

# Insights Into the Evolution of Philanthropy: A Systematic Literature Review

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## Abstract

*The article "Insights into the Evolution of Philanthropy: A Systematic Literature Review" explores the development of philanthropy through a systematic review of existing literature. This study identifies key trends, concepts, and approaches that have shaped philanthropic practices, which have evolved from traditional charity into more integrated strategies, such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and social entrepreneurship. The article also highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration and the role of technology in expanding the impact of philanthropy. These findings underscore the urgent need for further research on the adaptation of philanthropy to current global challenges.*

**Keywords:** CSR, Global, Philanthropy.

## Introduction

Philanthropy, as defined by Hall (1999), is the act of giving for the betterment of society, playing a crucial role in addressing social issues and driving positive change. By understanding and applying philanthropy, individuals and organizations can contribute to creating a more just and sustainable society. Philanthropy involves voluntary actions to improve society through donations of time, resources, or funds to empower marginalized communities and support social transformation, helping to build a more inclusive and sustainable society (Maclean et al., 2021). Philanthropy has both instrumental and expressive purposes within nonprofit organizations. For individuals, it is a way to express their values and beliefs through donations. For organizations, fundraising is an opportunity to engage supporters in their mission, making ethical behavior towards donors and the involvement of the board of directors and volunteers critical to successful fundraising (Nathan Sarah K. & Tempel Eugene R., 2016). The importance of review papers lies in increasing the number of reviews and explaining the process and structure of systematic review papers (Palmatier R.W. et al., 2018).

## Related Work

Varadarajan and Menon (1988) discussed the characteristics of cause-related marketing and its benefits for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Hall (1999) explored the origins of serious studies on philanthropy and provided Peter an opportunity to respond to Stanley Katz's comments on the topic. Ricks and Williams (2005) offered insights into strategic corporate philanthropic initiatives aimed at enhancing the performance of frontline employees in customer interactions. Venture philanthropy emerged as a new organizational and professional culture field, necessitating further scientific exploration (Moody, 2007). Foster et al. (2008) emphasized the need for increased research in Canada on this topic. Bekkers and Wiepking (2007, 2010) provided in-depth insights into the factors influencing philanthropic practices and the mechanisms driving generous behavior in society. Mair and Hehenberger (2014) highlighted how the

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concepts of front-stage and backstage in organizational philanthropy practices facilitate a shift from opposition to mutually beneficial cooperation.

Campopiano et al. (2014) stressed that philanthropy is a crucial aspect, particularly in the context of family involvement in ownership. Feliu and Botero (2015) discussed the drivers, implementation methods, and impact of philanthropy in family businesses. Chan (2016) underscored the importance of research in understanding philanthropy and fundraising practices in higher education institutions. Flanigan (2016) provided deep insights into how crowdfunding and diaspora philanthropy are interconnected and can reinforce each other in the context of donations and social support. Kubičková (2018) offered a comprehensive understanding of the concept of strategic philanthropy, its underlying theoretical foundations, empirical evidence supporting it, and methods for measuring the impact of strategic philanthropic practices. Mei and Wang (2021) emphasized the importance of place-based factors in corporate philanthropy. This study investigates the evolution of philanthropy and how it is applied in everyday practices.

## Methods

This article was compiled based on a search for articles about philanthropy in ScienceDirect from the first article found until 2013 using the keyword "philanthropy." Based on this keyword, 843 articles were found from 2000 to 2023. A further manual review of these articles was conducted, resulting in 750 article titles. The year 2000 was selected because the first philanthropy article appeared in the ScienceDirect database that year. The end of 2023 was chosen to ensure that the literature reviewed was complete and verified, and to avoid issues related to the availability and validity of information from publications that might be newly released in early 2024. This article addresses four research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How has the number of articles using the keyword "philanthropy" in the ScienceDirect database evolved?

RQ2: How are articles distributed in journals in the ScienceDirect database?

RQ3: What subject areas are covered in the search for the keyword "philanthropy" in the ScienceDirect database?

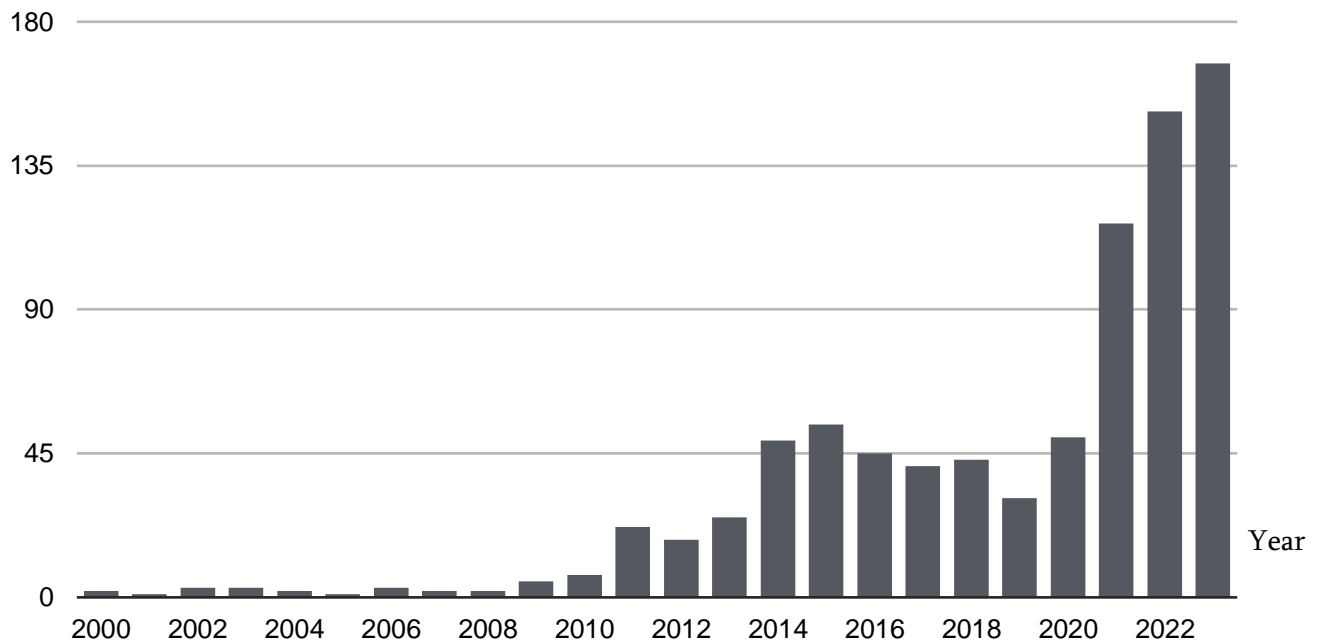
RQ4: Which articles are most relevant in the ScienceDirect database using the keyword "philanthropy"?

RQ5: What topics are related to the keyword "philanthropy" in the ScienceDirect database?

## Results and Discussion

### *Development of Articles with the Keyword "Philanthropy" in the ScienceDirect Database*

The number of articles using the keyword "philanthropy" in the ScienceDirect database from 2000 to 2023 can be seen in Figure 1. The number of articles published on philanthropy has shown a steady increase from 2000 to 2023, with a notable spike in 2010. The significant rise in the number of philanthropy-related publications in 2010-2011 was likely influenced by several interrelated complex factors. One major factor was the impact of the 2008 global economic crisis. This crisis triggered increased awareness of social disparities and the need for humanitarian aid. In response, many individuals, organizations, and governments began to focus more on social issues and philanthropy. Additionally, the development of information technology in the early 2010s played a crucial role. The growing accessibility of social media platforms and the internet enabled the faster and broader dissemination of information about various social issues, thus encouraging public interest in philanthropy. Global events such as major natural disasters during this period, for example, the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, may have also sparked increased interest in philanthropy. These events heightened public awareness of the importance of humanitarian aid and led to more research and publications related to philanthropy.



*Number of Articles*

**Picture1.** Number of articles from 2000 to 2023

The sharp increase in the number of philanthropy-related articles from 2020 to 2021 was likely due to several key factors during that period. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, triggered an extraordinary philanthropic response worldwide. Many philanthropic organizations, companies, and wealthy individuals increased their donations to support emergency response efforts, healthcare, vaccine research, and economic aid for those affected by the pandemic. The significant role of philanthropy in this global crisis drove heightened academic interest and research on how philanthropy adapted and contributed during the pandemic, as reflected in the spike in publications. The pandemic also highlighted and exacerbated existing social and economic inequalities, both within and between countries. This situation prompted further discussion and research on how philanthropy can play a role in addressing injustice and inequality. With growing attention to social justice, various academic articles likely focused on the role of philanthropy in resource redistribution and supporting vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, 2020-2021 also saw major shifts in consumer and business behavior, including increased interest in sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and the social impact of business. This led companies to engage more deeply with philanthropy and adjust their CSR strategies, which, in turn, attracted further research interest into the role and impact of philanthropy in business and society. This surge may also have been influenced by the adoption of new technologies and innovations in philanthropic practices, such as the use of digital platforms for crowdfunding and increased transparency through blockchain. These innovations opened new research areas exploring how technology can enhance the effectiveness and reach of philanthropy. Additionally, 2020 and 2021 saw various changes in policies and regulations related to philanthropy in several countries, which may have prompted new research on the impact of regulations on philanthropic activities and how government policies can support or restrict philanthropic contributions during crises.

*Distribution of Articles in Scimedirect Database Journals*

Table 1 shows the distribution of the number of articles by publication title in the open-access ScienceDirect journal dataset. The publication with the highest number of articles is "Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences" with 80 articles. "Procedia Economics and Finance" contributes 29 articles, followed by "Heliyon" with 23 articles. "Journal of Business Research" and "Journal of Cleaner Production" each have 17 articles. Furthermore, the "Journal of Pain and Symptom Management" has 14 articles, while "The Lancet" and "Social Science & Medicine" each contain 13 articles. Publications like "Public Health" and "Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity" each contribute 10 articles. There are several journals with 9 articles each, including "Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization," "Technological Forecasting and Social Change," "International Journal of Educational Development," and "Marine Policy." "Procedia Computer Science" has 8 articles, while "Geoforum" has 7 articles. Other journals that each include 6 articles are "Vaccine," "Research Policy," and "Asia Pacific Management Review." Publications with 5 articles include "Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions," "Experimental Gerontology," "Children and Youth Services Review," "China Journal of Accounting Research," "eBioMedicine," and "eClinicalMedicine." The total number of articles in the table is 325.

<b><i>Publication Title</i></b>	<b>Number of Articles</b>
<i>Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>	80
<i>Procedia Economics and Finance</i>	29
<i>Heliyon</i>	23
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	17
<i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>	17
<i>Journal of Pain and Symptom Management</i>	14
<i>The Lancet</i>	13
<i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i>	13
<i>Public Health</i>	10
<i>Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity</i>	10
<i>Journal of Economic Behavior &amp; Organization</i>	9
<i>Technological Forecasting and Social Change</i>	9
<i>International Journal of Educational Development</i>	9
<i>Marine Policy</i>	9
<i>Procedia Computer Science</i>	8
<i>Geoforum</i>	7
<i>Vaccine</i>	6
<i>Research Policy</i>	6
<i>Asia Pacific Management Review</i>	6
<i>Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions</i>	5
<i>Experimental Gerontology</i>	5
<i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>	5
<i>China Journal of Accounting Research</i>	5
<i>BioMedicine</i>	5
<i>ClinicalMedicine</i>	5
	325

**Table1.** Publication Title*Subject Areas Discussed in Keyword Searches For "Philanthropy" In the Scimedirect Database*

Based on Table 2, the Social Sciences subject area has the highest number of articles, totaling 285. This indicates that philanthropy is frequently discussed in a social context, covering various aspects such as social impact, public policy, social justice, and community involvement in philanthropic activities. Research in this area may include studies on the role of philanthropy in community development, poverty reduction, and

enhancing social welfare. Next, the Medicine and Dentistry subject area has 231 articles, highlighting the importance of philanthropy in supporting health and medical services. Research here may focus on philanthropic donations for medical research, financial support for healthcare facilities, and philanthropy's role in improving access to healthcare across different countries.

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Number of Articles</b>
<i>Social Sciences</i>	285
<i>Medicine and Dentistry</i>	231
<i>Business, Management and Accounting</i>	130
<i>Economics, Econometrics and Finance</i>	123
<i>Arts and Humanities</i>	106
<i>Environmental Science</i>	87
<i>Psychology</i>	64
<i>Nursing and Health Professions</i>	48
<i>Decision Sciences</i>	37
<i>Energy</i>	35
<i>Total</i>	1146

**Table2.** Subject Areas

The third-ranking subject area is Business, Management, and Accounting, with 130 articles. This area examines how philanthropy is integrated into corporate strategies, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and how companies use philanthropy as a tool to build their image and as part of broader business strategies. Articles in this area might also discuss the impact of philanthropy on accountability and transparency in corporate management. The Economics, Econometrics, and Finance subject area has 123 articles, which explore philanthropy from economic, econometric, and financial perspectives. Research in this area may focus on the economic impact of philanthropic activities, philanthropic funding models, measuring the effectiveness of philanthropic contributions, and quantitative analysis of financial data related to philanthropy. This field might also include studies on philanthropy in macroeconomic and microeconomic contexts.

Following this, the Arts and Humanities subject area has 106 articles, highlighting the relationship between philanthropy and the creative fields. Articles in this subject might discuss how philanthropy supports arts and culture, the role of donors in preserving cultural heritage, and philanthropic contributions to arts education. Additionally, studies on the social and cultural impacts of philanthropy in this field may also be a focus. Environmental Science has 87 articles, reflecting philanthropy's involvement in supporting environmental initiatives such as conservation, climate change, and sustainability. Research in this area may explore how philanthropic funds are used for environmental projects, the role of philanthropic foundations in supporting environmental research and actions, and the impact of philanthropy on environmental policies. The Psychology subject area, with 64 articles, reflects interest in understanding the psychological aspects of philanthropy, such as motivations for giving, the impact of philanthropy on mental well-being, and how philanthropy is perceived and influenced by psychological factors. Research in this area may also explore the relationship between philanthropic behavior and the psychological characteristics of individuals or groups.

The Nursing and Health Professions subject area has 48 articles, emphasizing the role of philanthropy in supporting health professions. This may include research on donations for nursing facilities, health education programs funded by philanthropy, and how philanthropy helps improve healthcare services, especially in underserved areas. The Decision Sciences subject area has 37 articles, which might discuss how philanthropy plays a role in decision-making processes, both in philanthropic organizations and for beneficiaries. Articles here may explore strategic decision-making models in allocating philanthropic funds, impact measurement, and the use of data in supporting philanthropic decisions. Finally, the Energy subject area has 35 articles, indicating that philanthropy also supports the energy sector, particularly in the context

of renewable energy and sustainability. Research in this field may cover philanthropy in funding clean energy research, supporting sustainable energy initiatives, and the role of philanthropic foundations in advocating for energy transitions.

The total number of articles is 750 titles, but these are found within 1,146 articles across various subject areas, indicating that some articles are multidisciplinary. Philanthropy's interdisciplinary nature, with its evolving practices and profound impact on various sectors of society, contributes to its inclusion in articles across diverse subject areas. Understanding philanthropy requires a holistic approach that considers its social, economic, ethical, and strategic dimensions, making it an interesting topic in various academic disciplines. Philanthropy is a complex concept intersecting with numerous subject areas due to its broad implications and impacts on society. The relevance of articles on philanthropy across different subject areas relates to the diversity of philanthropic activities and their implications. Philanthropy encompasses aspects such as reputation, altruism, sociology, political science, philosophy, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and community philanthropy (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2010; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007; Schnurbein et al., 2016; Paarlberg & Yoshioka, 2015). It involves analyzing mechanisms that drive giving, such as awareness of needs, demands, costs and benefits, altruism, reputation, psychological benefits, values, and effectiveness (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007). Additionally, philanthropy is closely related to corporate strategies, stakeholder relations, and business values (Schnurbein et al., 2016; Fedorova et al., 2023).

The context in which philanthropy operates, such as diaspora communities, family businesses, and institutional environments, affects the nature and level of philanthropic activities (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Koff, 2016; Wiepking et al., 2021; Feliu & Botero, 2015). Geographical and social contexts, including diaspora networks, local economic structures, and global institutional frameworks, play a crucial role in shaping philanthropic behavior (Paarlberg & Yoshioka, 2015; Koff, 2016; Wiepking et al., 2021). Furthermore, philanthropy is evolving into innovative practices such as data philanthropy and strategic philanthropy, which involve ethical considerations, governance frameworks, and integration of business and societal interests (Taddeo, 2016; Kubíčková, 2018). The continuous development in philanthropy necessitates critical reviews of its impacts, effectiveness, and ethical dimensions (Eyre, 2021; Schnurbein et al., 2021; Daly, 2023). In the health sector, philanthropy supports medical research and public health campaigns, which are frequently discussed in health journals. Philanthropy also has a legal dimension, particularly in the context of regulations and tax policies affecting nonprofit organizations. In management and business, philanthropy is part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) impacting business reputation and performance. Due to philanthropy's connection with various disciplines, articles on this topic are often found across different subject areas.

*Most Relevant Articles in The Sciencedirect Database Using the Keyword "Philanthropy"*

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the diversity of research in the field of philanthropy. These studies cover various aspects of philanthropy, ranging from individual motivations to broader social impacts. Some articles investigate the impact of philanthropy across different sectors, such as child welfare, the wine industry, and road safety. Other articles discuss the motivations of philanthropists and philanthropic strategies, including corporate philanthropy and philanthropy combined with crowdfunding. Additionally, there are articles exploring how social and political contexts influence philanthropic activities, including the impact of government policies on corporate philanthropy. Some articles also address innovations in philanthropy, such as the use of technology to manage philanthropic activities or collaborations among various actors in the philanthropic sector.

NO	TITLE
1	An examination of recent federal and philanthropic funding for child welfare research in the United.
2	An exploratory examination of philanthropy in the New Zealand, Spanish and US wine industries.
3	Corporate Philanthropy in the Czech Republic.
4	Donors on tour: Philanthrotourism in Africa.

5	Evaluation of the five-year Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Road Safety Program in the Russian Federation.
6	Impact of Social Context on Strategic Philanthropy: Theoretical Insight.
7	Misalignment or exclusion? Investigating climate and energy philanthropy funding of diversity.
8	Opening the black box of conservation philanthropy: A co-produced research agenda on private foundations in marine conservation.
9	Philanthropic-crowdfunding-partnership: A proof-of-concept study for sustainable financing in low-carbon energy transitions
10	Philantrocipitalism and the re-making of global water charity
11	Taxes and Business Philanthropy in Armenia.
12	The Effect of Corporate Philanthropy on Consumer Behavior: Open Innovation in the Operating Mechanism.
13	Where to donate: The geographical distribution of corporate philanthropy in China.

**Table3.** The Most Relevant Articles

*Topics Related to The Keyword "Philanthropy" In the Sciencedirect Database*

After documenting and selecting from 750 article titles in the ScienceDirect database using the search term "philanthropy," filtered for research articles, English language, and Open Access & Open Archive, the most articles were found in 6 categories, with search terms: CSR (60), charity (10), philanthropy (13), fund (6), donation (15), entrepreneurship (15). The following is a detailed explanation of the number of articles for each topic listed in Table 4. The topic of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the most frequently found, with a total of 60 articles. These articles cover various aspects of CSR, as reflected in the wide range of article numbers from 23 to 733. This indicates that CSR is a broad topic and receives significant attention in the ScienceDirect literature. Next, the topic of Donation has 15 articles, distributed fairly evenly with article numbers ranging from 64 to 740. These articles likely discuss various aspects of donations within the context of philanthropy, highlighting the importance of this topic in related research.

Entrepreneurship also has 15 articles, similar to the number of articles on Donation. The article numbers for this topic range from 86 to 750, showing significant attention to entrepreneurship in relation to philanthropic activities.

The topic of Philanthropy itself has 13 articles, with article numbers spanning from 47 to 740. Although the number of articles is slightly fewer compared to CSR, Donation, and Entrepreneurship, this topic remains important and has a relatively broad scope in research. Finally, the topic of Funding has the fewest articles, with only 6 articles. The article numbers for this topic range from 12 to 32. Although the number of articles on funding is less than other topics, its presence still indicates relevance in the context of philanthropy and related research.

Topic	Number of Articles	Article Number
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	60	23, 24, 48, 53, 57, 132, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 165, 167, 183, 204, 214, 217, 230, 239, 243, 247, 252, 267, 271, 285, 296, 298, 308, 331, 340, 354, 388, 389, 400, 429, 435, 463, 473, 513, 527, 566, 608, 618, 619, 620, 633, 647, 652, 674, 695, 699, 733.
Donation	15	64, 97, 138, 201, 232, 264, 281, 338, 528, 548, 553, 683, 684, 737, 740.
Entrepreneurship	15	86, 200, 287, 317, 319, 353, 358, 476, 550, 588, 603, 611, 626, 733, 750.

Philanthropy	13	47, 50, 143, 216, 256, 356, 444, 475, 490, 491, 586, 617, 740.
Funding	6	12, 19, 20, 24, 30, 32.

**Table4.** The Most Relevant Topics

CSR is the most extensively covered topic in the reviewed literature, appearing in 60 articles. This highlights the significant role corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays within the realm of philanthropy. Companies use CSR as a strategy to showcase their dedication to social, economic, and environmental welfare. The articles explore various dimensions of CSR, such as stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and its influence on a company's reputation. Donations, a classic form of philanthropy, are highlighted in 15 articles. These articles likely examine different donation types, such as individual contributions, corporate philanthropy, or donations facilitated by digital platforms. The primary goal of donations is to offer direct support to communities, making it one of the most straightforward forms of philanthropic activity.

Entrepreneurship includes 15 articles related to philanthropy, highlighting the connection between these two fields, particularly in the context of socio-economic empowerment through small and medium enterprises. These articles may cover topics such as social entrepreneurship or the role of entrepreneurship in supporting communities through philanthropic initiatives. There are 13 articles specifically focused on philanthropy that explore various in-depth aspects of philanthropic practices and developments. These articles might discuss definitions, history, theories, and strategies employed by individuals and organizations to achieve a greater social impact through philanthropic activities. In contrast, the topic of funding is covered in only 6 articles, which may address sources of philanthropic funding such as endowments, venture philanthropy, or other funding methods supporting philanthropic initiatives, as well as innovations in philanthropic funding such as crowdfunding or impact investing.

The concept of philanthropy has evolved over time, from individual and sporadic acts of giving to a more organized and strategic model. Modern philanthropy now involves long-term strategies aimed at driving more systematic social change, engaging various actors such as companies, government institutions, and nonprofit organizations. One of the key topics in this article is the relationship between corporate philanthropy and CSR. Companies utilize philanthropy as part of their business strategy to build a positive reputation and strengthen relationships with stakeholders. The article highlights an increase in research on how companies use philanthropy to achieve broader goals, including sustainability and social responsibility. Additionally, the development of digital technology has had a significant impact on philanthropy by facilitating crowdfunding platforms, where individuals and organizations can directly participate in philanthropic projects. This expands access to resources, accelerates fundraising processes, and enhances transparency.

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## Conclusion

Philanthropy has undergone significant evolution alongside social, economic, and technological changes. Through a systematic literature review, this article has successfully identified key trends, concepts, and approaches that have shaped philanthropic practices over time. Philanthropy practices are no longer confined to traditional charitable activities but have evolved into more strategic and integrated approaches, including areas such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), social entrepreneurship, and funding innovations. This study also highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration and the role of



technology in expanding the impact of philanthropy. Additionally, there is an increasing need to understand how philanthropy can adapt to current global challenges, such as inequality, climate change, and social resilience. Future research is encouraged to further explore philanthropy's role as a force for positive societal change.

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