To Do Well by Doing Good: Improving Corporate Image Through Cause-Related Marketing

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Abstract   As part of their corporate social responsibility, many organizations practice cause-related marketing, in which organizations donate to a chosen cause with every consumer purchase. The extant literature has identified the importance of the fit between the organization and the nature of the cause in influencing corporate image, as well as the influence of a connection between the cause and consumer preferences on brand attitudes and brand choice. However, prior research has not addressed which cause composition most appeals to consumers or the impact of cause choice on corporate image. A between-subjects field experiment in the Netherlands examines the influence of three core cause attributes—cause type, cause scope, and cause acuteness—on consumers' perceptions of corporate image. Furthermore, this experiment examines the extent to which consumer identification with the cause mediates the influence of the cause attributes on corporate image. The findings indicate that identification with the cause leads to more positive evaluations of marketing campaigns for cause type and cause scope. Also, however, our results uncover a negative direct relationship between cause scope and corporate image. Cause acuteness is only marginally influential in corporate image perceptions. By proposing and testing a comprehensive model of the influence of cause attributes on corporate image in cause-related marketing, this article provides important implications and suggests avenues for further research.

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Introduction

Corporate social responsibility has moved from ideology to reality (Kotler and Lee 2005; McWilliams et al. 2006). Many now consider it an absolute necessity that organizations define their roles in society and apply social, ethical, legal, and responsible standards to their businesses (Lichtenstein et al. 2004). In this pertinent and persistent corporate realm, we consider cause-related marketing an important facet of not just corporate social responsibility (Brønn and Vrioni 2001; File and Prince 1998; Jahdi and Acikdilli 2009; Kotler and Lee 2005; Liu et al. 2010; Van de Ven 2008) but of business ethics in general (Schlegelmilch and Öberseder 2010). Historically led by developments in the United States, cause-related marketing refers to a social initiative (Adkins 1999) in which organizations donate to a chosen cause in response to every consumer purchase made (Varadarajan and Menon 1988). This type of marketing, generally conducted in the business-to-consumer domain, differs from the sponsorship of "needy" organizations, which makes no direct linkage between the sales volume of the sponsor and donations (Adkins 1999). Instead, high-profile brand owners such as Proctor & Gamble run the "Give the Gift of Life"

campaign in conjunction with UNICEF and provide a life-saving tetanus vaccination for each purchase of Pampers (Pampers 2009).

When organizations thus pursue value creation by leveraging the gains in reputation and legitimacy that they achieve through cause-related marketing, it could improve consumer behavior, attract talented employees, and have a positive effect on the organizations' financial performance (Carroll and Shabana 2010; Kurucz et al. 2008). For example, when an organization is involved in a cause that consumers believe is worthwhile, 78% of them say they are more likely to buy a product; 66 and 62% would likely switch brands and retailers, respectively; and 54% indicate they would pay more for the product (Rains 2003).

Accordingly, organizations use cause-related marketing to support a wide variety of causes (Kotler and Lee 2005) and obtain a source of differentiation for both the firm and its brands (Adkins 1999), as well as to expand their corporate social responsibility programs (Oldenberg 1992; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). Cause-related marketing thereby has become an established and integral part of the marketing mix (File and Prince 1998), though its growing popularity makes differentiation more difficult. Furthermore, many of the stated benefits of cause-related marketing, such as increased sales, customer retention, access to niche markets, staff loyalty, reduced price sensitivity, and enhanced corporate image, reinforce the idea that organizations might do well by doing good, but that their definition of success necessarily varies from campaign to campaign (Deshpande and Hitchon 2002). From a marketing perspective, our study contributes to a better understanding of the factors that lead to the success of cause-related marketing.

Prior literature suggests that because of its positive effect on corporate image (File and Prince 1998; Gupta and Pirsch 2006), the fit between an organization and a cause influences the success of a cause-related marketing campaign. For example, campaigns might be closely aligned, such as Bayer Aspirin and the American Stroke Association, or more removed, such as American Express's campaign to raise funds to refurbish the Statue of Liberty (Webb and Mohr 1998). The positive effects of cause involvement for organizations appear to result from increasing consumers' identification with the organization (Lichtenstein et al. 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001); consumers' personal support of the cause likely moderates this effect (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001).

To the best of our knowledge though, the question of what motivates the consumer appeal of different types of causes largely remains unanswered (Endacott 2004). Whereas previous research considers the fit between the organization and the cause, as well as the importance of broad connections between consumer preferences and

selected causes, no studies have addressed comprehensively the precise fit between consumers and cause composition or the impact of this fit on corporate image (Schlegelmilch and Öberseder 2010). Therefore, we focus on relevant objective aspects of the cause's composition, as drawn from prior research, to develop a theoretical framework of these relationships.

Our study offers a significant theoretical contribution to cause-related marketing literature, in that it identifies three objective attributes of a cause and shows how consumer–cause identification mediates the effect of cause composition on corporate image. Thus, we add to the relatively sparse literature on cause-related marketing as a strategic approach. We also highlight how the three objective attributes of a cause interact to affect consumer identification with the cause and corporate image. From a managerial perspective, we further contribute to a greater understanding of how to select and screen cause-related marketing campaigns to align with customer profiles and campaign objectives.

We structure the remainder of this article as follows: First, we review the literature on cause-related marketing, its relationship with corporate image, and variables that influence this relationship. We particularly highlight the role of consumer identification with the cause, and with this review, we develop our study's theoretical framework and research hypotheses. Second, we describe the methodological approach for our between-subjects field experiment, which consists of a range of cause-related marketing campaigns that we operationalize according to three objective attributes: cause type, cause scope, and cause acuteness. Third, we present and discuss the results of our field experiment. Fourth, we outline our study's contributions and managerial implications, as well as some limitations, and suggest avenues for further research.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cause-Related Marketing

Corporate social responsibility is a general term for organizations "doing good;" it encompasses their voluntary involvement in complex issues such as health and safety at work, human resource management, education, economic development, relations with stakeholders (e.g., consumers, suppliers, local communities), environmental protection, and basic human needs and desires (Branco and Rodrigues 2006; Kotler and Lee 2005; Lindgreen et al. 2009). Organizations engage in corporate social responsibility not only to fulfill their external obligations but also to increase their differentiation and competitiveness (Kotler and Lee 2005), develop new resources and capabilities (Branco and

Rodrigues 2006), increase staff satisfaction and customer loyalty (Adkins 1999; Liu et al. 2010), improve corporate reputation (Brown and Dacin 1997; Drumwright 1994; Meyer 1999), and, more generally, improve their stock market performance (Klein and Dawar 2004).

Cause-related marketing represents a specific form of corporate social responsibility (Brønn and Vrioni 2001; File and Prince 1998; Jahdi and Acikdilli 2009; Kotler and Lee 2005; Liu et al. 2010; Van de Ven 2008). It offers an approach that socially responsible organizations can follow when formulating, implementing, and controlling ethical issues related to marketing (Schlegelmilch and Öberseder 2010). Some authors define cause-related marketing as "the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives" (Varadarajan and Menon 1988, p. 60). This is the definition we operationalize in the present study. Others use broader terms: "the general alliance between businesses and non-profit causes that provide resources and funding to address social issues and business marketing objectives" (Cui et al. 2003, p. 310), which might encompass event sponsorships, sales promotions, volunteering, or public relations (Duff 2003). Although the range of definitions is quite extensive, the central element consistently is that the relation between the profit-based organization and the cause (or charity) should be beneficial to both parties (File and Prince 1998; Papasolomou and Kitchen 2011). Furthermore, the cause-related marketing offer usually runs for a specified period of time, for a particular product, and to benefit a specific charity or cause (Kotler and Lee 2005). The brand, or profit-based organization, also generally uses its commitment to the cause as part of its brand communication with consumers (Pringle and Thompson 1999).

Cause-related marketing thus can constitute a tactical and a strategic approach (Varadarajan and Menon 1988), though previous research has focused mainly on the tactical side (e.g., Coca-Cola's 1997 support for Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and considered the direct effect of such marketing campaigns on consumers' choice behavior (Adkins 1999; Kotler and Lee 2005). With a tactical approach, the primary goal is increased revenue through the improved effectiveness of the profit-based organization's sales promotion efforts; the strategic approach instead takes a more long-term focus on improving corporate image and creating a positive consumer attitude toward the brand (Berger et al. 2007; Dowling 2001). Some studies report that organizations involved in medium- to long-term cause-related marketing campaigns (e.g., Tesco's Computers for Schools, IKEA's Brum Bear UNICEF campaign) prompt higher valuations by consumers than do short-term marketing efforts (Van den Brink et al. 2006).

Many goals and benefits of cause-related marketing for the profit-based organization, not surprisingly, are similar to those for corporate social responsibility in general, including increased sales (Varadarajan and Menon 1988); enhanced corporate prestige and credibility (Duff 2003); market entry (Varadarajan and Menon 1988); appeals to new investors (Kooijmans 2004); a competitive advantage (Kooijmans 2004); attracting, motivating, and retaining committed employees (Deloitte 2004; Kotler and Lee 2005); customer retention (Duff 2003); achieving marketing differentiation (Adkins 1999); and reduced customer sensitivity to price and product attribute differences (Trimble and Rifon 2006).

Yet cause-related marketing campaigns are not always successful (Garcia et al. 2003), and conclusions about their effects on increased sales remain mixed. Some research argues that campaigns with social dimensions, though capable of motivating the workforce, communicating the organization's mission, and influencing corporate image, are not necessarily effective in achieving sales objectives (Deshpande and Hitchon 2002). Campaigns may appear ineffective because of the lack of understanding among brand owners and agency advisors about the nature of the cause and how consumer attitudes influence cause-related marketing campaign results. Research also has indicated that consumers tend to buy from brands associated with cause-related marketing primarily when their price and value are already comparable (Maignan 2001); if brand owners expect cause-related marketing to compensate for a weak marketing offer, they are likely to be disappointed (Adkins 1999).

Cause-Related Marketing and Corporate Image

By using cause-related marketing as a strategic approach, the organization implicitly tries to influence its corporate image or "the configuration of perceptions that take root in the minds of observers" (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007, p. 39). A change in corporate image can initiate a change in attitudes regarding quality, buying behavior, loyalty, and competitiveness (Dowling 2001; McWilliams and Siegel 2001). When considered at an organizational level, corporate image involves "the features of the company that stakeholders come to perceive" (Van Riel and Fombrun 2007, p. 40).

Previous research suggests a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility activities and consumer attitudes toward organizations and their products (Brown and Dacin 1997), which implies that cause-related marketing campaigns, as a form of corporate social responsibility, similarly should facilitate a favorable corporate image. To our knowledge though, little research comprehensively investigates the specific attribute composition of

cause-related marketing campaigns that successfully influence corporate image; that is, "with respect to giving, which types of giving tend to better enhance firm image?" (Williams and Barrett 2000, p. 349).

Existing research into the impact of cause choice on corporate image is limited largely to discussions of the organization–cause fit and its apparent importance with regard to positive consumer attitudes toward the organization (Gupta and Pirsch 2006; Trimble and Rifon 2006), improved brand recall (Cornwell and Coote 2005), and perceived corporate credibility (Rifon et al. 2004). Cause-related marketing campaigns appear to work best for luxury goods, for which donating to a charitable cause may help offset consumers' feelings of guilt associated with the purchase (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Beyond organization–cause identification, the consumer's identification with the cause best predicts the success of a cause-related marketing campaign (Gupta and Pirsch 2006). Considering this relatively comprehensive coverage of organization–cause fit in existing literature, we focus instead on the relationship among the cause, consumer–cause identification, and corporate image (see Fig. 1).

Cause Composition, Consumer–Cause Identification, and Corporate Image

A comprehensive review of existing literature regarding cause-related marketing provides the key variables to use when considering attributes of the cause in a more general sense; however, it is unclear about how to select a cause that will maximize positive evaluations of a campaign in terms of corporate image (Endacott 2004). Few researchers have considered subjective variables, such as prior attitudes toward a cause (Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005), cause familiarity (Bendaputti et al. 1996; Lafferty and Edmondson 2009; Lafferty et al. 2004; Singh et al. 2009), or perceived value fit between the consumer and a branded charity (e.g., Amnesty International; Bennett 2003). Instead, specific, objective attributes dominate, including cause type, such as whether it addresses a primary or secondary need (e.g.,

Cornwell and Coote 2005; Demetriou et al. 2010); cause scope or proximity, whether local, national, or international (e.g., Grau and Folse 2007; Ross et al. 1992); and cause acuteness, such as a sudden disaster versus an ongoing tragedy (e.g., Cui et al. 2003; Ellen et al. 2000).

Investigations of cause attributes also tend to be less than comprehensive; only three studies we find address more than one objective cause attribute at a time (Cui et al. 2003; Hou et al. 2008; Ross et al. 1990–1991), and none consider all three core attributes or their potential interactions (see Table 1). Nor do any prior studies evaluate the effect of cause attributes on consumer identification with the cause or corporate image. Cui et al. (2003) predict main effects of cause scope and cause acuteness in a purchase intentions context; Hou et al. (2008) consider the same main effects with regard to purchase attitudes and likely behavior; and Ross et al. (1990–1991) investigate cause scope and cause acuteness preferences in a general sense.

To clarify appropriate methods for selecting a cause that improves positive evaluations of a cause-related marketing campaign and corporate image (Endacott 2004), we need to test the comprehensive impact these three core objective cause attributes. Furthermore, we must consider the mediating process that leads to consumer–cause identification, because we hypothesize that it depicts the pathway through which a specific cause composition influences corporate image.

Consumer–Cause Identification

Many consumption actions, such as buying products associated with a cause-related marketing campaign, serve goals that support self-identification processes. For example, they might enhance or maintain self-identities to which consumers are committed (Stets and Burke 2000). Such consumer–cause identification, with a basis in social identity theory (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973; Lewisch 2004; Reed 2002), implies that a consumer feels a psychological connection to a cause. If we transform a definition from consumer–organization identification literature, consumer–cause identification is the degree of overlap in consumers' self-concept and their perception of the cause (Lichtenstein et al. 2004). To the extent that the cause has features that overlap with consumers' self-concept, consumers should experience higher degrees of identification with that cause (Lichtenstein et al. 2004).

Previous studies also establish that feelings of affinity or identification with a cause drive favorable brand attitudes and brand choices (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Lichtenstein et al. 2004). Furthermore, consumer identification with a nonprofit organization (e.g., charity) facilitates positive consumer evaluations of its corporate sponsors, which eventually increases their purchase intentions toward those sponsors (Cornwell and Coote 2005). Thus, we propose
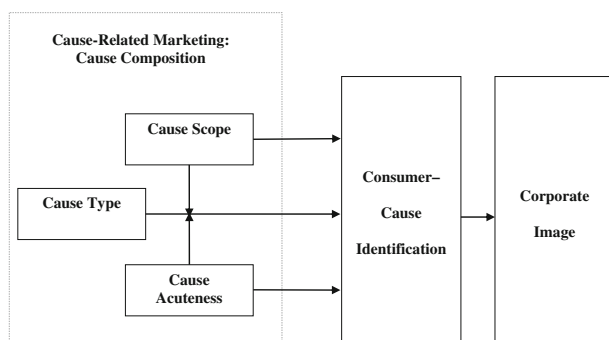
Fig. 1 Cause-related marketing: relationships under investigation

Table 1 Objective attributes of the cause: extant literature

Objective attributes of the cause	Prevalence within prior research	Main findings and contributions	Specific causes utilized
Cause type: primary need versus secondary need. Life-saving versus life-enhancing, sometimes labeled importance of the cause*	Berger et al. (1999)	Experimental: more positive response to scholarship cause relative to peace foundation and then arts	Student scholarship cause versus peace foundation and arts cause
	Cone (2002)	U.S. Corporate Citizenship and Cause Branding survey. Considered the respondents' priorities regarding attributes of a cause	Top American Issues (2002): education, medical research, poverty, environment and college scholarships
	Cornwell and Coote (2005)	Empirical: strong influence of primary causes over secondary ones	Breast cancer versus women's issues more generally
	*Lafferty and Edmondson (2009)	Considered more important versus less important causes. More important causes rated more highly.	Specific causes not clearly specified
	*Demetriou et al. (2010)	Consumer audit of cause types that consumers feel organizations should support. Primary causes seen as more important	Causes listed: anti-cancer societies (most important), anti-drug societies, protection of children's rights
Cause scope or proximity: local, national, international	Varadarajan and Menon (1988)	Conceptual paper: review of prior literature that highlights geographic scope as a key cause attribute	National versus regional versus local
	Ross et al. (1990–1991)	Empirical: most would support local or regional over national or international	Local, regional, national, international
	Ross et al. (1992)	Empirical: hypothesized that respondents would prefer local to national causes. Proximity effect is not significant	Local versus national cause
	Cui et al. (2003)	Experimental, examining how geographic scope affects assessment of campaigns. Contrary to hypothesis, local cause was not as well supported as national one	Local versus national
	Grau and Folse (2007)	Experimental: donation proximity as attribute; campaigns benefiting local initiatives rated more highly	Developing countries versus local communities
	Hou et al. (2008)	Empirical: considering cause proximity, local campaigns rated more favorably.	Local versus national
Cause acuteness: sudden disaster versus ongoing tragedy		Empirical: greater support for sudden disaster relative to ongoing need	Not specified
	Ellen et al. (2000)	Empirical: disaster versus ongoing cause. Respondent evaluations stronger for disaster-related cause compared with ongoing cause	Tornado relief
	Chochinov (2005)	Critical discussion paper: dramatic events disrupt collective sense of stability and predictability, resulting in powerful identification with the victims and their distress	Asian Tsunami, 9/11 terrorist attack
	Cui et al. (2003)	Experimental: examining disaster versus ongoing and impact assessment of campaigns. Disaster elicited more positive responses	9/11 versus cancer research
	Hou et al. (2008)	Empirical: considering cause importance, that is, disaster or ongoing. Disaster cause was more highly rated	Disaster versus ongoing, specific causes not listed

Notes: The cause scope dimension focuses on proximity. In The Netherlands, a tiny country compared with the United States, local and national issues are close to Dutch citizens; international issues are more distant, so we grouped local/national scope in our study. In the United States, a national issue could be very distant; this difference explains why some studies consider local/national versus international, whereas others investigate local versus national/international

H₁ Consumer–cause identification mediates the influence of the core objective attributes of the cause on corporate image.

Cause Type: Primary or Secondary Needs

A cause might support primary needs (life necessities) or secondary needs (quality of life). Primary causes include community health, safety, and other basic human needs and desires; secondary causes include employment, the environment, community services, and economic development (Kotler and Lee 2005). Organizationally sponsored campaigns that serve primary needs, such as relieving poverty, ignorance, and hunger, generally tend to produce higher levels of identification (Berger et al. 1999; Demetriou et al. 2010; Polonsky and Speed 2000) and present a more favorable image of the organization to consumers (Cornwell and Coote 2005; Williams and Barrett 2000) than do those centered on secondary causes. However, the extant literature cannot confirm the effect of cause type relative to other key objective attributes. That is, is its effect moderated by other core attributes of the cause?

Cause Scope: Local, National, or International

Geographic scope, which in this case refers to the location of the cause supported by the cause-related marketing campaign (Cui et al. 2003), reflects its physical proximity to the consumer. Previous research reports that U.S. citizens are more likely to support causes that have a local focus than those that are national or international in scope (Ross et al. 1990–1991); similar results also emerge from China (Hou et al. 2008). Yet other research indicates no significant differences due to cause scope (Ross et al. 1992) or even less support for local causes (Cui et al. 2003).

According to social exchange theory, people attempt to maximize their self-interest (Bagozzi 1979), so consumers should identify with organizations that satisfy their basic, self-definitional needs, such as self-enhancement (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). We thus propose that identification is more likely when causes are proximate to consumers, because they perceive that they may get something in return (e.g., see the impact of their donation to a local cause; benefit from improved conditions). Consumers should identify more with a local or national cause than with an international cause, though their actual behavior may depend on cultural norms about the role of the state and corporations (Meijs and Van der Voort 2003). This positive impact on identification suggests that corporate image also should be more positive for cause-related marketing campaigns that involve local or national causes.

Cause Acuteness: Sudden Disaster or Ongoing Tragedies

People tend to offer support for causes aimed at sudden disaster relief rather than those that work on ongoing tragedies (Hou et al. 2008; Ross et al. 1990–1991). Ubiquitous, persistent tragedies do not move people in the same way as those that are sudden. In addition to the acute and intense media attention that sudden disasters receive, there is the issue of imagination: Most Westerners can readily evoke images of sudden disasters, such as volcanic eruptions or tsunamis, but the prospect of dying from a chronic illness in the sub-Saharan desert lies beyond their understanding (Chochinov 2005). Therefore, we expect consumer identification with a cause to be greater when the events are sudden, dramatic, and easily imaginable.

Attribution theory also suggests that the external, uncontrollable nature of sudden disasters makes people less likely to attribute personal responsibility to the victims than they do to those who suffer from ongoing tragedies (Ellen et al. 2000). As a result, consumers identify more strongly with people who are affected by an event that is not their own fault (Chochinov 2005), and they evaluate organizations that support causes related to such events more favorably than they do those that support ongoing causes (Cui et al. 2003). Donations often increase immediately after a disaster occurs (Maon et al. 2009; Ratliff 2007). Thus we hypothesize:

H₂ Cause type, cause scope, and cause acuteness have specific influences on consumers' identification with a cause, such that consumers identify more with (a) causes that address primary needs rather than secondary needs; (b) causes that are local or national rather than international; and (c) causes that are sudden rather than ongoing.

We also expect these core attributes of cause composition to interact. Specifically, cause scope and cause acuteness should moderate the impact of cause type on identification. Consumers are more likely to identify with an organization that is attractive to them because it helps satisfy their basic self-definitional needs, such as self-enhancement (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). For this identification process to occur, however, consumers need to know the organization's identity well. In a cause-related marketing setting, this requirement means that consumers need to understand the cause to identify with it. Local causes should be relatively better known. Because media have a strong influence on the salience and image of specific causes (Carroll and McCombs 2003), and because sudden disasters are widely reported by modern media, we also expect that sudden disasters are relatively better known. Therefore, a cause related to primary needs and a local, sudden disaster should be more attractive and lead to stronger identification with the cause. Thus we hypothesize:

H₃ Cause scope and cause acuteness moderate the effect of cause type on consumer identification.

We summarize our hypotheses in the theoretical framework in Fig. 1.

Methodology

Design and Procedure

To test our theoretical framework and hypotheses, we designed a between-subjects (2 × 2 × 2 factorial) field experiment in which we operationalized the contents of a cause-related marketing campaign with three attributes: cause type (primary or secondary need), cause scope (local/national or international), and cause acuteness (sudden disaster or ongoing tragedy). An important advantage of experiments, relative to surveys, is that the desirability bias caused by respondents' tendency to provide socially desirable responses is less likely (Mohr et al. 2001).

We constructed eight cells to represent combinations of each of the three factors and communicated them in "Briefing Reports" for each scenario (for an example, see Appendix 1). To measure the relationships among cause composition, consumer–cause identification, and corporate image as accurately as possible, we designed the experiment to control for extraneous variables, which increases the internal validity of the experiment (Malhotra and Birks 2003). We also controlled for factors known to influence cause-related marketing effectiveness, such that we ensure (1) a consistent level of organization–cause fit, (2) the use of luxury products only, (3) and explicit benefits to the organization and the campaign. Specifically, we used a revenue-producing cause-related marketing approach; that is, the contribution to the cause occurred through consumer purchase (Menon and Kahn 2003; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). Also, the fictitious organization and cause approach remained constant across all eight conditions (Brown and Dacin 1997). In addition to the experimental design control, which minimizes the impact of extraneous variables, we applied statistical controls during the data analysis phase (Van der Velde et al. 2000). Socio-demographic elements such as age, income, and gender also were controlled as covariates. In the field experiment, a single scenario was randomly assigned to each respondent, who read the scenario and completed a list of items that measured the variables under investigation.

Stimuli

Eight written briefing reports, presented as newspaper articles that reflect different cause compositions (type,

scope, acuteness), were developed to serve as stimuli for the field experiment (Appendix 2). The primary need for shelter represents a relatively common occurrence and can result from either long-term social problems or short-term disasters, both in Europe and internationally. For the secondary need, we selected damage to paintings in a museum, another common event that can occur for a variety of reasons. For the cause scope, the local/national site of the West Netherlands is in close proximity to the respondents, whereas the international East Brazilian site is distant. Finally, we represented cause acuteness by using social problems or high humidity for the ongoing causes, and an unexpected flood as the sudden cause, both of which can result in problems of homelessness (no shelter) or damage to museum paintings. We operationalized the cause type, cause scope, and cause acuteness with scenarios in the questionnaire instrument. The manipulation check is reported in Appendix 3.

Measures

To measure corporate image, we used a three-item attitude toward the organization scale (good/bad, useful/useless, necessary/unnecessary), developed by Moore et al. (1995), with a seven-point semantic differential scale. Semantic differential scales are both effective and generalizable (Zaichkowsky 1985). We also included a general attitude toward the organization item to gain an overall (positive/negative) impression (single, seven-point item; Van Riel 1995), so four items relate to organizational image in the questionnaire.

The consumer–cause identification measure used a 10-item semantic differential scale (seven-point items), with endpoints of important/unimportant; of concern/of no concern; irrelevant/relevant; means a lot to me/means nothing to me; valuable/worthless; matters/does not matter; unexciting/exciting; appealing/unappealing; essential/non-essential; and significant/insignificant (Houston and Walker 1996; Lichtenstein et al. 1990). Although common measures of organization identification, which ask respondents to match the personality traits of the organization with their own traits (Lichtenstein et al. 2004), are not adaptable to our study context, because causes cannot be defined easily in terms of personality traits, the measure we used taps into the perceived attractiveness of the cause and thus underlies consumers' motivation to identify with the cause (cf. Lichtenstein et al. 2004).

A measure of respondents' views on whether dealing with local/national societal issues is part of the government's duty was also included in the main questionnaire (and serves as a possible covariate).

The questionnaires were translated and back-translated between English and Dutch. All the stimuli and

questionnaires were pretested among 49 respondents. The level of perceived fit for ELC-museum causes and ELC-homelessness causes was similar (cf. Appendix 2). The pretest results suggested some small adjustments to the eight stimuli to make them more reliable and credible, and we decided to measure scenario objectivity as a covariate in the main questionnaire.

Sample

The data collection, undertaken in the Netherlands, involved train travelers sampled from four different routes in the Dutch national rail network. The 200 consumer respondents, aged between 20 and 65 years, were randomly assigned to the eight conditions. Therefore, we have samples of 25 respondents per cell, which ensures sufficient numbers to provide reliable means and standard deviations (Van der Velde et al. 2000). The sample size also meets the minimum sample requirements ($n = 155$) calculated for the size of the Dutch population and the respondent age group (Malhotra and Birks 2003).

Results

Sample Description

The sample collected is broadly representative of the population of the Netherlands (Central Bureau of Statistics 2007), except for education level and age (see Table 2).

Table 2 Overview of sample characteristics

	Observed (%)	Population (%)	Observed mean	Population mean
Gender				
Male	56	50	–	–
Female	44	50	–	–
Age (years)	–	–	36.4	42.5
Income[a]				
Below average	34	42	–	–
Average	30	26	–	–
Above average	37	32	–	–
Education				
Below average	4	33	–	–
Average	43	41	–	–
Above average	53	25	–	–

[a] Due to rounding differences, percentages add up to more than 100%

Measure Checks

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (maximum likelihood estimation) of consumer–cause identification and corporate image. The two-factor model yielded a much better fit to the data ($\chi^2[69] = 133.632$, $p < .001$, normed fit index [NFI] = .92, confirmatory fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .07) than the one-factor model with identification and corporate reputation as a single factor ($\chi^2[70] = 403.941$, $p < .001$, NFI = .75, CFI = .78, RMSEA = .16). Thus, we confirm the discriminant validity of the two constructs ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 270,341$, $p < .001$). The Jöreskög's rho (composite reliability) and average variance extracted values are .92 and .53 for identification and .86 and .62 for corporate image, respectively. We aggregated each variable by taking the mean of its respective items. The correlation between identification and corporate reputation is .476 ($p < .001$).

Influence of Cause Composition on Cause–Consumer Identification (H$_2$ and H$_3$)

To test H$_2$ and H$_3$, we estimated a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA for cause–consumer identification, in which cause type, scope, and acuteness serve as between-subject factors (see Table 3, Eq. 1). Cause type has a significant main effect on consumer–cause identification ($F(1,191) = 39.33$, $p < .0001$), in that our respondents are clearly more involved with shelter, a primary need ($M = 5.05$), than with the museum, a secondary need ($M = 4.08$). For cause scope, we find that the identification with a cause in the West Netherlands ($M = 4.70$) is marginally significantly higher than identification with a cause in East Brazil ($M = 4.42$; $F(1,191) = 3.16$, $p < .08$). The cause acuteness results only approach marginal significance, in the expected direction: Identification with a sudden flood ($M = 4.68$) is greater than identification with an ongoing crisis ($M = 4.44$; $F(1,191) = 2.50$, $p < .12$). Thus, our results provide strong support for H$_{2a}$, marginal support for H$_{2b}$, and directional support for H$_{2c}$.

As we predicted in H$_3$, the three factors have a multiplicative effect on consumer–cause identification ($F(1,189) = 3.16$, $p < .08$). We a priori set a larger value (.10) for these triple interaction tests than for the tests of main effects, as recommended by Cohen (1988) (Table 3). The planned contrasts show that consumers identify more with acute local/national causes that address a primary need than with any other kinds of causes (see Table 4).

Mediating Role of Cause–Consumer Identification (H$_1$)

Finally, to test the mediating role of identification, we must determine whether (1) cause type × scope × acuteness (i.e., mediated moderation) and (2) the main effects of

Table 3 Effects of cause attributes on consumer–cause identification and corporate image

Direct effects	Eq. 1: Consumer–cause identification			Eq. 2: Corporate image with consumer–cause identification		
	Test Statistic (F)	p value	Mean*	Test statistic (F)	p value	Mean*
Type	39.33	.00		.09	.77	
Primary need			5.05			4.98
Secondary need			4.08			5.02
Scope	3.16	.08		5.69	.02	
Local/national			4.70			4.84
International			4.42			5.15
Acuteness	2.50	.12		.02	.90	
Sudden disaster			4.68			4.99
Ongoing tragedy			4.44			5.00
Type × scope	.03	.86	–	.31	.58	–
Type × acuteness	1.45	.23	–	.03	.87	–
Scope × acuteness	.02	.88	–	.05	.83	–
Type × scope × acuteness	3.16	.08	–	.03	.86	–
Primary need, local, sudden disaster			5.54			4.81
Primary need, local, ongoing tragedy			4.86			4.90
Primary need, international, sudden disaster			4.98			5.10
Primary need, international, ongoing tragedy			4.80			5.09
Secondary need, local, sudden disaster			4.08			4.83
Secondary need, local, ongoing tragedy			4.32			4.83
Secondary need, international, sudden disaster			4.13			5.21
Secondary need, international, ongoing tragedy			3.78			5.20
Consumer–cause identification	–	–	–	50.94	.00	

Notes: ANOVA Eq. 1 $R^2 = .21$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$; ANOVA Eq. 2 $R^2 = .25$, adjusted $R^2 = .21$

cause type, scope, and acuteness on company image are mediated by identification with the cause.

Mediation of the Interaction Effect

To test a mediated moderation in which the effect of X on a mediator depends on the influence of the moderator, we estimate the following set of equations (see Muller et al. 2005) to determine if the indirect path $b_4 \times b_8$ is significantly different from 0 (Zhao et al. 2010):

$$\text{Mediator} = b_1 + b_2 X + b_3 \text{Moderator} + b_4 X \times \text{Moderator} \tag{1}$$

$$Y = b_5 + b_6 X + b_7 \text{Moderator} + b_8 \text{Mediator} + b_9 X \times \text{Moderator} \tag{2}$$

In this case, the moderator is an interaction of two variables (i.e., scope × acuteness), and so the X × Moderator term represents a three-way type × scope × acuteness interaction. We detailed the results for Eq. 1 in our tests of H2 and H3 (see Eq. 1, Table 3). The β coefficient for the interaction effect is 1.097 (SE = .617). When we estimate Eq. 2, the triple interaction becomes nonsignificant, but the effect of

identification is significant and in the expected positive direction ($\beta = .422$, SE = .059; Table 3, Eq. 2). The Sobel test (Zhao et al. 2010) for the indirect effect is significant ($z = 1.73$, $p_{\text{1-tailed}} = .042$). The findings, which effectively meet the conditions for mediation, support H1: Identification fully mediates the joint effect of cause composition on corporate image. In Zhao et al.'s (2010) terminology, it is an indirect-only mediation.

Mediation of Main Effects

To test whether identification mediates the main effect of scope, acuteness, and type, we investigate if the three indirect paths scope/acuteness/type–identification–corporate image are significantly different from 0 (Zhao et al. 2010). As expected, in Eq. 1 (Table 3), the β coefficients for cause type, scope, and acuteness are all positive (type $\beta = 1.028$, SE = .308; scope $\beta = .544$, SE = .308; acuteness $\beta = .356$, SE = .308), and the β coefficient for identification is positive ($\beta = .422$, SE = .059). The Sobel test (Zhao et al. 2010) for the indirect effect is significant for cause type ($z = 3.025$, $p_{\text{1-tailed}} = .001$) and scope

Table 4 Contrast estimates for the triple component interaction

Cause composition	Versus	Primary need, local, sudden disaster
Primary need, local, ongoing tragedy	Contrast estimate	−.68
	Sig.	.03
Primary need, international, sudden disaster	Contrast estimate	−.55
	Sig.	.08
Primary need, international, ongoing tragedy	Contrast estimate	−.73
	Sig.	.02
Secondary need, local, sudden disaster	Contrast estimate	−1.46
	Sig.	.00
Secondary need, local, ongoing tragedy	Contrast estimate	−1.22
	Sig.	.00
Secondary need, international, sudden disaster	Contrast estimate	−1.40
	Sig.	.00

($z = 1.715$, $p_{\text{1-tailed}} = .043$) but not for acuteness ($z = 1.14$, $p_{\text{1-tailed}} = .127$), which is logical because cause acuteness does not significantly affect identification (Table 3, Eq. 1).

Thus, the conditions for mediation are met for cause type and scope, in support of H_1. Identification mediates the effect of cause type in an indirect-only mediation. For cause scope, the mediation type is called suppression (Zhao et al. 2010), because the direct effect of cause scope on corporate image (Table 3, Eq. 2) is significant and negative ($\beta = -.370$), whereas the indirect effect through identification is positive ($.544 \times .422$). In other words, we find two opposite effects for cause scope: a more positive effect of the local cause on consumer–cause identification but a less positive effect of the local cause on corporate image. Thus, the findings support our prediction that cause-related marketing with a local/national scope increases consumer–cause identification, which enhances corporate image, compared with causes that are international in scope (H_{2a}). However, we uncover an additional, unexpected finding, because the effect of cause scope on corporate image when it does not go through identification is negative. This suppression effect could help explain the contradictory previous findings pertaining to cause scope (e.g., Cui et al. 2003; Ross et al. 1992). Depending on the strength of the two opposite effects, the final effect of cause scope on corporate image may be positive, null, or negative. Cause scope is thus a double-edged sword.

Consumer Characteristics

People differ in their fundamental characteristics, including gender, age, income, and education, which may cause them to react differently to cause-related marketing campaigns. According to previous research, gender (Berger et al. 1996;

Valor 2005), age (Bennett 2003; Kottasz 2004), income (Kottasz 2004; Mohr et al. 2001), and education (Linke 2002; Mohr et al. 2001) explain consumer responses to cause-related marketing campaigns. In addition, cause-related marketing is much more common in the United States than in Europe and arguably has reached a higher level of sophistication in this market (Kooijmans 2004). In the Netherlands, despite increasing trends of cause-related marketing and corporate social responsibility in general, the idea of being socially responsible, beyond the formal scope of business activities, still is relatively new (Meijs and Van der Voort 2003). Thus, consumers' perception of the role that companies versus government should play to "do good" might influence their responses to cause-related marketing campaigns as well.

We estimated a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ analysis of variance for corporate image, with cause type, scope, and acuteness as between-subject factors and identification as a covariate, in which we also included a host of control variables: gender, income, age, education, and expectations about government versus organizations doing good (ordinal and nominal variables were recoded as two categories and transformed in dummy variables). The pattern of results is identical to that in Table 3 (Eq. 2). Only cause scope ($F(1,183) = 6.457$, $p = .012$) and consumer–cause identification ($F(1, 183) = 53.678$, $p = .000$) are significant. Of the demographic variables, gender and income are nonsignificant ($p > 36$), whereas expectations of government to do good ($p = .091$), education ($p = .077$), and age ($p = .066$) are only marginally significant.

Discussion

We propose and test a comprehensive model of the influence of different cause attributes involved in cause-related marketing campaigns and demonstrate that respondents identify more with and thus evaluate more positively those campaigns that involve a primary need rather than a secondary need. Although respondents tend to identify more with local/national causes than with international causes, our respondents' evaluations of corporate image due to the cause-related marketing campaign are more positive when the campaign adopts an international scope. This result reflects the direct negative influence of cause scope on corporate image, in which consumer–cause identification does not play a role. Regarding cause acuteness, the results point in the expected direction but with only marginal significance; respondents identify more with causes that occur suddenly than with ongoing causes. In addition, we show that cause scope and acuteness moderate the effect of cause type on identification; the latter also mediates their effect on corporate image.

Our findings thus extend prior research by demonstrating that the fit between cause attributes and the consumer can have significant impacts on corporate image. Prior literature suggests that the fit between the cause and the consumer affects consumer brand attitudes and choices because of the consumer's feelings of affinity or identification with the cause (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Our findings extend this understanding of how consumers might relate to causes, in the form of the cause's specific attributes, and clarify the impact on not just consumer identification with the cause but also corporate image evaluations resulting from the cause-related marketing campaign. We highlight that identification is the process by which the effect of cause composition on corporate image gets transmitted. We also show that the three core objective attributes of causes interact to influence identification and thus corporate image. Prior research has not probed all three attributes of cause composition (i.e., type, scope, and acuteness) (Williams and Barrett 2000). However, we demonstrate that strategic decisions about all these aspects of cause composition have significant effects on corporate image outcomes.

Managerial Implications

Cause-related marketing, as part of corporate social responsibility, is clearly a growth area (IEG 2009). Whether profit- or cause-based, organizations undertake cause-related marketing to meet their objectives. Our review of the extant literature and study findings suggest that maximizing the benefits of cause-related marketing entails complex efforts; practitioners need to understand the key relationships better. This experimental study meets this demand by probing, for the first time, the effect of three cause attributes in combination and how their influence moves through the mediating process of consumer–cause identification.

For profit-based organizations, the findings indicate that they must determine the objectives and methods underlying their cause-related marketing campaigns clearly by balancing the fit between the organization's image and the cause against the fit between the consumer and the cause. Marketers who want to influence their corporate image should choose a cause that addresses a primary need; a sudden cause only marginally affects consumer–cause identification and therefore is less likely to improve corporate image. This study also shows that cause scope can be a double-edged sword: A local/national cause increases consumer–cause identification, which enhances corporate image, but when it does not proceed through consumer–cause identification, its effect is negative. For example, the final effect of cause scope on corporate image may vary because consumers identify more with local/national cause, but international causes get relatively more media coverage. Thus the decision about selecting a local/national versus international cause should reflect the strength of each opposite effect. This finding also can help explain contradictory extant findings about cause scope.

Profit-based organizations should undertake research to determine the attitudes of their target markets with regard to the most appropriate causes to support, if they hope to meet particular organizational objectives (e.g., sales increases, organizational image changes, both). The recent emphasis on measuring marketing initiatives means that marketers also need to track the impact of their campaigns on organizational objectives.

Cause-based organizations instead need to understand how to attract profit-based partners and determine the likely outcomes of their campaigns. Representatives of causes that relate to acute primary needs should find our results heartening, though causes with a different type, scope, or acuteness certainly should not lose hope. Our study focuses on consumer identification with the cause and corporate image; it may be that objectives related to short-term sales increases can be equally well addressed by causes with a secondary needs focus, for example. Real-world evidence supports this suggestion; perhaps the most famous example is American Express's fundraising to restore the Statue of Liberty, which increased card usage by 28% and increased the number of new users by 17% during the campaign (Adkins 1999). Research guidelines remain unclear on this matter though.

Limitations and Further Research Directions

Our study has several limitations that affect our interpretations and that therefore must be considered. First, we conducted our study in a single European market. Our findings may be difficult to generalize outside countries with a culture similar to that of the Netherlands, especially those pertaining to the roles of government and profit-based organizations in social need initiatives (Meijs and Van der Voort 2003). Research should examine this question in more depth, along with the varying dynamics at play in countries with different social cultural norms and values. Such research appears particularly interesting considering the trend toward standardized global promotional efforts (Melewar and Saunders 1998; Okazaki et al. 2006; Szymanski et al. 1993). Yet different countries and cultures likely perceive a standardized cause-related marketing campaign very differently. Although IKEA has run a campaign with UNICEF in 22 countries, most brand owners thus far have limited their campaigns to a few international markets.

Second, though we provide useful insights into the importance of appropriate cause selection as a means to enhance corporate image, we do not compare its relative importance with that of other variables, such as matching

the corporate brand image with the cause. Additional research is required to understand the relative impact of the various independent variables on perceptions of corporate image and other outcomes. In particular, we need an integrated model that encompasses fit between the cause and the organization (brand), fit between the consumer and the cause composition, and their combined impact on corporate image, as well as other possible outcomes. For example, should small organizations and large organizations approach cause-related marketing in different ways?

Third, though we covered the three core objective cause attributes comprehensively, further detailed study of each attribute could be useful, such as investigations that consider the wide array of primary and secondary causes and how they might influence consumer responses. Further research similarly should examine the process by which cause scope exerts its negative effect.

Fourth, our research solely addresses the corporate level, though many cause-related marketing campaigns involve individual brands (e.g., Procter & Gamble's Pampers–UNICEF campaign, Lever-Faberge's Persil's U.K. Comic Relief Campaign) and aim to influence brand attitudes and sales. Few organizations use monolithic branding strategies, so cause-related marketing activity at the brand level likely does not affect corporate image. Our study findings thus are difficult to generalize to non-corporate cause-related marketing campaigns.

Fifth, several brands recently have connected to the same cause-related marketing initiatives. It remains unclear how multibrand campaigns, such as the "Project Red" global campaign that raises funds to fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases in Africa and features major international brands (e.g., The Gap, iPod, Armani, American Express, Dell, Nike, Starbucks), actually affects any one brand owner. Other cause-related marketing initiatives such as UNICEF (supported by IKEA and Pampers) or the U.S.-based Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (supported by Ford Credit and Yoplait) also tend to receive support from multiple brands. Does this approach dilute the impact of identification with any one brand?

Sixth, current literature provides little guidance, theoretical or managerial, about the relative effects of various durations for cause-related marketing campaigns. Research might consider whether the benefits of being associated with a particular cause-related marketing initiative diminish over time.

Appendix 1: Example of a Briefing Report

ELC supports victims of flood in West-Netherlands

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the victims of the current flood in the west of the Netherlands that has caused more than 50,000 people to be homeless. ELC, which recently started its activities in our country, will make a contribution through a special cooperation with the Dutch division of international aid organization 'PFA'.

For every product it sells, ELC will donate 5% of the sales price to the Dutch division of PFA. This division will use the money to help providing shelter to the victims of the flood. In an interview, the CEO of ELC explains the company's support as follows: 'ELC has an image of caring for society and people in the flooded area are currently in need of immediate help. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide these people with shelter and enables us to strengthen our image of caring for society.' The campaign will start tomorrow.

Appendix 2: Briefing Reports

Scenario 1 (Cause: Primary Need; Scope: Local/National; Acuteness: Sudden Disaster)

ELC supports victims of flood in the West-Netherlands

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the victims of the current flood in the west of The Netherlands that has caused more than 50,000 people to be homeless. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money to help providing shelter to the victims of the flood. In an interview, […] for society and people in the flooded area are currently in need of immediate help. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide these people with shelter and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 2 (Cause: Primary Need; Scope: Local/National; Acuteness: Ongoing Tragedy)

ELC supports the homeless in the West-Netherlands

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the homeless in the West-Netherlands. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money for providing shelter to the homeless in the West-Netherlands. In an interview, […] for society and part of the local population doesn't have a place to stay. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide these people with shelter and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 3 (Cause: Primary Need; Scope: International; Acuteness: Sudden Disaster)

ELC supports victims of flood in East-Brazil

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the victims of the current flood in the east of Brazil that has caused more than 50,000 people to be homeless. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money to help providing shelter to the victims of the flood. In an interview, […] for society and people in the flooded area are currently in need of immediate help. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide these people with shelter and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 4 (Cause: Primary Need; Scope: International; Acuteness: Ongoing Tragedy)

ELC supports the homeless in East-Brazil

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the homeless in East-Brazil. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money for providing shelter to the homeless in East-Brazil. In an interview, […] for society and part of the East-Brazilian population doesn't have a place to stay. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide these people with shelter and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 5 (Cause: Secondary Need; Scope: Local/National; Acuteness: Sudden Disaster)

ELC supports the West-Netherlands Museum after flood

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the West-Netherlands Museum to restore its paintings that were heavily damaged by the recent unexpected flood. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money to assist the West-Netherlands museum with the restoration of the paintings that were damaged during the flood. In an interview, […] for society and situation in the West-Netherlands Museum endangers our national cultural heritage and requires immediate action. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide the appropriate support to the museum and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 6 (Cause: Secondary Need; Scope: Local/National; Acuteness: Ongoing Tragedy)

ELC supports the West-Netherlands Museum

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the West-Netherlands Museum to restore its paintings. Many paintings have suffered from decades of high humidity levels, caused by the museum's proximity to a river. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the money to assist the West-Netherlands museum with the restoration of damaged paintings. In an interview, […] for society and the situation in the West-Netherlands Museum endangers our national cultural heritage. Our financial support to PFA helps this organization to provide the appropriate support to the museum and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 7 (Cause: Secondary Need; Scope: International; Acuteness: Sudden Disaster)

ELC supports East-Brazilian Museum after floods

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help the East-Brazilian Museum to restore its paintings that were heavily damaged by the recent unexpected flood. ELC, which […] division of PFA. This division will use the

money to assist the East-Brazilian museum with the resto-
ration of the paintings that were damaged during the flood.
In an interview, […] for society and situation in the
East-Brazilian Museum endangers our global cultural her-
itage and requires immediate action. Our financial support
to PFA helps this organization to provide the appropriate
support to the museum and enables us […] tomorrow.

Scenario 8 (Cause: Secondary Need; Scope:
International; Acuteness: Ongoing Tragedy)

ELC supports East-Brazilian Museum

From our reporter

Electronics chain ELC announces a commitment to help
the East-Brazilian Museum to restore its paintings. Many
paintings have suffered from decades of high humidity
levels, caused by the museum's proximity to a river. ELC,
which […] division of PFA. This division will use the
money to assist the East-Brazilian museum with the res-
toration of damaged paintings. In an interview, […] for
society and the situation in the East-Brazilian Museum
endangers our global cultural heritage. Our financial sup-
port to PFA helps this organization to provide the appro-
priate support to the museum and enables us […]
tomorrow.

Appendix 3: Manipulation Check

We ran a pretest of the manipulation on 70 respondents;
they were randomly assigned to one of the eight scenarios
and rated three five-point semantic differential scales
anchored with the notion that the described cause was "a
cause related to a problem that involves the most basic
human needs, that is, basic physical requirements [per-
sonal, social, or cultural life enhancement or development,
that is, not related to basic human needs]," "a cause that is
related to a problem that has happened geographically
close to me [far away from me]," and "a cause that is
related to a problem that has occurred suddenly [has been
going on for some time]." As expected, the manipulations
of cause scope, type, and acuteness were successful and
orthogonal. Respondents who read the scenario with the
flood perceived a more primary need than did respondents
who read the scenario about the museum ($F(1, 69) =$
140.082, $p = .000$; 1.53 vs. 4.52), and the manipulation of
cause type did not affect the ratings for the two other
questions ($p > .451$). Respondents who read the scenario
with the local cause perceived it as geographically closer to
them than respondents who read the Brazilian cause sce-
nario ($F(1, 67) = 160.380$, $p = .000$; 1.84 vs. 4.72), and
the manipulation of cause scope did not affect the ratings
for the two other items ($p > .641$). Finally, respondents

who read the scenario about the disaster perceived it as
sudden, more than those who read the scenario about the
ongoing issue ($F(1, 69) = 103.329$, $p = .000$, 1.58 vs.
4.23), and the manipulation did not affect the ratings for the
two other questions ($p > .399$).

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