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The Effects of Product Type and Donation Magnitude on Willingness to Pay More for a Charity-Linked Brand

Michal Strahilevitz
Department of Marketing
University of Miami

This research investigates how the nature of a product and the magnitude of a donation to charity interact to determine the effectiveness that a charity incentive will have in promoting a product. The results suggest that sensitivity to magnitude in the case of charity incentives (i.e., the size of the contribution made per purchase) is not as strong as sensitivity to magnitude in the case of monetary incentives (i.e., the percentage of the price being discounted). In addition, it is found that with large donation magnitudes competing with large monetary incentives, charity incentives will be significantly more effective in promoting products perceived as "frivolous luxuries" (e.g., a hot fudge sundae or a luxury cruise) than in promoting products perceived as "practical necessities" (e.g., a roll of paper towels or a new washing machine). In contrast, in the case of small donation magnitudes competing with correspondingly small monetary incentives, no significant difference in charity incentive effectiveness is observed between different product types. Finally, the effects of donation magnitude and product type are examined in the context of choosing among multiple charity-linked brands. It is found that whereas brands linked to large donations are more likely to be preferred with frivolous products, brands linked to smaller donations are more likely to be favored with practical products.

The practice of companies linking the purchases of their products with donations to charity is commonly referred to as "cause-related marketing" (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). The range of companies and types of products that have utilized cause-related marketing have been quite diverse. Cottonelle toilet paper, Ben and Jerry's ice cream, Eureka vacuum cleaners, Hershey's chocolates, and Purina puppy

Requests for reprints should be sent to Michal Strahilevitz, Department of Marketing, University of Miami, P.O. Box 248–147, Coral Gables, FL 33124–6554. E-mail: strahile@sba.miami.edu

chow are among the many products that have used one or more charity-linked sales promotions. The number of companies getting involved in cause-related marketing suggests that many firms consider bundling purchases with charitable donations to be an effective marketing tool. In the long run, such campaigns have been found to be beneficial in terms of improving the image of the sponsoring firm (Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992). However, it is also possible that cause-related marketing tactics can offer the short-term benefit of immediately boosting sales.

In this article I focus on examining the conditions in which cause-related marketing is most likely to be effective in stimulating brand preference. More specifically, the research investigates the effects of the hedonic and utilitarian nature of the product being promoted and the size of the donation being offered on the effectiveness of using promised donations to charity as purchase incentives. Given the growing trend among corporate donors to focus on "strategic giving" (Deutsch, 1997; Mescon & Tilson, 1987), understanding how consumers react to these factors is clearly of importance to marketers.

CHARITABLE GIVING

Each day consumers perform acts of altruism. These include making financial contributions to charitable organizations, giving blood, donating organs, going through painful bone marrow extraction procedures, volunteering time, and even risking their own lives for the good of others. Altruistic behavior has been observed in every culture, among men and women, children and adults, the wealthy and the needy. The fact that altruism continues to exist in so many forms and in so many cultures has been a perplexing phenomenon for scholars throughout the ages. The phenomenon is especially puzzling to economists (Etzioni, 1988). If people are all selfish utility maximizers, why should they make sacrifices for others?

Several explanations have been proposed to address this question. These include an aspiration to "do the right thing" (Dawes & Thaler, 1988), a quest for moral satisfaction (Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992), a need to view oneself as good and kind (Walster, Berschield, & Walster, 1973), and the desire to experience a "warm glow" (Andreoni, 1990; Isen & Levin, 1972). What these explanations have in common is the underlying assumption that helping others leads one to experience positive emotions. This suggests that one way of thinking about charitable giving in the context of consumer behavior is to view those engaged in altruistic acts as consumers seeking the emotional benefits derived from giving. Indeed, Cialdini, Darby, and Vincent (1973) pointed out that the mere fact that one is giving often causes an otherwise painful sacrifice to feel like an overall hedonically pleasant experience.

A recent slogan of a Red Cross advertising campaign sums it up well: "Feel good. Give blood." Obviously, if we were all purely selfish utility maximizers, the notion that giving blood feels good would be absurd. Yet giving does feel good, in

part because we like to think of ourselves as unselfish. In addition to encouraging individuals to contribute blood, the tactic of suggesting a connection between altruism and happiness has been used to encourage financial contributions as well. This is illustrated in a recent advertisement for the New York Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Better Business Bureau, which reads, "Give a gift to charity and make a lot of people very happy, including yourself."

If giving is about feeling good, then the extent to which a promised donation to charity will add value to a product should be a direct reflection of how successful that incentive is in making consumers feel good about their purchases. In this article I investigate a number of factors that may influence this process. Will consumers be willing to pay more for a brand that promises a donation to charity than one that does not? Will they be willing to pay more for a brand that gives a relatively larger donation than for a brand that gives a relatively smaller one? Will the hedonic and utilitarian nature of the product being promoted have any effect on consumers' willingness to pay a premium for a brand offering a charity incentive?

THEORY AND PREDICTIONS

The Role of Donation Magnitude

The range of donation magnitudes found in cause-related marketing campaigns is quite diverse. At one extreme, firms have promised as little as 0.05% of profits to the sponsored charities or set of charities (e.g., The Nature Biscuit—discontinued). At the other end, marketers have offered as much as 100% of profits to charity (e.g., Elton John's "Candle in the Wind" tribute to Princess Diana). Diversity in donation magnitude is also found within product categories. For example, within the luxury chocolate product category, the Environmental Candy Company promises to give 50% of their revenues from chocolate sales to environmental causes. Meanwhile, Cloud Nine gives 10% of their profits from chocolate sales to a similar selection of good causes. Such diversity in donation magnitudes between brands is also found among utilitarian product categories, such as laundry detergent and toilet paper.

From a marketer's perspective, giving more per purchase in a given cause-related marketing campaign involves a greater cost that is likely to be passed on to the consumer in one form or another (e.g., fewer or smaller price promotions). Thus, the issue of how much should be given involves consideration of both the costs and benefits of making more substantial donations. This suggests that the most relevant test for finding the optimal donation magnitude for a charity-linked promotion would be an examination of whether consumers will be willing to pay only slightly more or substantially more for a brand linked to a correspondingly large contribution to charity.

There are several ways consumers can react to various donation magnitudes. At one extreme, there may be no correlation between how much is being donated per purchase and how good consumers will feel about choosing a charity-linked brand, as long as some sort of donation is made. Obviously, in such a case, a profit maximizing firm should offer the smallest possible donation that would enable it to use the name of the charity they have chosen to sponsor. It seems unlikely, however, that there will be no relation between how much a consumer gives and how good that consumer will feel about his or her contribution. After all, if there was absolutely no relation between how much individuals give to charity and how good they feel about it, every donor would always give the absolutely smallest donation that would be accepted by the charity, and this is not the case. In fact, in 1996 the average donation from contributing households in the United States was $1,017 (Jacoby, 1997). This suggests that some people do feel better giving more.

In addition to generally feeling better about giving more, there may be some sort of feel-good threshold for giving. Indeed, it has been noted that in the absence of some method of legitimizing paltry donations, many potential donors who cannot afford to make large donations may shy away from making small contributions for fear of appearing cheap (Brockner, Guzzi, Kane, Levine, & Shaplen, 1984; Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Reingen, 1978). This poses a challenge to charitable organizations, which is reflected in the fact that although the average donation size in the United States has steadily increased in the last 5 years, the percentage of Americans who give anything has steadily decreased (Jacoby, 1997).

Similar to what is observed in the context of regular donations, in the context of cause-related marketing, consumers may view small donations as tacky or cheap. In an extreme case, a relatively small donation could do the sponsoring firm more harm than good. Nevertheless, the aversion to small donations is likely to be less pronounced in the case of cause-related marketing than in the case of direct donations. This is because by linking small donations to the purchase of products, marketers can give consumers an opportunity to feel good about making a contribution, without feeling bad that they are not giving more. Indeed, because the amount to be donated is determined by the seller of the product rather than by the buyer, the consumer is not likely to feel accountable for the amount contributed, only for the fact that a charity-linked product has been purchased.

Among the factors that could influence the optimal donation magnitude for a cause-related marketing campaign is the trade-off consumers make between feeling good about giving more and feeling bad about paying more. Prior research suggests that converting the utility of public goods into monetary values often leads to insensitivity to the amount of the good (Baron, 1997; Diamond & Hausman, 1994; Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992). In addition, work by Carson & Mitchell (1993) called attention to a decreasing marginal monetary value to contributing to public goods. This suggests that the more people contribute to a given public good, the less utility they will derive from making further contributions. Along similar lines,

in research examining the trade-offs between receiving money and having that same amount contributed to charity, it was observed that participants were more likely to opt for the donation with relatively small amounts than with relatively large ones (Strahilevitz, 1993). It has also been observed that the more participants have already given, the less likely they will be to prefer giving more over receiving that same amount (Strahilevitz, 1999).

Why might the utility of giving relative to receiving be a diminishing function? One explanation may be that when individuals contribute to a charity, they rarely have an opportunity to personally experience the difference between the benefits of their giving a great deal and their giving only a little because they seldom are able to witness the donation being put to good use. In contrast, when individuals obtain money or goods for themselves, they usually will experience the consumption of what has been acquired and thus witness the relation between the magnitude of how much they get and how much utility they derive from consuming what they have acquired (Strahilevitz, 1999).

To illustrate, one may feel more of a warm glow from raising $100 for charity than from raising $5 for that same charity. However, unless that person is present to witness the consumption of this money on the part of the final recipients, he or she will be unable to experience the magnitude of either contribution at the point of consumption of the goods or services provided. In contrast, if an individual earns $100 in tips rather than $5 in tips, that person is likely to not only experience more pleasure in receiving the extra cash, but also to experience additional pleasure as that money is being spent.

If the phenomenon of diminishing marginal value to giving more rather than having more is applied to purchase incentives, one would predict that, all things being equal, individuals should be more sensitive to the magnitude of discounts and regular price differences than to the magnitude of donations to charity. This leads to the hypothesis that, holding price constant, charity incentives are more likely to be preferred over monetary incentives of equal value when the incentive magnitude is relatively small.

The Role of Product Type

Several consumer behavior scholars have pointed out that certain types of products evoke quite different affective states than others (Ahtola, 1985; Babbin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Dhar & Wertenbroch, in press; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Lofman, 1991; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). These researchers call attention to a distinction between two types of consumption:

1. Hedonic, pleasure-oriented consumption is motivated mainly by the desire for sensual pleasure, fantasy, and fun (e.g., eating chocolate truffles or spending a

week sunning in Hawaii). In Western culture, such products are often labeled *frivolous* or *decadent.* Such goods can cause consumers to experience feelings of guilt before, during, and after consumption.

2. Utilitarian, goal-oriented consumption is motivated mainly by the desire to fill a basic need or accomplish a functional task (e.g., applying floor wax or using a lawn mower). In Western culture, such products are often labeled *practical* or *necessary.* Consumption of such goods rarely leads to either sensual pleasure or guilt.

As mentioned earlier, cause-related marketing campaigns have been used with products as clearly utilitarian as toilet paper and vacuum cleaners, as well as with products as hedonic as ice cream and gourmet chocolate. Recent work by Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) suggests that altruistic incentives will be more effective with products perceived as pleasure-oriented and frivolous than with products perceived as goal-oriented and practical. The explanation given for this effect is based on a wide body of prior research that has shown that experiencing either pleasure (Cunningham, 1979; Isen & Levin, 1972; Isen, Shalker, Clark, & Karp, 1978; Levin & Isen, 1975) or guilt (Baumann, Cialdini, & Kenrick, 1981; Carlsmith & Gross, 1969; Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; Freedman, Wallington, & Bless, 1967; Ghingold, 1981; Izard, 1977) can significantly affect an individual's willingness to engage in charitable behavior. Because hedonic products tend to evoke both pleasure and guilt, and utilitarian products do not usually evoke either of these emotions, it follows that charity incentives should work better with pleasure-oriented products.

Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) referred to this phenomenon as affect-based complementarity because the emotions generated by hedonic products appear to complement the feelings generated from contributing to charity. The research presented reexamines these findings by investigating whether the tendency for charity incentives to be more effective with frivolous products than with practical products will depend on the magnitude of the donation being offered.

The Relation Between Product Type and Incentive Magnitude

The experiments described in the Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) article all involved relatively large donations and price differences. The role of donation magnitude was not examined. However, as mentioned earlier, prior research indicating a decreasing marginal value to giving (Carson & Mitchell, 1993; Strahilevitz, 1993) suggests that when costs are low, contributing to a worthy cause may be appealing to many, even without the emotional stimulation created by hedonic consumption. In contrast, when the contribution and resulting sacrifice to the giver are relatively high, fewer people are likely to choose to make a relatively substantial sacrifice for

a good cause in the absence of some sort of emotional stimulation that may increase altruistic tendencies. It follows that the role of product type in determining the appeal of a charity incentive should be greater in the case of relatively large donations because the emotions created by hedonic products could affect consumers who may otherwise be unwilling to accept a substantial price increase for an equally large donation to charity. Thus, one would expect the tendency to purchase a brand linked to a relatively small donation at a slightly higher price to be relatively high, even when the product is practical. This suggests that, regardless of product type, when a brand claims that 1% of its price will be given to charity, people are likely to prefer that over a brand with a 1% lower price that does not give to charity. After all, the cost of choosing the cause-related brand in such a case would be very small. In contrast, for a brand that substantially increases its price to cover the cost of a larger donation (e.g., when the product's price is doubled to cover the cost of a corresponding donation to charity), one would expect people's willingness to pay so much more for a charity-linked brand to be more significantly affected by the affective nature of the product involved. This implies that there should be an interaction between product type and incentive magnitude in terms of their effects on whether a charity-linked brand is preferred over a less expensive brand. More specifically, this advances the hypothesis that, in the context of charity incentives competing with monetary incentives of equal magnitude, the tendency for charity incentives to be relatively more effective with frivolous products than with practical products will be more pronounced with large incentive magnitudes than with small incentive magnitudes. This suggests that the product-based differences reported earlier (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998) may only be significant when the donations and monetary incentives involved are relatively large.

STUDIES 1 AND 2

Studies 1 and 2 both involved two-factor designs in which donation magnitude and product type were manipulated. Studies 1 and 2 were virtually identical except for two things. First, different donation magnitudes were used. More specifically, in Study 1 the magnitudes used were 5% and 50% of product price, and in Study 2 the donation magnitudes were 1% and 25% of product price. Second, in Study 1 participants had a choice between a charity-linked brand and a brand offering a promotional discount. In contrast, in Study 2 the brand without the cause-related promotion was simply offered at a lower price.

Preparation of Stimuli

A pretest was designed to facilitate the accurate selection and labeling of the products to be used in the three experiments and to ensure that the donations offered as

incentives would be to charities with which the participants were familiar and likely to support. Pretests conducted in previous research (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998) suggest that the terms most commonly referred to in the consumer behavior literature regarding the distinction between pleasure-oriented and goal-oriented consumption (i.e., *hedonic* vs. *instrumental* and *experiential* vs. *utilitarian*) may not be as clear or familiar to student participants as the terms *frivolous* and *practical*. Therefore, these more familiar terms were used in this pretest to classify products that were being considered for use in Study 1. Seventy-two participants received a long list of product and fictitious brand descriptions that were being considered for the experiments, along with the following definitions:

> *Frivolous Products*—Pleasure-oriented consumption; something fun, experiential, and perhaps even "decadent." Purchasing such goods or experiences for oneself may sometimes bring on feelings of guilt, and this "acquisition guilt" may diminish the pleasure of consumption.
>
> *Practical Products*—Goal-oriented consumption; something which one ordinarily buys to carry out a necessary function or task in one's life. No guilt is associated with purchasing these products, and relatively little pleasure is associated with their consumption.

After a brief task designed to ensure that the participants had read and understood the definitions, participants were instructed to classify each of the product and brand descriptions on their list into one of four categories: (a) practical, (b) frivolous, (c) both practical and frivolous, or (d) neither practical nor frivolous. Only those items that were put into either the first or second category by at least 90% of the pretest participants were considered for use in the final experiments. After completing the classification portion of the questionnaire, participants were presented with a long list of charities and asked to circle those with which they were familiar. They were also encouraged to list any charities not on the list that they generally liked. They were then asked to rate each of these charities on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not willing to support*) to 5 (*extremely eager to support*). Only the charities that were both familiar to at least 90% of the participants and that received an average support score 4.0 or higher were used in any of the actual experiments. None of the students who were involved in this pretest exercise participated in any of the actual experiments.

Operationalization of Donation Magnitude

It has been shown that the more people spend on a product, the less sensitive they will be to the absolute magnitude of a discount (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). This suggests that perhaps the more people are spending on a product, the less affected they will be by the loss of giving an amount of money to charity rather than receiving that

same amount in the form of a discount or rebate. To illustrate, a $100 rebate on a $150 watch may be much more attractive than a $100 donation to the World Wildlife Fund with that same purchase. However, if a consumer is spending $18,000 on a new car, a $100 rebate may feel insignificant compared to the warm glow of giving $100 to a good cause. Due to this phenomenon, in this article, rather than examine absolute magnitudes (e.g., $1), the effect of the ratio of the value of the incentive relative to the price of the product (e.g., 25% of the product price will be donated to charity) is examined at various price levels. In Studies 1 and 2, donation magnitudes were framed and manipulated as a percentage of the price of the product.

Method

Procedure. Participants in Studies 1 and 2 were 208 undergraduate students at a Midwestern university who participated in one of these studies as a part of a course requirement. None of the participants participated in both studies. Ninety-two participants participated in Study 1, and 116 participants participated in Study 2.

In both studies, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a two-factor between-subjects design. The first factor was the magnitude of the donation and the corresponding monetary incentive (large or small), and the second factor was the nature of the product (frivolous or practical) for which two brands were offered in each choice set. In both studies, participants were consistently assigned to one of the four conditions. Participants in both experiments were given a series of questions where they were asked to indicate which of two brands they would prefer, assuming that they were making these choices for themselves. Thus, depending on the product-type condition to which they had been assigned, participants made a series of choices between either two brands of different practical products, one offering a monetary incentive and one offering a charity incentive, or two brands of different frivolous products, one offering a monetary incentive and the other offering a charity incentive. How large those incentives were depended on the magnitude condition to which the participants had been assigned. Study 1 consisted of six such choice tasks, and Study 2 consisted of five such choice tasks. Within each condition, the order of the questions varied. Also, both experiments were counterbalanced so that for each product, each of the brands in each choice set was promoted by a charity incentive in half the questionnaires and by a monetary incentive in the other half of the questionnaires.

The studies differed in the way the monetary incentives were framed. In Study 1, within each choice set, the monetary incentive was described as a promotional cash discount to be given at the register. In each question, a promotional discount was offered for one brand, and a corresponding donation to charity was offered with the other brand. In Study 2, rather than offering a discount on the no-charity brand, this brand was simply featured at a "regular" cor-

respondingly lower price. The promotional discount in Study 1 made the cash–charity trade-off quite salient. In contrast, in Study 2, noticing that the magnitude of the difference in prices equaled the magnitude of the donation to charity required participants to compare the prices of the two brands in each choice set. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the difference in the framing of the monetary incentives, the two studies also used different magnitudes to represent the large and small incentive conditions.

Studies 1 and 2 also varied in terms of the actual frivolous and practical products used. The practical products used in Study 1 were laundry detergent, liquid paper, a dental exam with a cleaning, ball point pens, toothpaste, and frozen concentrated orange juice. The frivolous products used were ice cream, gourmet chocolate chip cookies, a professional massage with aromatherapy and music, chocolate-covered peanuts, malt balls, and gourmet fried corn chips. In Study 2, the practical products were a mandatory textbook, a new washing machine and dryer set, toilet paper, an alarm clock, and a spiral notebook. The frivolous products were rock concert tickets, a cruise, a box of chocolates, movie tickets, and an ice cream sundae.

The charity incentives used in Studies 1 and 2 were presented as automatic donations that would be made by the manufacturer for each unit purchased. The charities used in Study 1 were the March of Dimes, the Humane Society, Habitat for Humanity, the United Way, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Nature Conservancy. The charities used in Study 2 were Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, the March of Dimes, Easter Seals, and the World Wildlife Fund. In both Studies 1 and 2, the specific charity used for the cause-related brand varied from question to question. However, for each question, the specific charity used was the same for each of the four conditions.

To control for the possible effects of different product price ranges, practical and frivolous products were paired so that, for each question, the price ranges of the two brands of practical or frivolous products were the same across conditions. For example, the prices of the two options for a dental cleaning with an exam were identical to the prices of the two options for a professional massage with aromatherapy and music. The fact that, across conditions, both the price ranges of the products in each choice set and the specific charity used to promote the cause-related brand were kept constant within each question helped to control for the effects of price, absolute incentive magnitude, and specific charity popularity. For sample questions from Study 1, see Appendix A1 and Appendix A2. For sample questions from Study 2, see Appendix B1 and Appendix B2.

Results

The data from Studies 1 and 2 were analyzed separately. This was to see if charity-linked brands competing with brands with promotional discounts would yield the same results as charity-linked brands competing with brands that were regularly

marked at a lower price. Both analyses were carried out at the aggregate level using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the main effects for product type and incentive magnitude, the interaction between the two, and the effects of product type within each incentive magnitude. The main effect for product type was examined to see whether the results observed by Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) would be replicated. The main effect for incentive magnitude on the appeal of a charity incentive was examined to see if higher magnitudes would indeed lead to a decrease in the number of participants choosing a cause-related brand. Finally, to investigate the relation between product type and incentive magnitude, the interaction between these two variables was examined along with the effects of product type at the two different incentive magnitude levels.

Because the questionnaires in Study 1 consisted of six sets of either frivolous or practical products, the dependent variable in Study 1 was the number of times out of six that each participant chose the brand promoted with a donation to charity over the brand promoted with the monetary discount equivalent. These means appear in Table 1. Because the questionnaires in Study 2 consisted of five questions, the dependent variable was the number of times out of five that each participant chose the brand promoted with a donation to charity over the lower priced brand. These means can be found in Table 2. In addition, two graphs illustrating the results of each of these studies are found in Figures 1 and 2.

TABLE 1
Results of Study 1: Mean Number or Times Out of Six That the Charity-Linked Brand Was Chosen

	Donation of 50% of Price of Product Preferred Over Equivalent Discount[a]	*Donation of 5% of Price of Product Preferred Over Equivalent Discount*[a]
Practical products	0.74	3.30
Frivolous products	2.67	3.57

[a] $n = 23$.

TABLE 2
Results of Study 2: Mean Number or Times Out of Five That the Charity-Linked Brand Was Chosen

	Donation of 25% of Price of Product Preferred Over Equivalently Lower Price[a]	*Donation of 1% of Price of Product Preferred Over Equivalently Lower Price*[a]
Practical products	0.72	3.17
Frivolous products	2.14	3.38

[a] $n = 29$.

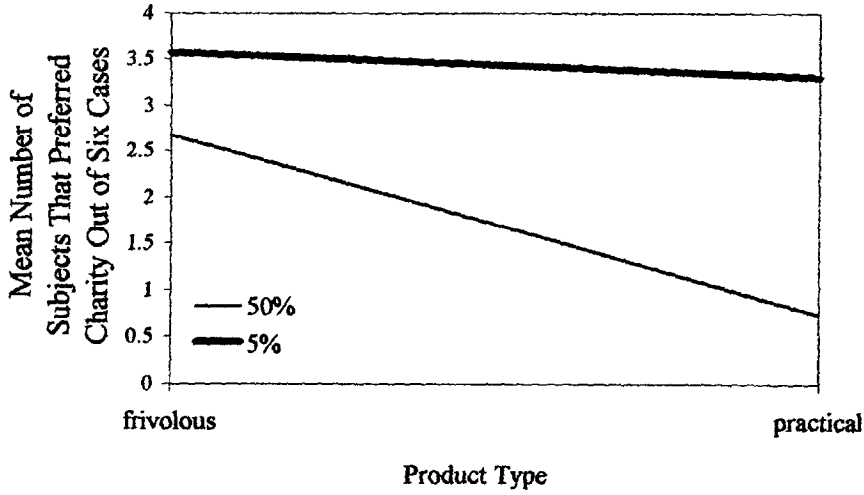

FIGURE 1 The effectiveness of charity incentives relative to rebates as a function of product type and incentive magnitude—Study 1.

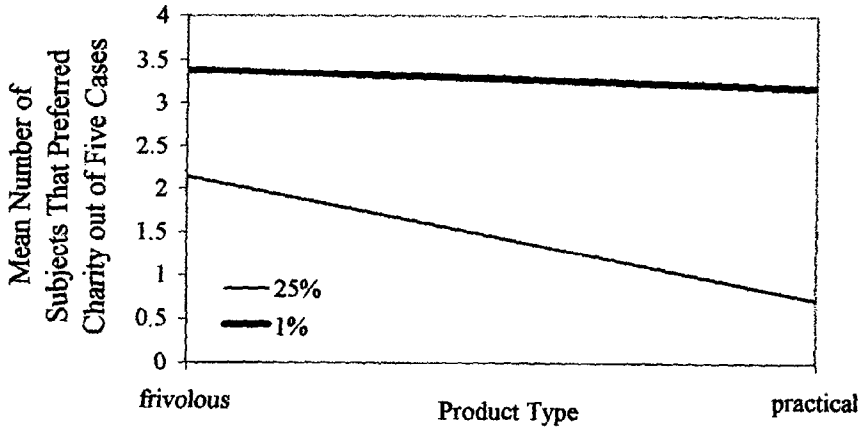

FIGURE 2 The effectiveness of charity incentives relative to lower prices as a function of product type and incentive magnitude—Study 2.

Main effects. The first comparison examined was the main effect for product type. On average, participants in Study 1 who were assigned to the frivolous product condition chose the brand promoted with charity significantly more often (3.13 out of 6 times) than those assigned to the practical product condition (2.02 out of 6 times), $F(1, 88) = 6.953, p < .01$. A main effect for product type was also observed in Study 2. On average, participants in the frivolous product condition chose the brand promoted with a charity significantly more often (2.76 out of 5 times) than did participants in the practical product condition (1.95 out of 5 times), $F(1, 112) = 6.38, p < .05$. Thus, both Studies 1 and 2 replicated the product type effects that had been demonstrated in previous work.

We next examined whether the mean number of times participants would choose the brand promoted with a charity incentive over the brand promoted with a monetary incentive would be higher when the magnitude of the donation or discount was a smaller percentage of the price. As predicted, in Study 1, on average, participants assigned to the 5% incentive condition chose the brand promoted with charity more often (3.44 out of 6 times) than those assigned to the 50% incentive condition (1.72 out of 6 times). This difference was significant, $F(1, 88) = 16.68, p < .001$. The predicted main effect for incentive magnitude was also observed in Study 2, in which participants assigned to the 1% incentive condition chose the brand promoted with charity significantly more often (3.28 out of 5 times) than those assigned to the 25% incentive condition (1.43 out of 5 times), $F(1, 112) = 33.08, p < .001$.

The interaction between product type and incentive magnitude. Interactions between product type and incentive magnitude were observed in both Studies 1 and 2. This interaction was significant in Study 1, $F(1, 88) = 4.07, p < .05$, and bordered significance in Study 2, $F(1, 112) = 3.54, p < .06$. The interactions observed in Studies 1 and 2 support the prediction that the effect of product type may depend on whether the incentive being offered is relatively large or small compared to the product's price.

Are product-type effects always significant? To better interpret the interaction effects observed in Studies 1 and 2, product type effects were examined within each level of incentive magnitude. Among participants assigned to a large incentive condition, the effect of product type was highly significant in both Study 1, $F(1, 88) = 11.31, p < .005$, and Study 2, $F(1, 112) = 11.02, p < .003$. In contrast, among participants assigned to a small incentive condition, the effect of product type was not significant in Study 1, $F(1, 88) = .185, p > .50$, or in Study 2, $F(1, 112) = .186, p > .50$.

Discussion

The results of Studies 1 and 2 support the prediction that the effect of product type on preference for cause-related brands is more pronounced with large donations and correspondingly large price differences than with small donations and correspondingly small price differences. Together, the results of these studies shed new light on the product-based effects reported in Strahilevitz and Myers (1998). These results suggest that consumers may be virtually unaffected by the nature of the product being promoted when the magnitude of the donation and resulting increase in cost are relatively small. On the other hand, when the donation to charity and the corresponding difference in price are relatively large, product type appears to play a significant role in determining whether a monetary or charity incentive will be more effective in stimulating brand preference. It appears that the emotional stimulation caused by hedonic products is not necessary when the financial sacrifice involved in choosing the charity-linked brand is relatively small. In contrast, when the donation to charity and the corresponding increase in cost is relatively large, willingness to pay significantly more for a brand that is linked to charity does appear to be influenced by the emotions created by the nature of the product being acquired. The fact that these simple effects were observed both with charity-linked brands competing with promotional discounts (Study 1) and with charity-linked brands competing with regularly priced less expensive brands (Study 2) suggests that the observed phenomena are not dependent on how the monetary cost of choosing a charity-linked brand is framed. This, along with the facts that in both Studies 1 and 2 multiple examples were utilized for each product type, and both the price range of the products and the specific charity used varied from question to question, suggests that the predicted phenomena that were observed are quite robust.

STUDY 3

Choosing Between Multiple Cause-Related Brands

With the growing popularity of cause-related marketing, it has become increasingly common to find more than one brand in a given product category using donations to charity as a purchase incentive. The purpose of Study 3 was to examine what happens when individuals are choosing between two different brands of a given product, each offering a donation of a different magnitude at a correspondingly different price. Based on the interaction observed between product type and incentive magnitude, it is hypothesized that, controlling for the appeal of the specific charities involved, the proportion of participants to prefer a brand that costs less and contributes less over a brand that costs more and contributes more will be more pronounced in the case of practical products than in the case of frivolous prod-

ucts. By testing this prediction, Study 3 differs from Studies 1 and 2 in that rather than comparing charity incentives to regularly less expensive brands or temporarily discounted brands, Study 3 directly examined the issue of optimal donation magnitude by giving participants a choice between two charity-linked brands, each offering a different percentage of its price as a donation to charity. Thus, the choice is not whether or not to contribute by choosing the cause-related brand, but how much to contribute by choosing either the larger donation with a higher priced brand or smaller donation with a lower priced brand.

Selection and Pairing of Stimuli

Study 3 relied on the same pretest that had been used to select products and charities for Studies 1 and 2. The practical products used in Study 3 were a package of toilet paper, a washing machine and dryer set, a cellular phone, a required textbook, and a package of paper towels. The frivolous products were a box of gift chocolates, a cruise to the Bahamas, a banquet dinner, concert tickets, and a deluxe pound cake. As in Studies 1 and 2, the frivolous and practical products were paired up according to price range (e.g., the box of chocolates was paired with the package of toilet paper, and the washing machine and dryer set was paired with the cruise to the Bahamas). The price ranges were the same for each question across conditions.

Each choice set involved two fictitious brands linked to two different charities. This was done to make the task more realistic, as many brands insist on exclusivity within their category as a condition for participating in a cause-related campaign. Pretests indicated that this also made the actual goal of Study 3 less apparent. For each choice task, two different charities were paired together based on those charities having similar ratings in the pretests. Specifically, the charity sets used were the March of Dimes with Easter Seals, Meals on Wheels with Habitat for Humanity, the Sierra Club with the World Wildlife Fund, the Children's Miracle Network with Ronald McDonald House, and the American Red Cross with the American Lung Association. Because preferences in choosing between two different charity-linked brands is likely to be affected by both brand-specific attributes and charity-specific characteristics, these two variables were counterbalanced so that for each question, each of the two magnitudes and each of the two charities were linked an equal number of times to each of the two brands. (For sample questions, see Appendix C.)

Method

Participants were 64 undergraduate students at a Midwestern university who participated in this study for course credit. None of the participants in this study had

participated in Study 1, Study 2, or the initial pretest. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in a single factor between-subjects design. The independent variable was the nature of the products described in the questionnaire (i.e., either two different brands of a practical product or two different brands of a frivolous product), and the dependent variable was stated preference (i.e., either the more expensive brand offering the larger donation or the less expensive brand offering the smaller donation). Regardless of the condition to which they had been assigned, each of the participants was given a questionnaire with five questions. For each question, participants were asked to indicate which of two cause-linked alternatives they would be most likely to purchase. Rather than manipulating incentive magnitude and product type within subjects, as had been done in Studies 1 and 2, in Study 3 only product type was manipulated within subjects. Incentive magnitude was in effect manipulated within subjects, as each participant chose between two alternatives linked to two different donation magnitudes.

As in Studies 1 and 2, the order of the questions was systematically varied. In each choice set, one brand offered a donation of 1% of the product's price to a specified charity while, at a 24% higher price, the other brand offered a donation of 25% of the product's price to a different charity. The two charities that were linked to the brands in each choice set varied from question to question, and no pair of charities appeared more than once in either questionnaire. However, for each specific question, the same series of pairs of charities were used in both conditions.

Results

In each of the five examples tested in Study 3, the proportion of participants who preferred the higher priced brand promoted with a large donation over the lower priced brand promoted with a small donation was higher when the product was frivolous than when the product was practical. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for the significance of these differences at the aggregate level. The dependent variable was the number of times out of five that each participant chose the brand linked to the larger donation over the brand linked with the smaller donation at a correspondingly lower price. On average, when assigned to the practical product condition, participants chose the brand linked to the larger donation in only 1.56 out of 5 questions, indicating that most participants choosing between two practical products preferred to pay less and give less rather than pay more and give more. In contrast, when assigned to the frivolous product condition, participants chose the brand linked to the larger donation in 3.53 out of 5 times, on average. This product-based difference in willingness to pay more so that more will be donated was significant, $F(1, 62) = 39.91$, $p < .001$. Thus, as predicted, when participants chose between two brands of a product in which one was offering a small donation to charity at a lower price and the other was offering a larger donation at a correspondingly higher price, the brand offering the larger donation was more likely to be pre-

ferred over the brand offering the smaller donation if the products in question were frivolous than if they were practical. The results of Study 3 support the prediction that willingness to pay more for a larger donation would be more pronounced with frivolous products than with practical products.

In interpreting these results, it is worth recalling that two different charities were used within each choice set and the design was counterbalanced so that each charity in each choice set was used an equal number of times in each condition. This counterbalancing, which was done to control for preferences for certain charities, is likely to have diluted the effect observed in Study 3. Nevertheless, a significant difference was observed.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The research presented suggests that a consumer's willingness to pay more for a charity-linked brand may not be a constant, but a dependent variable that is affected by product type, donation magnitude, and the interaction between the two. The results of Studies 1 and 2 offer insights into how donation magnitude and product type can influence consumers' willingness to pay more for a charity-linked brand. As was predicted, the results indicate that consumers may be more likely to choose a brand offering a donation over a brand offering an equivalently lower price when the donation and corresponding price difference are relatively small than when they are relatively large. The results of Studies 1 and 2 also demonstrate that the previously observed effect of product type on charity incentive effectiveness (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998) may only occur with relatively large donation magnitudes.

Study 3 investigated the effect of product type on whether consumers would prefer a charity-linked brand offering a relatively large contribution at a higher price over a charity-linked brand offering a smaller contribution at a lower price. In spite of the counterbalancing of charities and brand descriptions within each question, participants assigned to the frivolous product condition chose the brand linked to a larger donation significantly more often than those assigned to the practical product condition.

Understanding how product type and incentive magnitude interact offers useful information for marketers seeking to optimize the effectiveness of a given cause-related campaign. This understanding also points the way for further theoretical research geared toward understanding how these and other contextual variables may influence the value that a charity incentive will add to a product.

Future Research

Alternative explanations. Further insight into the phenomena observed in this article could be gained from examining alternative explanations for these

results. For example, it could be that consumers perceive relatively small donations as less appropriate with frivolous products because the guilt generated from pleasure-oriented consumption increases the donation magnitude threshold they require to feel that they are giving enough. It may also be the case that hedonic consumption will simply increase the pleasure people derive from both giving in general and making large contributions in particular. Another possibility is that individuals may be willing to pay more for larger donations in the context of pleasure-oriented products because they are generally less price sensitive with these types of purchases. One reason for this could be that consumers often see higher prices as a cue for higher quality, and they may be more sensitive to quality when purchasing hedonic products than when purchasing utilitarian ones.

Examining new variables and measures. The effects of product type and incentive magnitude could interact with other variables such as the actual charity being chosen. To illustrate, linking Feed the Children to Godiva chocolates might seem in poor taste, particularly if the donation magnitude is small. Similarly, linking Virginia Slims to the American Lung Association could only call attention to the negative effects of the product. Another variable that could play a role is the perceived quality of both the brand being linked to charity and the other brand(s) in the choice set. For example, linking an unknown brand of inexpensive sneakers to the Special Olympics may not have the same effect as linking Nike sneakers with that same charity.

In addition to examining new independent variables, investigating new dependent measures could also prove useful in expanding our understanding of the phenomena reported in this article. For example, the perceptions consumers have of the motivations of marketers for participating in a given cause-related campaign could vary depending on the size of the donation being made, the nature of the product, the initial image of the brand being promoted, and the specific charity being used. These variables, along with the image they create, could easily affect long-term brand equity.

Further research on the role of emotion. Hedonic products may not be the only context in which guilt induces an increase in the appeal of a charity-linked promotion. Previous work (Irwin, 1994; Luce, 1998) suggests that emotion can be altered by manipulating decision attributes and that several negative emotions, including guilt, can be generated by products that are definitely not hedonic. Irwin's work (1994) is particularly relevant to the context of cause-related marketing because it demonstrated differential weighting of ethical attributes depending on the emotionality of the tradeoff context, with greater loss aversion for environmental (public)

goods than market (private) goods. Future work could apply these findings to the context of cause-related marketing by examining the effects of task-related emotion and the resulting weighting of ethical attributes on the appeal of charity incentives.

New product categories. A related direction for future work would be to examine products that do not quite fit into either the purely hedonic or purely utilitarian product category. This could include products that lead to guilt without pleasure as well as those that lead to pleasure without guilt. Because there are likely to be different types and degrees of both pleasure and guilt associated with different product types, it would be useful to classify both the nature and intensity of the emotions associated with each example used. For instance, in the case of products that create pleasure without guilt (e.g., all natural, nonfat frozen yogurt), it is unlikely that such products would be equally as pleasurable as their frivolous high-guilt counterparts. To illustrate, controlling for guilt, most individuals would derive more pleasure from a scoop of "real" ice cream with hot fudge sauce than from a cup of nonfat frozen yogurt with sliced bananas. This suggests that pleasure-oriented products that lead to little guilt may tend to offer less hedonic stimulation than pleasure-oriented products that lead to relatively higher levels of guilt.

A similar issue arises in examining products that create guilt without pleasure and in comparing such products to those that lead to both pleasure and guilt. This is because, although there are some products that could create guilt without pleasure due to their environmentally unfriendly nature (e.g., ozone-harming aerosol spray deodorant or nonrecyclable styrofoam cups), the guilt that comes from consuming such products is different from the guilt derived from consuming hedonic products (e.g., rum-filled chocolate truffles or lobster drenched in butter). After all, environmentally unfriendly products harm the entire planet rather than just the health or figure of the individual who is self-indulging. So, in the case of high-guilt, low-pleasure products, consumers are likely to feel guilty about the harm their consumption is causing to others rather than about the harm they may be inflicting on themselves personally. Furthermore, compared to marketers of self-indulgent products (e.g., Godiva chocolates), marketers involved in activities that are perceived as harmful to the environment are more likely to be seen as unethical (e.g., Exxon after the Valdez oil spill). This could add an additional confound in comparing high-pleasure, high-guilt products to low-pleasure, high-guilt products. Nevertheless, examining these new product categories could help to add new insight to the phenomena reported here, especially if detailed measures of both the nature and the intensity of the pleasure and guilt associated with each product are taken.

Final Thoughts

As I noted at the start of this article, a wide range of types of products utilize cause-related marketing promotions, and the magnitudes of donations offered vary a great deal. In this research, consistently strong and robust effects indicating a relation between product type and donation magnitude were demonstrated across a wide range of products. By taking a closer look at the interaction between these and other variables that could affect the success of a cause-related marketing campaign (e.g., the specific charity used or the initial perceived quality of the promoted and competing brands), consumer behavior researchers can gain a clearer understanding of the effects of linking brands with donations to charity. More generally, investigating such issues can enhance our understanding of the effects of context on the trade-offs consumers make every day between giving to others and obtaining a better deal for themselves.

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APPENDIX A1
Study 1: Two Counterbalanced Versions of a Question From the Practical Product, Small Magnitude Condition

Dental Exam and Cleaning

Which of the following dentists would you prefer for a routine exam and cleaning?

Dentist X
- Listed in the Yellow Pages, but only one person you know has used him.
- $65 for a routine exam + cleaning (X-rays not included).
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be discounted at the register.

Dentist Y
- Recommended by two friends, but not listed in the Yellow Pages.
- $66 for a routine exam + cleaning (X-rays not included).
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be donated to the March of Dimes.

Which of the two dentists would you be more likely to go to?
Dentist X Dentist Y

Dental Exam and Cleaning

Which of the following dentists would you prefer for a routine exam and cleaning?

Dentist X
- Listed in the Yellow Pages, but only one person you know has used him.
- $65 for a routine exam + cleaning (X-rays not included).
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be donated to the March of Dimes.

Dentist Y
- Recommended by two friends, but not listed in the Yellow Pages.
- $66 for a routine exam + cleaning (X-rays not included).
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be discounted at the register.

Which of the two dentists would you be more likely to go to?
Dentist X Dentist Y

APPENDIX A2
Study 1: Two Counterbalanced Versions of a Question From the Frivolous Product, Small Magnitude Condition

Professional Massage with Aroma-Therapy and Music

Which of the following massage therapists would you prefer for a professional massage with aroma-therapy and music?

Massage Therapist X
- Listed in the Yellow Pages, but no one you know has used her.
- $65 for a complete one hour massage with aroma-therapy and music.
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be discounted at the register.

Massage Therapist Y
- Recommended by two friends, but not listed in the Yellow Pages.
- $66 for a complete one hour massage with aroma-therapy and music.
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be donated to the March of Dimes.

Which of the two massage therapists would you be more likely to go to?
Massage Therapist X Massage Therapist Y

Professional Massage with Aroma-Therapy and Music

Which of the following massage therapists would you prefer for a professional massage with aroma-therapy and music?

Massage Therapist X
- Listed in the Yellow Pages, but no one you know has used her.
- $65 for a complete one hour massage with aroma-therapy and music.
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be donated to the March of Dimes.

Massage Therapist Y
- Recommended by two friends, but not listed in the Yellow Pages.
- $66 for a complete one hour massage with aroma-therapy and music.
- Because of a special promotion, 5% of the price will be discounted at the register.

Which of the two massage therapists would you be more likely to go to?
Massage Therapist X Massage Therapist Y

APPENDIX B1
Study 2: Two Counterbalanced Versions of a Question From the Practical Product, Large Donation Condition

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Required Textbook

Which store would you go to in order to purchase a required textbook for a class?

Bookstore X
Carries the textbook.
Priced at $60.00

Bookstore Y
Carries the textbook.
Priced at $80.00
25% of the price will go to Habitat for Humanity.

Please circle the one you would prefer:
Bookstore X Bookstore Y

Required Textbook

Which store would you go to in order to purchase a required textbook for a class?

Bookstore X
Carries the textbook.
Priced at $80.00
25% of the price will go to Habitat for Humanity.

Bookstore Y
Carries the textbook.
Priced at $60.00

Please circle the one you would prefer:
Bookstore X Bookstore Y

APPENDIX B2

Study 2: Two Counterbalanced Versions of a Question From the Frivolous Product, Large Donation Condition

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Concert Tickets

Your favorite band will be giving 2 local concerts. The concerts are equally distant from your home. Which would you be most likely to attend?

Concert Location X
Two tickets are $80.00
25% of the price will go to Habitat for Humanity.

Concert Location Y
Two tickets are $60.00

Please circle the one you would prefer:
Concert Location X Concert Location Y

Concert Tickets

Your favorite band will be giving 2 local concerts. The concerts are equally distant from your home. Which would you be most likely to attend?

Concert Location X
Two tickets are $60.00

Concert Location Y
Two tickets are $80.00
25% of the price will go to Habitat for Humanity.

Please circle the one you would prefer:
Concert Location X Concert Location Y

APPENDIX C
Sample Questions From Study 3: Two Counterbalanced Versions of a Question From the Practical Condition

Toilet Paper

Which brand of toilet paper would you prefer?

Quality Toilet Paper Brand A Priced at $3.95 for nine rolls 25% of the price goes to the Children's Miracle Network.	Quality Toilet Paper Brand B Priced at $2.99 for nine rolls 1% of the price goes to the Ronald McDonald House.

I would prefer
Brand A Brand B

Toilet Paper

Which brand of toilet paper would you prefer?

Quality Toilet Paper Brand A Priced at $2.99 for nine rolls 1% of the price goes to the Children's Miracle Network.	Quality Toilet Paper Brand B Priced at $3.95 for nine rolls 25% of the price goes to the Ronald McDonald House.

I would prefer
Brand A Brand B