore how these mechanisms that drive charitable giving are impacted by company policies, business objectives, profit-maximising targets, and socially orientated goals. There are potentially many other factors that may impact a food business's decision to donate beyond these eight mechanisms. Nevertheless, they are a useful starting point to thinking about people from the food industry's motivations to donate their surplus food. However, when food businesses donate their surplus food, they are diverting this food from landfill. There are several environmental benefits to diverting food from landfill. These environmental benefits may motivate the people from the food industry to donate, but they are not considered in the philanthropic and pro-social behaviour literature above. For this reason, this paper will now turn to review previous work on pro-environmental behaviour to consider which elements of this research are useful in understanding what motivates food businesses to donate their surplus food.

2.2. Pro-Environmental Behaviours

Many environmental problems are caused by human behaviour, and can thus be managed by altering the relevant behaviour [106,107]. Pro-environmental behaviour denotes behaviour that benefits the environment, or harms the environment as little as possible [108]. Much of the research on pro-environmental behaviour focuses on changing purchasing behaviour, as it is considered to have

greater environmental benefit than reusing or recycling products [108]. However, food waste is a significant environmental problem that is greatly affected by human behaviour, and requires further attention. Every year millions of tonnes of food and grocery products are discarded to landfill as organic waste [18]. In Western developed nations, up to 60% of this food that ends up in landfill is wholesome and edible, but it is not consumed for various reasons, such as failure to harvest, post-harvest loss, and product disposal due to expiration, over production, damage, marketing, and other business decisions [1,109,110]. When food is sent to landfill it rots and produces harmful, potent, and heat-trapping methane gas, equivalent to more than 13 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year [111]. Climate change scientists have demonstrated that this excess amount of greenhouse gas in the Earth's atmosphere is causing our planet to heat at a rapid rate, over a short period of time [111]. They highlight that these changes are extremely destructive to our climate system and natural environment. Clearly then, programs and organisations that reduce food waste or surplus food play an essential role in establishing environmental sustainability. A recent study into the environmental benefits of the food rescue organisation OzHarvest found that “on average every kilogram of food that OzHarvest recovers will avoid 2 kg of greenhouse gas (kg CO₂-eq) emissions, and avoids the consumption of 143 L of water” [112]. Protecting the environment by reducing food waste, and its subsequent greenhouse gas emissions, may influence people from the food industry's decisions to donate their excess food rather than sending it to landfill.

Previous studies show that individuals are increasingly taking environmental consequences into account when making decisions [113–115]. It is important to understand which factors encourage or deter pro-environmental behaviour. The literature indicates a variety of theoretical perspectives that are used when exploring the factors underlying pro-environmental behaviours. Drawing upon Steg and Vlek's [108] integrative review of pro-environmental behaviour, this section will examine the two main factors that environmental psychologists suggest motivate pro-environmental behaviour. These are perceived costs and benefits and moral and normative concerns. Although these factors focus on the influences of pro-environmental behaviour more broadly, the findings may be useful to analyse and critique why people from the food industry decide to donate their surplus food. For this reason, this section will examine the extent to which these factors are useful to understand people from the food industry's involvement in food redistribution organisations.

2.2.1. Costs and Benefits

The costs and benefits associated with donating have been considered in the philanthropy/pro-social behaviour section above. However, many studies of environmental behaviour focus on the costs and benefits too [108]. Much of this research is based on the common, and sometimes misguided, belief that individuals make reasoned choices, and that they will choose options with the highest benefits and the lowest costs (regarding money, effort, and/or social approval). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been a leading framework in explaining various types of environmental behaviour [116]. It is based on the idea that an individual's beliefs shape their intention, which then influences their behaviour [116]. In pro-environmental research, TPB is used to explain several types of environmental behaviours, including travel mode choice [117,118]; waste composting [119,120]; household recycling [121]; meat consumption [122]; and the purchase behaviour of sustainable

products [115,121,123]. In terms of food redistribution, the application of TPB may be a useful framework for future research to explore the motivating factors behind people from the food industry deciding to donate their surplus food.

2.2.2. Moral and Normative Concerns

A significant amount of research from various theoretical perspectives focuses on the role of moral and normative concerns. There are four lines of research on moral and normative concerns. Firstly, this research explores the impact of environmental concern. There are different conceptualisations of “environmental concern”, but most studies commonly use the New Environmental Paradigm scale (NEP) [124,125]. This research reveals that a higher environmental concern is linked to acting more pro-environmentally [126,127]. Secondly, the value-basis of environmental beliefs and behaviours has been examined. This research shows that individuals with stronger self-transient, pro-social, altruistic, and/or biospheric values are more likely to participate in pro-environmental behaviour [113,114,128,129]. Thirdly, studies explore the moral obligations to act pro-environmentally. This research is based on the value-belief-norm theory of environmentalism (VBN theory) [130,131], or the norm-activation model (NAM) [132]. According to Steg and Vlek [108] both the NAM and VBN theory appear to successfully explain “good intentions” and low-cost environmental behaviour [128,131]. However, they are less useful in explaining situations with high behavioural costs or pro-environmental behaviours that have strong constraints on one’s lifestyle [117,133]. Finally, other research on moral and normative concerns focuses on the effect of social norms on behaviour. The theory of normative conduct [134] has been useful in studies about littering in public places, as it identifies two types of social norms—inductive norms and descriptive norms. Inductive norms describe “the extent to which behaviour is supposed to be commonly approved or disapproved of” [108], while descriptive norms “reflect the extent to which behaviour is perceived as common” [108].

These four lines of research, and the theoretical frameworks they suggest, may be useful to direct future research on food redistribution. It will be beneficial to determine the levels of environmental concern that people from the food industry feel and the impact that environmental concern has on decisions to donate. The previous research on the value-basis of environmental beliefs and behaviour also highlights areas worth exploring in the context of food redistribution. In particular, as food redistribution can be understood as both pro-social and pro-environmental, it will be useful to understand the values that food donors hold and how the donors’ values impact their decisions to donate. It will also be beneficial for research to explore whether food businesses are more motivated by the social or environmental consequences of food redistribution. However, future research may find that food redistribution appeals to food businesses because it aims to address both social and environmental issues simultaneously. This information will be beneficial for targeting potential food businesses, as it will allow food redistribution organisations to present their work to food businesses in the most appropriate way. Furthermore, research into values should explore whether linking and addressing social and environmental issues together may be a motivation in itself. That is, individuals and businesses may be inspired to support an organisation if it appears to have positive consequences for people and the environment, rather than organisations that focus on these issues separately.

3. Discussion

The review of the previous literature on pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours reveals numerous areas for future research with food businesses that donate to food redistribution organisations. It highlights many potential factors that may motivate food businesses to donate their surplus food, and the research from both pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours is a useful starting point to investigate and explain the involvement of people from the food industry in food redistribution. However, these mechanisms and factors are not mutually exclusive. Human behaviour can result from multiple motivations. Philanthropic acts, pro-social behaviour, and pro-environmental behaviours are commonly the result of multiple mechanisms or motivational factors working at once. However, formal models generally focus only on one or two motivations [38]. Almost two decades ago, Brown explained that “no single model captures all the motivations that underlie charitable action” [135]. Although it is probably impossible to capture all the motivations in one elegant model, Brown’s assessment still remains true [38]. Food redistribution is generally viewed by the layperson as being beneficial for both society and the environment, and so if viewed in isolation, these theories and frameworks may be unable to fully explain what motivates people from the food industry to become involved. For this reason, this paper argues that there is a need for a coherent framework that integrates these social and environmental behaviours, values, and motivations.

Moreover, previous research is biased towards the circulation of inorganic material objects. Food, on the other hand, is in a constant state of decomposition. As a result, the temporal dimension of charitable acts in relation to food is much more pressing and intense than with other more researched materials, such as financial donation. Food redistribution is about donating ephemeral food, not eternal money. The majority of research in this field is on money, but there is a particular need to understand how those theories apply to food—an organic, ephemeral material in a perpetual state of decomposition. Alexander and Smaje’s [77] study of retail and food redistribution arrangements concerning surplus food and food waste in the UK describe the precarious task of donating surplus food. They explain that although food redistribution—where excess is directed to useful ends—appears to be an arrangement that suits all included parties, it can in fact be spoiled by conflicting aims. At each stage, where the food items are transferred from one party to the next, the ownership of either assets (edible food) or liabilities (waste) are similarly transferred. Alex and Smaje highlight that “in the case of perishable food, the temporal element separating assets from liabilities is particularly acute” [77]. Thus, in order to understand what motivates people from the food industry to donate, it is necessary to consider the material and cultural transformation of this food from edible to inedible, and how the temporal and surplus aspects of food influence decisions about when and what to donate.

Finally, emotions are largely ignored in research on pro-social behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour. However, as sociologists and anthropologists of food have determined, food, and especially its distribution and reciprocation, is highly emotional. Given that humans are *a priori* emotional beings, given the emotionality of issues such as the environment, food security, and poverty, there is a need for future research to explore the role of symbolic and emotional motivations for food donations. Much of the previous pro-social and pro-environmental literature assumes that people are “rational agents who respond to reasoned arguments as to why they should prioritise a particular cause” [42]. For this reason, a large majority of this research is quantitative, where specific motivations and

variables are tested. However, these prior studies fail to consider other factors that may lie behind these decisions. For example, structural conditions, contextual factors, habitual behaviours, competing values and practices, and perhaps even cultural understandings may impact motivations. Midgley's [136] recent study on the logic of surplus food redistribution argues that food redistribution is "premised on decision making within a capitalist food system", which acts as a mirror to contemporary society. She suggests that further research must more critically consider the way different stakeholders choose to challenge or maintain the problems of food insecurity and food waste through the management of resource. It is likely that some of these broader factors may impact the motivation of people from the food industry to donate their surplus food. Thus, future research is necessary to evaluate the usefulness of the theories reviewed in this paper, and to extend their understanding and practical application.

There is a particular need to examine the role of these broader factors *vis-à-vis* motivational factors. Qualitative research methods, such as *in situ*, ethnographic interviewing and observations [137,138], use detailed, thick description to represent the human experience, and are utilised when the researcher wants to understand phenomena from the participant's point of view [139,140]. Although ethnographic interviewing and observations have been utilised in previous research on food redistribution in a variety of ways [19,141–144], there is a need for qualitative research that focuses on the broader factors that motivate food businesses to donate their surplus food. Ethnographic observations and interviewing are methods that can reveal the structural conditions, contextual factors, habitual behaviours, competing values, and cultural understandings that may impact decisions to donate surplus food. This type of research will allow researchers to share in people from the food industry's understandings and perspectives to examine the way they structure and understand the problems of food surplus and food insecurity, and the way they give meaning to the donations of their surplus food. In this way, qualitative research will allow researchers to focus on the food donors' "interpretative understanding of their decisions and actions, and to cast light on (their) rationalities" [42].

4. Conclusions

The social, environmental, and financial ramifications of food waste are significant [1,2,86]. Donating surplus food through food redistribution organisations is an approach that has been readily adopted by many food businesses, both internationally and in Australia. However, it remains unclear why food businesses choose to donate. The previous literature on food redistribution is critical of food businesses that decide to donate their surplus food. It suggests that food redistribution fits into the "Big Food" structure of the modern food system, which perpetuates and enables the problems of food surplus and food insecurity. This paper argued that while this critical perspective has merit, it often uncritically adopts a political activist viewpoint without considering the self-representations and self-understandings of the food businesses involved in food redistribution [31]. The purpose of this paper, therefore, was to provide a theoretical and conceptual overview to set out principles from which empirical data on food donations and food redistribution can be analysed or critiqued. Specifically, this paper explored the fields of pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour, because these fields have examined the motivations behind donations and reducing environmental impact. This paper suggested that charitable giving of food is different to giving other inorganic material, such as money. Thus, this paper argued that research is necessary to explore the unique temporal, environmental, social, cultural,

and emotional factors that may motivate food businesses to donate their surplus food through food redistribution organisations. The food redistribution sector needs more attention from social researchers and policy makers to examine its strengths and limitations. Understanding the motivations of food industry donors is an important part of examining this sector, so that food redistribution does not develop unchecked or disrupt other upstream preventative actions [145].

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Author Contributions

The research and preparation of this paper was undertaken by Elisha Vlaholias under the supervision of Kirrilly Thompson, Danielle Every, and Drew Dawson. Kirrilly Thompson assisted with conceptualisation of the research project and was involved in each stage of preparation and revision of the manuscript. She provided expert advice on socio-cultural aspects of food waste, Danielle Every on philanthropy and pro-social behaviour, and Drew Dawson on behavioural change and the pro-environmental research. All authors were involved in the drafting and approval of the final paper.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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