The Effects of Cause-Related Marketing
on Company and Brand Attitudes

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Abstract

Cause-related marketing, a practice of strategic philanthropy, has gained currency among firms seeking both social and economic benefits simultaneously. Unlike previous findings that have mainly shown the positive effects of cause-related marketing, this study focuses on when cause-related marketing efforts can backfire. Corporate credibility (high/low) and product-cause relatedness (risk related/non-risk related/unrelated) were manipulated so that participants were presented with six different cause-related marketing contexts. According to the results, attitude toward the company was mainly affected by the level of corporate credibility; participants in the low corporate credibility condition showed a less favorable company attitude. In addition to the main effect of corporate credibility, product-cause relatedness

determined consumers' attitude toward the brand; cause-related marketing adversely affected brand attitude when there was an association between the cause and the product's risk.

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

As a consumer society matures, expectations regarding social responsibility from its corporations arise simultaneously. Companies worldwide have taken actions for societal problems that they may partially be associated with(e.g., environmental pollution, scarcity of resources, poverty), or have simply given back to their communities some of their returns as a gesture of goodwill. Indeed, companies nowadays are engaging in a variety of corporate social responsibility(CSR) activities, including donations, charities, employment support, and sponsorships. CSR has gained such currency in the business world that it has become an industry in itself, with full-time staff, websites, newsletters, professional associations, and massed armies of consultants. According to "The State of Corporate Citizenship in the U.S.: A View from Inside," a 2004 survey conducted by the Centers for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 70% of U.S. businesses contribute cash to nonprofit organizations, 57% donate goods and services, and 33% percent have a company volunteer program.

Traditionally, the underlying purposes of CSR activities were recognized as being purely altruistic. Owners would set aside a portion of their firm's profits for charitable causes. This voluntary nature of corporate philanthropy evolved into a mandated social responsibility for firms as the influence of stakeholders over corporate decision-making grew significantly. Businesses have come to seek profit maximization within a socially justifiable context. Those companies that risk not to are subject to financial losses from legal punishments as well as from consumers who may express their disappointment aggressively as is the case with most boycotts.

Recently, companies have started to view CSR as an effective means for enhancing the value of corporate assets. Under the name of strategic philanthropy, several firms have tied CSR activities with their operations in pursuit of building a positive corporate image, enhancing sales, and other important business objectives. Cause-related marketing, a subcategory of strategic philanthropy, describes a commercial activity in which businesses join with charities or causes to market an image, product, or service for mutual benefit(Carroll 1979). In 1983, American Express was one of the first companies to realize this concept. It led a mass campaign that donated one-cent to the Statue of Liberty every time someone used its charge card; the number of new card holders soon grew by 45%, and card usage increased by 28%. Numerous firms since then have found that corporate social responsibility and business objectives can be complementary rather than conflicting goals, and therefore, can be pursued at the same time.

Despite the gaining popularity of cause-related marketing, the number of causes linked to corporate activity has been limited to a few of high visibility(e.g., hunger, environmentalism, cancer research). As a result, consumers are now having difficulty identifying a particular company or brand with a particular cause, and hence, mitigating the effectiveness of cause-related marketing as a competitive edge. Finding a niche cause is not only an interest among competing companies. As businesses expand and their brand portfolio enlarges, corporate executives are faced with the question of which of their products will best fit a certain cause. As with any other marketing strategy, the success of cause-related marketing requires a carefully planned execution. This study tries to identify a few factors that may be worth considering in the course of such a process.

Research Purpose

Corporate executives who are interested in cause-related marketing are faced with a critical decision in the initial stages of planning a campaign; which cause should the firm get involved with? A popular tactic used by many companies seeking to maximize the effectiveness of cause-related marketing is promoting a cause that is aligned with their core businesses or

corporate/product image. For instance, food companies have often sponsored hunger causes, while pharmaceutical companies have consistently helped AIDS or cancer patients. This simply seems more appropriate to consumers since companies are trying to help causes relevant to their domain of expertise. Their motives are perceived to be more voluntary than the motives of firms that apparently seem to select causes for mere publicity.

The connectedness to a cause and a corporate domain, however, does not always guarantee successful outcomes. Philip Morris launched a campaign in the late 1990s against teenage smoking which caused more criticism than praise. There have been similar reports regarding manufacturers in the liquor industry. Why then does cause-related marketing work for some firms more than others? It may appear that in the aforementioned cases, adverse effects of cause-related marketing occurred due to the fact that the same companies were responsible for the causes per se. If so, how can one explain the success of a vast number of companies in the pulp industry sponsoring causes related to environmentalism, but at the same time, evidently linked to issues such as deforestation?

The present study attempts to address these questions. Product-cause relatedness is of particular interest, and is classified into the two following subtypes for the first time: risk relatedness and non-risk relatedness. Consistent with the results of previous research, co-marketing with a cause related to a firm's product(but not its risks), will likely generate positive outcomes. Tissue, a main product of pulp, is generally perceived as having no direct risk. On the other hand, tobacco is typically perceived as a harmful product to any demographic and is often linked to health problems. Therefore, when such a product is promoted with a cause directly related to its risk(e.g., teenage smoking prevention, cancer) it is predicted that a company's cause-related marketing campaign may backfire.

Prior research suggests that the effects of cause-related marketing not only depend on a strategic campaign(e.g., the specific corporate social responsibility issues that the company chooses to focus on), but also various preconditions(e.g., CSR record, brand familiarity). Corporate credibility is identified in this study as an a priori factor that may also affect the cause-related marketing efforts of companies.

In addition, this study tries to contribute to the growing literature of cause-related marketing by assessing direct relationships between cause-related marketing and attitudes toward the company and the brand. This is worth notice since extant literature on cause-related marketing has mainly focused on consumers' behavioral responses(e.g., number of coupons redeemed, increase in sales). Despite their representation of critical business objectives, these responses lack accountability of the long-term effectiveness of cause-related marketing. Attitudinal responses may be a more precise means for measuring such cause-related marketing objectives that many firms tend to focus on today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility(CSR) was originated in 1953 with the publication of Bowen's book, *Social Responsibilities of Businessmen*. During this period of time, the emphasis was mainly placed on the owner's social conscience, rather than on the company itself. The managerial revolution soon caught on and the growing hostility of the public led to a shift in the focus (Valor 2005). CSR was incorporated into regulation as public policy. However, it did not take long before legal requirements met short of public demand, and companies were faced but to view CSR as a routine element of business management.

In the academic society, numerous terms and definitions that imply similar or identical meanings have risen since; corporate social responsibility, public responsibility, corporate social responsiveness, corporate social performance, corporate citizenship, business citizenship, stakeholding company, business ethics, sustainable company, etc. No single authoritative definition of the term has been provided. Thus, the definitions presented here only constitute a few from the vast literature.

One of the earliest conceptualizations of CSR was proposed by Carroll. Carroll(1979) describes cause-related marketing as a commercial activity in which businesses join with charities or

causes to market an image, product, or service for mutual benefit. In his work, a three-dimensional model of corporate social performance suggests that firms should first assess their social responsibilities along the range of economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary categories of business performance. Subsequently, the firm must identify social issues that need to be addressed and then choose a response philosophy(i.e., reaction, defense, accommodation, or proaction).

Zenisek(1979) proposes a definition of social responsibility based on the notion of a fit between two components, business ethic and societal expectations of the private economic sector. Turban and Greening(1997) define corporate social performance as a company's responsibility to multiple stakeholders, such as employees and the community at large, in addition to its traditional responsibilities to economic stakeholders. They also note that whereas earlier work on corporate social performance focused on firms' alleged wrong-doings(e.g., firms affected by specific social groups and controlled through regulation, public pressure, and judicial actions), recent attention has been directed toward identifying how socially responsible actions may be associated with certain competitive advantages.

Brown and Dacin(1997) distinguish two types of cognitive associations that consumers hold for a corporation; corporate ability and CSR associations. Unlike corporate ability associations that relate to the company's expertise in producing and delivering its outputs, CSR associations reflect the organization's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations. More recently, Lichenstein et al.(2004) have referred to CSR initiatives as the various forms of company involvement with charitable causes and the nonprofits that represent them. Their work provides evidence that CSR can benefit not only the company in terms of enhanced corporate image, but also the nonprofits associated with such activities.

In a recent report(ISO Issue Briefing Note: Perceptions and Definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility, May 2004), the International Organization for Standardization(ISO) observed that most definitions of CSR emphasize the interrelationship between economic, environmental and social aspects and impacts of an organization's activities. Furthermore, the report asserts that social responsibility is taken to mean a balanced

approach for organizations to address economic, social and environmental issues in a way that aims to benefit people, communities and society.

Cause-Related Marketing

According to Philip Kotler(2003), the paradigm of marketing has shifted through six concepts over the past years; the production concept, the product concept, the selling concept, the marketing concept, the customer concept, and the societal marketing concept. Each concept literally represents the focus of businesses at the relevant time(e.g., production-oriented businesses focused on making their products widely available and inexpensive). The last concept to which the focus of marketing has evolved into, the societal marketing concept, emerged due to the limitations of the preceding concept; the marketing concept sidesteps the potential conflicts among consumer wants, consumer interests, and long-run societal welfare.

The societal marketing concept holds that the organization's task is to determine the needs, wants, and interests of target markets and to deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that preserves or enhances the consumer's and the society's well-being. It calls upon marketers to build social and ethical considerations into their marketing practices. Cause-related marketing, as Kotler puts, is a practical form of the societal marketing concept.

A similar relationship can be applied to cause-related marketing and CSR. CSR has evolved from a corporation's commitment to giving back to the community by supporting nonprofits through traditional philanthropy to newer forms which involve integrating charitable activities into business activities. Cause-related marketing is a clear example of a newer form of CSR. Cause-related marketing has changed itself over the years and includes a wide range of activities from simple agreements to donate a percentage of the purchase price for a particular item or items to a charity for a specific project, to longer, more complex arrangements.

Varadarajan and Menon(1988) define cause-related marketing as a 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. The last part of this definition, customers' engaging in revenue-producing transactions with the firm, is a distinctive feature of cause-related marketing that differentiates it from sales promotion, corporate sponsorship, corporate good Samaritan acts, public relations, and other marketing activities. Moreover, the corporate dollars involved in cause-related marketing are not outright gifts to a nonprofit organization, and hence, not tax-deductible.

Consumer Evaluations of Cause-Related Marketing. An

Table 1. Positive Findings of Cause-Related Marketing

The Cone/Roper study(1999)	68 percent of customers would "have no problem" paying more for a product that is linked to a good cause.
A study, cited in Business and Society Review(1999)	300 large corporations found that companies which made a public commitment to rely on their ethics codes outperformed companies that did not do so by two to three times, as measured by market value added
DePaul University study(1997)	Companies with a defined corporate commitment to ethical principles do better financially (based on annual sales/revenues) than companies that don't.
Coca-Cola(1997)	a 490 percent increase in sales of its products at 450 Wal-Mart stores during a six-week campaign with Mothers against Drunk Driving, in which the company donated a portion of its sales to the organization.
Lewin(UCLA) study at the request of IBM	Among 156 companies studied, firms with higher philanthropic giving had significantly higher returns on assets or financial investments.
Business in the community/Research Int'l in the UK(1996)	86% of consumers have a more positive image of companies they see "doing something to make the world a better place." 64% think cause-related marketing "should be a standard part of a company's business practices."

emerging body of literature and other data suggests a positive correlation between cause-related marketing and business success. Some examples are listed in [table 1].

Cause-related marketing programs, however, have been criticized at the same time(Drumwright 1996; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). When consumers focus upon specific cause marketing programs, rather than cause marketing in general, the attributions they make of the company's motives for conducting the program may influence how they respond.

Varadarajan and Menon(1988) warn that firms making cause-related marketing offers could be perceived as primarily self-interested and experience negative outcomes. The managers in Drumwright's(1996) study were keenly aware of the potential for a negative impact of cause marketing communications, promotions that consumer might interpret as self-interested. Strahilevtiz and Myers(1998) suggest that charity incentives rather than purchase incentives are more effective in promoting frivolous products than in promoting practical products. Kim and Kim(2001) manipulated the donation size in an experiment and found a stronger belief that the company was exploiting the cause when the donation size was smaller.

By implication, for consumers to respond positively to cause-related marketing, they must find compelling elements in the structure of the offer to justify the belief that the company is rejecting its basic self-interested nature. In the present study, corporate credibility, discussed below, is proposed as such an element that may justify a company's self-interested nature in sponsoring a cause related directly to its product's risk.

Corporate Credibility

Previous literature confirms the reputation of a corporation as an important ingredient in a firm's success. Fombrun(1996) defines corporate reputation as a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that are an aggregate of many personal judgments about the company. Corporate credibility is one aspect of corporate reputation that refers to the degree to which consumers, investors and other constituents believe in the company's trustworthiness and expertise(Goldsmith et al. 2000).

Keller and Aaker(1992) define corporate credibility as the extent to which consumers believe that a firm can design and deliver products and services that satisfy customer needs and wants. They also identify three dimensions of company credibility: company expertise, company trustworthiness, and company attractiveness. Company expertise refers to the extent to which a company is seen as able to competently make and sell their products or conduct their services. Company trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the company is seen as motivated to be honest, dependable, and sensitive to consumer needs. Company attractiveness refers to the extent to which the company is seen as likable, prestigious, interesting, etc. These dimensions were adopted from the same components Sternthal and Craig(1982) used to measure source credibility of endorsers.

Brown and Dacin(1997) confirm that products introduced by a company with negative corporate ability associations are not always destined to receive negative product responses. Wansink (1989) demonstrates that consumers may draw inferences about missing product attributes from corporate information. Goldsmith et al.(2000) verify the positive effects of corporate credibility on attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the present study, which examines how product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility affect attitudes toward the company and the brand. Although a number of prior studies(Strahilevitz and Myers 1998; Cho 2000; Kim and Kim 2001) have identified product-cause relatedness as an important antecedent to the effectiveness of cause-related marketing, none have attempted to recognize it other than as a dichotomous concept(i.e., related or unrelated). This study attempts to further break down the construct of product-cause relatedness according to relevance of a product's risk. It is expected that a cause related to the direct risk of a
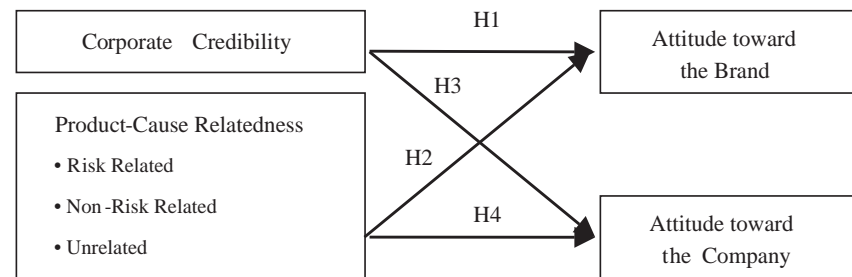
Figure 1. Conceptual Model

product will weaken the effects of cause-related marketing on firm-related objectives, thus implying that product-cause relatedness may not always be effective. In this case a company should design a campaign more carefully, considering whether a specific campaign will be related to the direct risk of a product. It is also suggested that cause-related marketing effectiveness may vary according to the level of corporate credibility.

Hypotheses

Prior research has confirmed positive effects of product-cause relatedness on attitude toward a company and its brand(Kim and Kim 2001), corporate image(Kim 2004), brand preference (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), and purchase intention (Han and Ryu 2003). In addition, corporate credibility has also been associated with attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions(Goldsmith et al. 2000). Sen and Bhattacharya(2001) show perceptions of corporate social responsibility to have a positive influence over company evaluation and purchase intention. Similarly, Brown and Dacin (1997) suggest that associations of both company ability and corporate social responsibility can affect product evaluation via a mediation of corporate evaluation.

It is proposed in the present study that product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility will influence the effect of cause-related marketing on attitudes toward both the company and the brand. Consumer attitudes regarding the brand and the company are predicted to be more favorable in a high corporate

credibility level than in a low one. Consistent with previous studies on product-cause relatedness, supporting a cause related to the product(but not its risk) versus an unrelated cause is likely to generate more favorable attitudes toward the brand and the company. It is however predicted that cognitive dissonance (e.g., Why help something your product is responsible for?) may occur if a consumer is to experience a cause-related marketing campaign associated to a risk related cause, which may negatively affect a firm's cause-related marketing efforts when unresolved. A consumer may distinguish this risk related cause from the non-risk related one. Thus, we assume that a cause-related marketing campaign will not always lead to favorable attitudes. On the contrary, when a cause is directly related to a product' risk, it may lead to more unfavorable attitudes toward the brand and the company. If this is the case, companies should be more cautious in developing a cause suitable for their campaign.

Whether an interaction effect between these two constructs occurs and if so, how the effect of cause-related marketing on attitudes toward the company and the brand varies accordingly is also of interest in the present study. The following hypotheses are derived from the discussion above.

H1: The higher the corporate credibility is, the more favorable are the attitudes toward the brand.

H2: Three levels of product-cause relatedness-risk related, non-risk related, and unrelated-will affect attitudes toward the brand differently.

H2a: Attitudes toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is unrelated than when it is non-risk related.

H2b: Attitude toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is unrelated.

H2c: Attitudes toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is non-risk related.

H3: The higher the corporate credibility is, the more favorable are attitudes toward the company.

H4: Three levels of product-cause relatedness-risk related, non-risk related, and unrelated-will affect attitudes toward the

company differently.

H4a: Attitudes toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is unrelated than when it is non-risk related.

H4b: Attitude toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is unrelated.

H4c: Attitudes toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is non-risk related.

Method

Experimental Design. The target product selected in this study was a hamburger. Fast-food has frequently been linked to health issues such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes; there has been vast media coverage on legal suits against fast-food companies regarding these issues. To ensure that participants were familiar with the target's direct risk, they were presented with a brief product description in which ingredients generally perceived as high in calories(e.g., double cheese, double beef patties) were included. To prevent any bias from existing attitudes or preferences, fictitious names(i.e., *Doubledouble burger produced by Burgerland*) were employed in the experiment.

A2(corporate credibility: high/low) $\times$ 3(product-cause relatedness: risk related/non-risk related/unrelated) between-subject design was used to examine the effects of cause-related marketing on product evaluation and consumers' behavioral responses. In the high(low) corporate credibility condition, participants were presented with a description of *Burgerland* as having done excellent(poor) performance in year 2004 from three ratings of authoritative institutions. Each rating was chosen to represent the three dimensions of corporate credibility(i.e., attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness).

Product-cause relatedness was manipulated into three levels: risk related, non-risk related, and unrelated. Since a hamburger, a target product in this study, may cause childhood obesity, a cause related to a product risk was manipulated as 'donating 10% of revenue will be used to combating childhood obesity'. A cause unrelated to the product was manipulated as 'supporting

the construction of recreational facilities' in alienated areas. While a hamburger is a kind of food, a cause with no direct relationship to the risk of hamburgers was manipulated as 'improving the quality of meals provided to elementary school children'. The selected causes are shown in [table 2]. To minimize the level of personal involvement toward a cause, all three causes were designed to target beneficiaries irrelevant to the majority of participants who were mainly university students residing in an urban area. According to Cho(2000), a consumer's response to a cause-related marketing program is not only influenced by product-cause relatedness, but also perceived importance of the cause as a social issue(e.g., hunger is usually perceived as a more immediate and important cause to society than improving educational environment). Hence, a pretest including thirty university students other than the participants of the main experiment was conducted to confirm that the perceived importance of each selected cause was not significantly different from the others.

Attitude toward the brand was measured using the same four items from Mitchell and Olson's(1981) study. On a seven-point scale, participants were asked whether they like/dislike the brand, whether the brand is good/bad and pleasant/unpleasant, and whether they thought the quality of the brand was high/low. Attitude toward the company was measured using the same three items(i.e., good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, like/dislike) in Kim and Kim's study(2001).

Although it is not included as one of the hypotheses, perceived corporate motive of cause-related marketing was measured for additional analysis. Participants were asked three questions which were consistent with the open-responses derived from of

Table 2. Product-Cause Relatedness Conditions

Level of Relatedness		Selected Cause
UnRelated(UR)		Supporting construction of recreational facilities in alienated areas
Product Related	Risk Related(RR)	Combating childhood obesity
	Non-Risk Related (NRR)	Improving quality of meals provided to elementary school children

Lichenstein et al.'s(2004) study(i.e., Do you perceive the company's motive to be altruistic/egoistic?, Do you perceive the company desires to change its practices? Do you perceive the company's motive regarding cause-related marketing to be intentionally good?). Participants were told to express their degree of agreement on a seven-point scale for each question.

A seven-point scale was used again to check the manipulation of corporate credibility and product-cause relatedness. Corporate credibility was measured by three items used in Ahn and Lee (2005)'s study(i.e., Burgerland is trustworthy/likable/honest). Two items were used to measure product-cause relatedness. One item was used to assess the degree of relatedness between the product and cause. Another item was used to assess the degree of relatedness between the cause and the product's direct risk. Also, an item was used to measure the perceived importance of the cause to society.

Data Collection. Students from a university located in an urban district of the Kangwon province in Korea participated in the experiment as a class requirement. Although cause-related marketing is usually not limited to a specific demographic, this group of young adults was recognized as a main target for fast-food companies. As is illustrated in [table 3], one of six surveys which were manipulated by the level of corporate credibility (high/low) and cause-related marketing context(risk related/non-risk related/unrelated) was randomly distributed to each participant from May 17 to 19, 2005. Each survey consisted of a description of the company and its cause-related marketing situation, dependent measures, manipulation measures, and demographic measures. Subjects were instructed to answer each question by reflecting on the company and cause-related marketing situation described on the first page.

296 out of 312 surveys were complete and used for analysis. The remaining 16 surveys were discarded due to missing data. The number of respondents for each survey type was almost equivalent, ranging from 47 to 51. Respondents characterized as female(65.5%), liberal arts majors(50.3%), and between the age of 18 and 21(73.0%) consisted of the majority.

Table 3. Classification of Groups

		Corporate Credibility	
		High	Low
Product-Cause Relatedness	Risk Related	G1	G4
	Non-Risk Related	G2	G5
	Unrelated	G3	G6

Analysis and Results

All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences(SPSS Version 11.0). Cronbach's alpha reliability, exploratory factor analysis, one-way analysis of variance, multivariate analysis of variance, and descriptive statistics were generated to confirm the research model discussed earlier.

Reliability and Validity. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was performed on every multi-item construct. Adopting the main criterion in Nunnally's(1967) research, internal consistency among items was assessed from an alpha coefficient of 0.7 or larger. As is depicted in [table 4], all of the measures tested indicate sufficient reliability. These results, however, reflect the results of a preliminary factor analysis in which one item(i.e., The quality of Doubledouble burger is high/low) from the construct, "Attitude toward the Brand," was eliminated due to a poor fit.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the same measures as was used in the reliability analysis. Extracted factors are only referred as *stable* when the sample size is above 50 and is approximately four to five times larger than the number of relevant items. In addition, factor loadings generally range from -.3 to +.3(Lim et al. 2001). The data in the present study met both of these criteria. Factors were extracted from a principal components analysis, and rotated by Varimax.

Manipulation Checks. Corporate credibility and product-cause relatedness were manipulated to test the effects of cause-related marketing on consumer attitudes. Each of these constructs were

Table 4. Reliability and Validity Analyses

Component	Item	Factor Loadings	Cumula-tive %	Alpha
Attitude toward the Brand	I like/dislike Doubledouble burger.	.795	68.704	.8863
	Doubledouble burger is good/bad.	.816		
	Doubledouble burger is pleasant/unpleasant.	.812		
Attitude toward the Company	I like/dislike Burgerland.	.854	82.148	.9130
	Burgerland is good/bad.	.817		
	Burgerland is pleasant/unpleasant.	.506		
Corporate Credibility	Burgerland is trustworthy.	.655	77.035	.8714
	Burgerland is favorable.	.800		
	Burgerland is honest.	.605		

experimented under two(high/low corporate credibility) and three(risk related/non-risk related/unrelated) conditions respectively, generating six different groups of participants.

To confirm the manipulation of corporate credibility, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Corporate credibility evaluations were higher in the high corporate credibility condition(11.068) than in the low corporate credibility condition (7.740). The difference between groups was statistically significant within the significance level of .05(F = 97.244).

The manipulation of product-cause relatedness was also confirmed through one-way analyses of variance. The first analysis was to confirm if participants perceived the given cause in each of the three product-cause relatedness conditions as having an association with the product per se. Participants in the risk related condition(RR; 3.39) and non-risk related condition (NRR; 3.26) rated product-cause relatedness higher than those in the unrelated condition(UR; 2.22). The means were compared across three product-cause relatedness conditions. The F-scores were highly significant(F = 14.566; p < .01). implying that the product-cause relatedness treatment was very effective.

However, since there were more than two groups involved in the manipulation, post hoc tests were additionally conducte d to verify the mean differe nce between groups respectively.

[table 5] shows the results of the Scheffe test. The Scheffe test is customarily used with unequal sample sizes for the one-way

Table 5. Multiple Comparisons of Product-Cause Relatedness Conditions

Dependent Variable: D4

Scheffe

(I) RELATEDNESS	(J) RELATEDNESS	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
RR	NRR	.13	.237	.857	-.45	.71
	UR	1.17*	.237	.000	.59	1.75
NRR	RR	-.13	.237	.857	-.71	.45
	UR	1.04*	.237	.000	.45	1.62
UR	RR	-1.17*	.237	.000	-1.75	-.59
	NRR	-1.04*	.237	.000	-1.62	-.45

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 6. Homogeneous Subsets of Product-Cause Relatedness Conditions

	RELATEDNESS	N	Subset for alpha=.05	
			1	2
Scheffe[a,b]	UR	98	2.22	
	NRR	99		3.26
	RR	99		3.39
	Sig.		1.000	.858

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size=98.664.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA. As was assumed, the mean difference is significant between the risk related and unrelated conditions and between the non-risk related and unrelated conditions. [table 6] shows that the risk related condition and non-risk related condition can be grouped as homogeneous subsets in this case.

A second analysis of variance was conducted to verify the given cause's relatedness to the product's risk. Results indicated the mean difference among groups was statistically significant at the

Table 7. Multiple Comparisons of Product Risk Relatedness Conditions

Dependent Variable: D5

Scheffe

(I) RELATED NESS	(J) RELATED NESS	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
RR	NRR	1.07*	.206	.000	.56	1.58
	UR	1.10*	.207	.000	.60	1.61
NRR	RR	-1.07*	.206	.000	-1.58	-.56
	UR	.03	.207	.986	-.47	.54
UR	RR	-1.10*	.207	.000	-1.61	-.60
	NRR	-.03*	.207	.986	-.54	.47

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Ttable 8. Homogeneous Subsets for Product Risk Relatedness Conditions

	RISK RELATED	N	Subset for alpha=.05	
			1	2
Scheffe[a,b]	UR	98	3.61	
	NRR	99	3.65	
	RR	99		4.72
	Sig.		.986	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size=98.664.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

.05 level(F = 18.555)

[table 7] and [table 8] show the manipulation of product risk relatedness was successful. Results of the post hoc test reveal that, as was expected, the mean differences are only significant between the risk related condition and the other two conditions respectively.

An additional manipulation check was conducted to verify any differences among product-cause relatedness conditions

regarding the societal importance of the relevant cause. According to the results of one-way analysis of variance, none of the groups varied in perception of societal importance and thus this factor may be excluded as an alternative explanation in the findings(F = 2.519; p > .05).

Tests of Hypotheses. Hypotheses were tested via a multivariate analysis of variance. Instead of performing multiple individual tests, a single test of MANOVA was used because the dependent variables, attitude toward the company and attitude toward the brand were highly correlated(Pearson r = .647, p < .01). Also, a MANOVA was employed to explore how the independent variables, product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility, influence the patterning of participants' response on the dependent variables. According to the results of multivariate tests presented in [table 9], the main effect of product-cause relatedness(RELATED) on the combination of company and brand attitudes was insignificant with the exception of Roy's Largest Root. However, its interaction effect with corporate credibility(CRED) in addition to the main effect of corporate credibility was significant across all tests.

Based on the between-subjects effects in [table 10] and the descriptive statistics in [table 11], hypotheses 1 to 4 are examined in turn.

The main effect of corporate credibility on brand attitude is statistically significant(F = 43.135, p < .05), supporting hypothesis 1. Participants in a high corporate credibility level(13.1918) show a more favorable attitude toward the brand than those in a low corporate credibility level(10.4067). The results suggest that firms perceived as highly credible have an advantage over firms perceived as less credible when carrying out the same cause-related marketing actions.

The main effect of product-cause relatedness on brand attitude is statistically significant(F = 4.089, p < .05), supporting hypothesis 2. This result however is an overall test of the equality of mean vectors for several groups(i.e., risk related, non-risk related, unrelated). Therefore, to determine which groups differ from which other groups a post hoc test was conducted and conclusions for hypotheses 2a and 2b were drawn. Results of the Scheffe test are presented in [table 12].

Hypothesis 2a predicts that consumers will form a less

Table 9. Results of Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.931	1940.844[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.69	1940.844[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	13.431	1940.844[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	13.431	1940.844[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
RELATED	Pillai's Trace	.028	2.023	4.000	580.000	.090
	Wilks' Lambda	.972	2.030[a]	4.000	578.000	.089
	Hotelling's Trace	.028	2.037	4.000	576.000	.088
	Roy's Largest Root	.028	4.089[b]	2.000	290.000	.018
CRED	Pillai's Trace	.399	95.983[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.601	95.983[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.664	95.983[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.664	95.983[a]	2.000	289.000	.000
RELATED	Pillai's Trace	.051	3.788	4.000	580.000	.005
	Wilks' Lambda	.949	3.824[a]	4.000	578.000	.004
	Hotelling's Trace	.054	3.859	4.000	576.000	.004
	Roy's Largest Root	.053	7.692[b]	2.000	290.000	.001

a. Exact statistic

b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

c. Design: Intercept + RELATED + CRED + RELATED * CRED

Table 10. Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Brand Attitude	863.523[a]	5	172.705	13.018	.000
	Company Attitude	2223.782[b]	5	444.756	40.584	.000
Intercept	Brand Attitude	41204.921	1	41204.921	3106.004	.000
	Company Attitude	32734.017	1	32734.017	2986.965	.000
RELATED	Brand Attitude	108.479	2	54.239	4.089	.018
	Company Attitude	28.051	2	14.026	1.280	.280
CRED	Brand Attitude	572.235	1	572.235	43.135	.000
	Company Attitude	2086.925	1	2086.925	190.431	.000
RELATED * CRED	Brand Attitude	182.518	2	91.259	6.879	.001
	Company Attitued	109.430	2	54.715	4.993	.007
Error	Brand Attitude	3847.203	290	13.266		
	Company Attitude	3178.097	290	10.959		
Total	Brand Attitude	45789.000	296			
	Company Attitude	37910.000	296			
Corrected Total	Brand Attitude	4710.726	295			
	Company Attitude	5401.878	295			

a. R Squared=.183(Adjusted R Squared=.169)
b. R Squared=.412(Adjusted R Squared=.402)

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics (MANOVA Results)

	RELATED	CRED	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Attitude toward the Brand	RR	High	11.3061	3.94337	49
		Low	10.7400	3.74607	50
		Total	11.0202	3.83587	99
	NRR	High	14.3800	3.24440	50
		Low	10.6122	3.82871	49
		Total	12.5152	4.000348	99
	UR	High	13.8936	3.00893	47
		Low	9.8824	3.94283	51
		Total	11.8061	4.04525	98
	Total	High	13.1918	3.66402	146
		Low	10.4067	3.83396	150
		Total	11.7804	3.99607	296
Attitude toward the	RR	High	11.9184	3.52276	49
		Low	8.3000	3.38815	50
		Total	10.0909	3.88900	99
	NRR	High	13.8000	3.56857	50
		Low	7.8980	2.83758	49
		Total	10.8788	4.37122	99
	UR	High	13.8085	3.53023	47
		Low	7.3922	2.95350	51
		Total	10.4694	4.55935	98
	Total	High	13.1712	3.62816	146
		Low	7.8600	4.27919	296
		Total	10.4797	4.27919	296

favorable attitude toward the brand when it is associated with an unrelated cause than a non-risk related cause. The mean difference between the two groups however is insignificant. The inconsistency of this result with previous findings can be explained by the different levels of personal involvement participants may have had for the two causes. Although both causes were initially designed to help beneficiaries other than the participants, respondents may have thought otherwise. This limitation is discussed in detail at the end of the study. Nevertheless, the(-) direction of the mean difference between the

Table 12. Multiple Comparisons (MANOVA Results)
Scheffe

Dependent Variabel	(I) RELATED	(J) RELATED	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Low Bound	Upper Bound
Attitude toward the Brand	RR	NRR	-1.4949*	.51769	.016	-2.7687	-.2212
		UR	-.7859	.51901	.319	-2.0629	.4911
	NRR	RR	1.4949*	.51769	.016	.2212	2.7687
		UR	.7090	.51901	.394	-.5680	1.9860
	UR	RR	.7859	.51901	.319	-.4911	2.0629
		NRR	-.7090	.51901	.394	-1.9860	.5680
Attitude toward the Company	RR	NRR	-.7879	.47052	.248	-1.9456	.3698
		UR	-.3785	.47172	.725	-1.5391	.7822
	NRR	RR	.7879	.47052	.248	-.3698	1.9456
		UR	.4094	.47172	.687	-.7512	1.5700
	UR	RR	.3785	.47172	.725	-.7822	1.5391
		NRR	-.4094	.47172	.687	-1.5700	.7512

Based on observed means.
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

unrelated cause and non-risk related cause is consistent to results of prior studies(i.e., supporting a product-related cause is more beneficial).

Hypothesis 2b is also not supported. The mean difference between the risk related cause and unrelated cause is statistically insignificant. Again, the(-) direction of the mean difference between the two groups is consistent to the main idea of the present study(i.e., a risk related cause makes the brand less attractive). Although both hypotheses 2a(UR<NRR) and 2b (RR<UR) proved to be insignificant, interestingly, the combination of the two(RR<NRR) is significant at a confidence level of .05, supporting Hypothesis 2c. That is, regardless of corporate credibility, participants show a less favorable attitude toward the brand when it is linked to a risk related cause than a non-risk related cause. This finding is important since it differentiates the effects of two types of causes, both of which are related to the product.

The interaction effect of product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility on brand attitude is significant(F = 6.879, p < .05), supporting hypothesis 3. The result is plotted in the left box of [figure 2]. Two contrasts are evident. The first is in terms of the product-cause relatedness levels within the high corporate credibility condition. Participants presented with a risk related cause(11.3061) show a significantly less favorable attitude toward the brand compared to those presented with not only a non-risk related cause(14.3800), but also an unrelated cause (13.8936). This result reveals that hypothesis 2b can actually be supported within a high corporate credibility condition. The second significant contrast is across the two levels of corporate credibility. The mean difference is significant between the two levels of corporate credibility for the non-risk related and unrelated causes, but not for the risk related cause, suggesting the effect of cause-related marketing is the same for a highly credible firm and a less credible firm when sponsoring a cause related to the product's risk.

The main effect of corporate credibility on company attitude is statistically significant(F = 190.431, p < .05), supporting hypothesis 3. However, the main effect of product-cause relatedness is insignificant, rejecting hypothesis 4. Results of the multiple comparisons in [table 15] show that sub-hypotheses 4a,
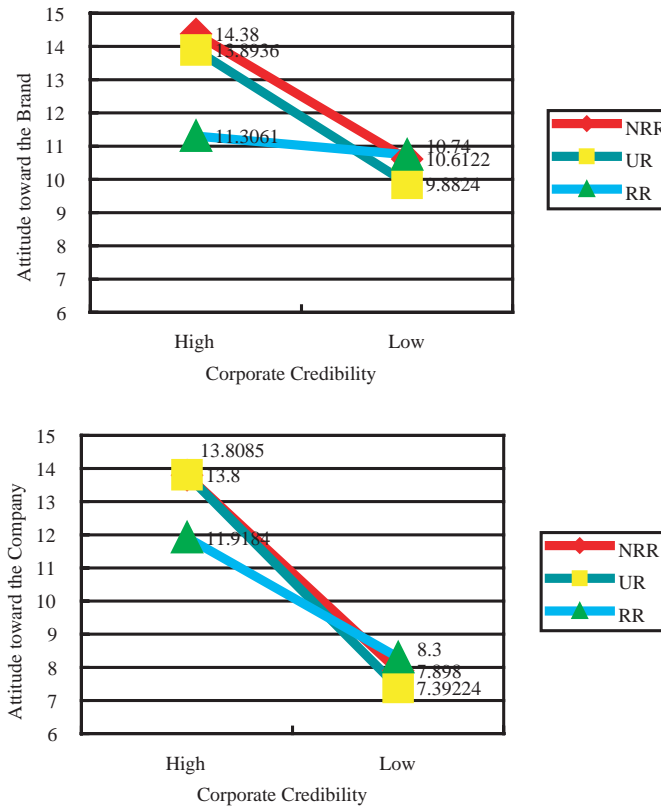
Figure 2. Interaction Effects of Product-Cause Relatedness and Corporate Credibility

4b, and 4c are also not supported. Together these results imply that the impact of cause-related marketing on attitude toward the company is strongly affected by the precondition of a firm, the level of corporate credibility in this case.

Despite the insignificance of its main effect, product-cause relatedness however significantly interacts with corporate credibility and affects attitude toward the company($F = 4.993$, $p < .05$). As is presented in the right box of [figure 2], not only is the mean difference significant between the two levels of corporate credibility, but also within each level of product-cause relatedness within the high corporate credibility condition. Participants presented with a risk related cause(11.92) show a

significantly less favorable attitude toward the brand compared to those presented with not only a non-risk related cause(13.80), but also an unrelated cause(13.81). This result also reveals that hypothesis 4b can actually be supported within a high corporate credibility condition.

Additional Tests. Kim and Kim(2004) propose that perceived corporate motives of a cause-brand alliance affect attitudes on corporate and product brands. Kim(2004) also reports that consumers' perception of corporate intentions as being altruistic can positively affect corporate image. In a recent study by Lichenstein et al.(2004), negative perceptions of corporate social responsibility were overturned by a consumer's perceived opportunity to do good, which positively influenced their donations to nonprofits.

Similarly, it is assumable that consumers will show a more positive attitude toward the company when they think the company is trying to change its corporate or brand image with good intentions(i.e., a fast-food company trying to make up for its negative outputs). Of course, it is likely that some consumers may think the opposite, that is, the given company is trying to *cover up* rather than make up for its mistakes. Whether it be positive or not, the perceived motive of a company's cause-related marketing actions is predicted to mitigate the effects of product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility.

Again, a MANOVA was conducted to verify the results. Responses from the three 7-point items of perceived motive of the company were summed and then recoded as either "good (sum>12)" or "bad (sum≤12)." Product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility were used as fixed factors, brand and company attitudes were used as dependent variables, and perceived motive was used as a covariate. Results of between-subjects effects are depicted in [table 13].

When adding perceived motive of the company as a covariate, the amount explained by the independent variables, product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility increase for both brand attitude(R squared=.186 → R squared=.232) and company attitude(R squared=.412 → R squared=.445). The main effect of product-cause relatedness on attitude toward the brand is no longer significant once perceived motive of company is controlled for. The interaction effect between product-cause relatedness and

Table 13. Test of Between-Subjects Effects (Perceived Corporate Motive as a Covariate)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Brand Attitude	1092.045[a]	6	182.008	14.536	.000
	Company Attitude	2403.938[b]	6	400.656	38.623	.000
Intercept	Brand Attitude	4474.111	1	4474.111	357.317	.000
	Company Attitude	3548.390	1	3548.390	342.063	.000
PMOTIVE	Brand Attitude	228.522	1	228.522	18.251	.000
	Company Attitude	180.156	1	180.156	17.367	.000
RELATED	Brand Attitude	55.888	2	27.944	2.232	.109
	Company Attitude	7.756	2	3.878	.374	.688
CRED	Brand Attitude	304.138	1	304.138	24.289	.000
	Company Attitued	1482.419	1	1482.419	142.904	.000
RELATED * CRED	Brand Attitude	109.483	2	54.741	4.372	.013
	Company Attitued	56.509	2	28.255	2.724	.067
Error	Brand Attitude	3618.681	289	12.521		
	Company Attitude	2997.940	289	10.373		
Total	Brand Attitude	45789.000	296			
	Company Attitude	37910.000	296			
Corrected Total	Brand Attitude	4710.726	295			
	Company Attitude	5401.878	295			

a. R Squared=.232(Adjusted R Squared=.216)
b. R Squared=.445(Adjusted R Squared=.433)

corporate credibility still remain significant for brand attitude, whereas the effect becomes insignificant for company attitude. The main effects of corporate credibility remain significant for both company and brand attitudes.

Thus, it can be concluded that when controlled for perceived corporate motive of cause-related marketing, product-cause relatedness becomes irrelevant to attitude toward the company. Its impact on brand attitude also weakens, but still remains significant in regard to an interaction effect with corporate credibility. Corporate credibility, an a priori factor of a cause-related marketing context, sustains its influence on both attitudes toward the company and brand regardless to a company's perceived intention.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Firms initially engage in corporate social responsibility activities for various reasons including pressure from stakeholders, tax benefits, and purely philanthropic purposes. Many of these firms, however, have started to take advantage of these activities and have adopted them into everyday practices. Cause-related marketing is an example of this new trend, in which companies associate commercial activity with charitable causes in order to gain publicity, increase sales, and attain other important business objectives.

The present study focuses on the effects of cause-related marketing on consumer attitudes toward the company and the brand. Product-cause relatedness and corporate credibility are labeled as factors that will influence cause-related marketing effects on both types of attitude. [table 14] summarizes the results of this study.

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn.

First of all, cause-related marketing has a different effect on attitude toward the brand and attitude toward the company. Despite similar patterns in the responses, attitude toward the company is far more influenced by the level of corporate credibility than attitude toward the brand is. On the other hand,

Table 14. Summary of Results

H1: The higher the corporate credibility is, the more favorable are the attitudes toward the brand.	*Supported*
H2: Three levels of product-cause relatedness-risk related, non-risk related, and unrelated-will affect attitudes toward the brand differently.	*Supported*
H2a: Attitudes toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is unrelated than when it is non-risk related.	*Rejected*
H2b: Attitude toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is unrelated.	*Partially Supported*
H2c: Attitudes toward the brand will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is non-risk related.	*Supported*
H3: The higher the corporate credibility is, the more favorable are attitudes toward the company.	*Supported*
H4: Three levels of product-cause relatedness-risk related, non-risk related, and unrelated-will affect attitudes toward the company differently.	*Rejected*
H4a: Attitudes toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is unrelated than when it is non-risk related.	*Rejected*
H4b: Attitude toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is unrelated.	*Partially supported*
H4c: Attitudes toward the company will be less favorable when the supported cause is risk related than when it is non-risk related	*rejected*

consumers' attitude toward the company compared to that of the brand is less affected by product-cause relatedness. It is suggested that product-cause relatedness directly affects attitude toward the product brand, whereas corporate credibility directly influences corporate attitude. Given that the two types of attitude are highly correlated (r = .647), these effects are likely to weaken as they are passed on to company attitude and brand attitude

respectively.

Attitude toward the brand is more favorable for firms with high credibility than for those with low credibility except for when the firm is supporting a cause related to the risk of a product. When firms support a cause consumers perceive as being related to the product's direct risk(e.g., obesity caused from eating hamburgers), not only can attitude toward the brand become less favorable compared to when a non-risk related cause or unrelated cause is supported, but the positive effect of cause-related marketing actually backfires. Consumers in both high and low corporate credibility conditions form an unfavorable brand attitude. This is especially noteworthy since existing research on cause-related marketing has consistently supported the notion that sponsoring product related causes benefits the firm.

In the past, product-cause relatedness has also been referred to as product-cause congruence(Varadarajan and Menon 1988) and product-cause fit(Lafferty et al. 2004). Some may argue that a "risk related" cause may simply be another expression for an "incongruent" or "unfit" cause. Although a risk related cause can be categorized under these names, it is important to point out that an unrelated cause can also be categorized this way. The findings of the present study however differentiate the effects of risk relatedness from unrelatedness or non-risk relatedness in terms of attitude toward the brand within a high corporate credibility condition. Furthermore, a risk related cause, unlike a non-risk related cause or unrelated cause, generates unfavorable attitudes toward the brand regardless of the level of corporate credibility.

Product-cause relatedness has little effect on attitude toward the company. Consumers are more influenced by corporate credibility, a precondition rather than a part of the cause-related marketing context, when evaluating companies. Additional testing concludes that this tendency among consumers is not affected when controlled for their perceptions of a company's motive for executing cause-related marketing actions.

Implications

The varying effects of product-cause relatedness and corporate

credibility should be considered when a firm is to plan a cause-related marketing campaign. Although attitudes toward the brand and the company are positively correlated, firms should decide from the two which to focus on(at least for a short term). When choosing to focus on enhancing consumers' attitude on the company, firms should try to make themselves viewed as highly credible. This tactic should also be employed when companies try to enhance consumer attitude toward the brand through cause-related marketing. A favorable attitude toward the brand is likely to be generated when firms sponsor a non-risk related cause or unrelated cause rather than a risk related cause.

The findings also showed that there is no direct effect of product-cause relatedness on attitude toward the company. Instead of focusing on product-cause relatedness, companies should make efforts to increase the level of corporate credibility to obtain more favorable attitudes toward the company.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are as follows.

First, the demographic characteristics of participants are too narrow in scope to generalize findings of this study to a full population. Future research should be conducted with a larger pool of subjects from various demographic and geographic backgrounds.

Second, manipulation of the independent variables was not as strictly carried out as initially planned. For instance, manipulation of corporate credibility resulted in two significant levels, respectively labeled as "high" and "low." However, the group mean(11.0685) for participants in the high corporate credibility condition were in fact not that *high*. Considering that corporate credibility was measured using three 7-point items, it would reasonably be assumed that high credibility refer to a mean value larger than 12. Nevertheless, participants showed significant difference in their responses, dividing themselves into two homogeneous subsets. Therefore, corporate credibility can be still be interpreted as being *relatively* high or low. In addition, future study should develop multiple measures for the two items which were used to measure product-cause relatedness.

Although comparisons of the selected causes in the present study were made to check for differences in societal importance, none were made to verify the level of involvement. Despite the fact that causes were designed to target beneficiaries other than the participants, some of the students may have assigned a higher level of personal relevance to a certain cause. For example, participants originally from rural areas of Korea may have perceived the unrelated cause(i.e., supporting construction of recreational facilities in alienated areas) as more personally relevant compared to the other two causes. Individual involvement of causes and products involved should be considered in future research regarding cause-related marketing.

Further Research

In the present study, corporate credibility had a strong influence over attitudes toward the company and the brand. Its main effects and interaction effect with product-cause relatedness was significant for both dependent variables. It would be interesting to further investigate whether various aspects of corporate credibility have the same effect on consumer attitudes. Would the effects of cause-related marketing differ between a firm credible for its excellence in economic performance and a firm credible for its past CSR activities?

It would also be worth considering different dependent variables in the future. Do cause-related marketing efforts influence consumers' attitude toward other brands from the same company? Also, incorporating both attitudinal responses and behavioral responses in future research should be of interest.

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