



Social Connectedness in Cause Marketing: Is Donation Amount Benefits or Monetary Sacrifice?

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A clear understanding of how donation amount affects consumer response is important for CM success. The impact of donation amount on participation intentions in CM remains a controversial topic. However, recent research proposes consumers process donation amount information in two different ways (benefits or monetary sacrifice) depending on their construal level. Our study finds that the interaction effects of donation amount and construal level occur only when consumer social connectedness is low. These findings indicate that high social connectedness plays a role in lowering the perception of monetary sacrifice while enhancing CM participation intentions. Implications of the findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Cause marketing (CM), Donation amount, Construal level, Social connectedness, Perceived benefits, Perceived monetary sacrifice

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1. Introduction

As the interest in corporate sustainability continues to increase (Yoo & Lee, 2018), the interest in cause marketing (CM), one of the most popular types of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Chang & Chen, 2019; Chang & Cheng, 2015; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988; Webb & Mohr, 1998), has also increased. In fact, companies around the world spent about \$ 62.7 billion on CM in 2017, and the amount is expected to reach \$ 65.8 billion in the near term (IEG Sponsorship Report, 2018). Consumers are increasingly more likely to face CM or “cause-related” products when making shopping decisions (Grolleau, Ibanez, & Lavoie, 2016). As a result, academic interest in CM is also increasing. Previous studies have shown that although CM may lead to consumer skepticism, it generally has a positive effect on corporate image (Berger, Cunningham, & Kozinets, 1999; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Gupta & Pirsch, 2006; Nan & Heo, 2007), purchase intentions (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Pracejus, Olsen, & Brown, 2003), and word of mouth (File & Prince, 1998; Lee Thomas, Mullen, & Fraedrich, 2011). CM is an effective and useful marketing tool for companies.

Previous research suggests that various factors such as company (Strahilevitz, 2003),

consumer (Wymer & Samu, 2009), and cause (Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992) account for successful CM. We focus on donation amount among various factors because it is a strategic element that can be controlled directly by the manager (Müller, Fries, & Gedenk, 2014) and has direct relevance to the amount of the benefits that contribute to a social cause (Grau & Folse, 2007; Polonsky & Speed, 2001). Companies can set donation amount in a wide range, such as 1% donation of P & G or 50% donation of Tommy Hilfiger. In this regard, Yoo, Kim, and Doh (2018) proposed a dual role of donation amount. They suggest that donation amount is perceived as a benefit or as a monetary sacrifice, depending on construal level. Specifically, consumers with high-level construal perceived donation amount as a benefit, while those with low-level construal perceived donation amount as monetary sacrifice. In this study, we apply the dual role model of Yoo et al. (2018) and extend their study.

Furthermore, we focus on suggesting ways to lower perceptions of monetary sacrifice in order to increase consumer intentions to participate in CM. In particular, we examine the influence of social connectedness following previous research (Lasaleta, Sedikides, & Vohs, 2014; Xu, Zhou, Ye, & Zhou, 2015), and find that satisfying the

desire for social relationship weakens the desire for money and reduces the spending pain.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the role of the desire for social relationship in the context of CM. To do this, we apply the dual role model of donation amount and investigate whether the desire for social relationship increases the CM participation intentions by lowering perceived monetary sacrifice.

2. Theoretical Background

1) Cause Marketing

CM is “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), p.60.” In other words, CM is a marketing practice in which a company donates a certain portion of product revenue to help certain social agendas (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

Previous studies indicated that CM is not only a contribution to social causes, but it also benefits both the company and

consumers involved (Hemat & Yuksel, 2014). By allowing consumers to participate in CM, companies can reduce costs related to CM and generate profit. Smith and Alcorn (1991) suggest that CM is the most creative and cost-effective strategy for solving monetary factor problems. In addition, consumers have a positive attitude toward CM because it is a relatively easy way to make charitable donations (Dahl & Lavack, 1995). Customers also experience satisfaction and warm glow when they feel they are contributing to making a better society while meeting their personal needs (Polonsky & Wood, 2001), thus leading to positive attitudes toward CM (Andrews, Luo, Fang, & Aspara, 2014). Previous studies have shown that CM has positive effects on consumer behavioral intentions, including participant intentions, purchase intentions, and donation intentions (Barone, Norman, & Miyazaki, 2007; Coleman & Peasley, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2018; Lafferty & Edmondson, 2014; Müller et al., 2014) as well as on their attitudes toward brand, product, and corporations (Berger et al., 1999; R. Chen, Su, & He, 2014; Moosmayer & Fuljahn, 2010). Thus, successful CM campaigns help promote interest in social issues, create profit for corporations, and provide psychological satisfaction to consumers. In this sense, CM is a “win-win-win” strategy

for NPOs, companies and consumers (Hemat & Yuksel, 2014).

2) Donation Amount

Previous studies indicate that a variety of factors including company (Strahilevitz, 2003), consumers (Wymer & Samu, 2009), NPO (Barnes, 1992), donation-related causes (Ross, Stutts, & Patterson, 1991), and donation amount (Yoo et al., 2018) contribute to CM success. In this study, we examine the effect of donation amount on consumer response. Donation amount differs from other factors in that it has direct relevance on the size of the benefits that contribute to social issues (Grau & Folse, 2007; Polonsky & Speed, 2001) and can be controlled directly by the manager (Müller et al., 2014).

The amount of the donation offered in CM affects consumer attitudes and participation intentions in the campaign. However, the results of previous studies related to donation amount are not clear. On one hand, previous research showing that donation amount has a positive impact on consumer responses has found that the larger the donation amount, the more consumers feel the warm glow of helping others (Dahl & Lavack, 1995; Holmes & Kilbane, 1993; Moosmayer & Fuljahn, 2010). Previous research has also

found that when donations were small, consumers doubted the CM motives of the company and they were more likely to perceive that the companies are strategically using NPOs (Dahl & Lavack, 1995).

On the other hand, previous research also finds that negative effects of donation amount mainly refer to the monetary sacrifice perception of consumers (Yoo et al., 2018). That is, as the amount of the donation increases, consumers experience a negative feeling about paying more (Strahilevitz, 1999), which in turn has a negative impact on consumer intentions to participate in CM. According to Chang and Lee (2008), who investigate consumer preference differences for products with CM and price discounts, consumers tend to choose CM products over price discounts. However, as the amount of donations and discounts increase, they prefer price discounts rather than CM products. This is because consumers are more likely to perceive monetary sacrifice as the donation amount increases, so consumers prefer price discount rather than CM products at that stage. In a similar vein, Müller et al. (2014) showed that donation amount negatively affects the responses of consumers who are thinking about monetary aspects compared to those who are thinking about non-monetary aspects.

Previous studies have shown both a

positive and a negative impact of donation amount on consumer responses. Indeed, Howie, Yang, Vitell, Bush, and Vorhies (2018) suggest that the monetary and non-monetary efforts required in CM make consumers perceive costs as well as benefits. Likewise, Yoo et al. (2018) find that perceived benefits and monetary sacrifice of consumers varies according to donation amount. In the following section, we introduce the construal level as a factor influencing the relative salience of the dual roles (benefits and monetary sacrifice) of donation amount.

3) Donation Amount and Construal Level

According to Construal Level Theory (CLT), people construe the same event or information differently depending on how their construal level is activated (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Trope & Liberman, 2003). People with high-level construal interpret the event abstractly. At the high construal level, consumers focus more on desirability, which means the value of the action's end state. People with low-level construal, however, interpret the event concretely. At this construal level, consumers focus more on feasibility, which involves the means used to reach the end state (Liberman,

Sagrignano, & Trope, 2002; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Previous studies argue that consumers interpret psychologically distant objects at a higher construal level while psychologically near objects are interpreted at a lower construal level.

In the context of the dual roles of donation amount in CM, we focus on the difference between weights assigned to desirability and feasibility according to construal level. As mentioned above, consumers with high-level construal give greater weight to desirability than to feasibility and decide on the 'why' aspects of future action, whereas those at low-level construal give greater weight to feasibility than desirability and decide on the 'how' aspects of future action. This means that high-level construal allows the consumers to focus on the value and benefits gained after the acquisition of the objects, while the low-level construal allows the consumers to focus on the means or the ease of acquisition. In a similar vein, according to Bornemann and Homburg (2011), who investigated the relationship between price information processing and construal level, consumers with high-level construal perceive quality differently according to price level, but those with low-level construal perceive monetary sacrifice (instead of quality) differently according to price level. In

addition, Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak (2007) find that consumers with high-level construal focus more on the benefits of the product than the costs associated with the product, while consumers with low-level construal focus more on the costs than the benefits.

As Yoo et al. (2018) argues, construal level is an important variable that must be considered in relation to the donation amount in CM. In other words, the way consumers process information related to donation amount is expected to vary depending on their construal level. Specifically, consumers with high-level construal that focus more on benefits than monetary sacrifice will perceive benefits more strongly as donation amount increases, leading to more positive participation intentions in CM. However, consumers with low-level construal that focuses more on monetary sacrifice than benefits will perceive monetary sacrifice more strongly as the donation amount increases, leading to more negative participation intentions in CM.

4) Social Connectedness in CM

Although consumers know that participating in CM is a contribution to society, they may nevertheless experience losses such as monetary sacrifice as the donation amount

increases. These losses cause the pain that comes from spending money (Knutson, Rick, Wimmer, Prelec, & Loewenstein, 2007; Rick, Cryder, & Loewenstein, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the factors that have positive effects on the intention to participate in CM by reducing the perceived monetary sacrifice of consumers. We focus on the desire for social relationship, which is known to reduce the importance of money (Xu et al., 2015).

Previous research suggests that consumer perceptions of being included in social relationship and being valued by others are a positive resource for them (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984; Teoh, Chia, & Mohanraj, 2009). In addition, consumer feelings of social belonging play a role in reducing the various pains they experience (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Coan, Schaefer, & Davidson, 2006). In contrast, socially excluded people experience other types of pain such as loneliness (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; MacDonald & Leary, 2005). As a result, when people are exposed to threats or pains, they prefer to have social affiliation or social support to reduce these pains (Zhou, Lei, Marley, & Chen, 2009).

The desire for social relationship also influences consumer perceptions of money. The desire for social relationship and the

desire for money are interchangeable relationships (Lasaleta et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2015). In other words, fulfillment of the desire for social relationship reduces consumer desire for money (Chaplin & John, 2007). People tend to perceive the importance of money relatively less when the desire for social relationship is satisfied, but tend to perceive the importance of money more when the desire for social relationship is not met (Pieters, 2013). Indeed, Xu et al. (2015) shows that meeting consumer desire for social relationships lowers the importance of money and reduces the spending pain experienced when buying a product. This implies that social connectedness lowers the importance of money and the value of the monetary losses that consumers experience.

Therefore, the interaction effect of donation amount and construal level occur only when consumers' social connectedness is low. In other words, the interaction effect is expected to be diluted for consumers with high social connectedness. This is because the heightened perception of social relationships lowers the perception of the importance of money and shifts consumers' perceptions of the donation amount from a benefit to a monetary sacrifice (Xu et al., 2015; Yoo et al., 2018). Thus, consumers with high social connectedness could be expected to indicate a reduced perceptions

of monetary sacrifice related to the donation amount in CM. As a result, consumers with high social connectedness are expected to perceive donation amount as the benefits instead of the monetary sacrifice. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is presented:

H1. For consumers with low social connectedness, larger donation amount will be perceived as more benefits in the high-level construal condition than in the low-level construal condition.

However, we expect that the interaction effect between donation amount and construal level will occur for consumers with low social relationships. For them, there is no reduction in the importance of money caused by the fulfillment of the desire for social relationship. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2. For consumers with low social connectedness, larger donation amount will be perceived as more monetary sacrifice in the low-level construal condition than in the high-level construal condition.

H3. For consumers with high social connectedness, larger donation amount will be perceived as more benefits, not more monetary sacrifice, regardless of construal level.

3. Study Method

1) Data collection and sample

The purpose of this study is to verify whether the effect of donation amount and construal level on participation intention varies according to the social connectedness of consumers. 204 Americans via Amazon MTurk were recruited for a small monetary compensation. 52.9 percent of them ($n = 108$) were men and the mean age of the group was 37.98 years ($SD = 10.77$, age range = 20–73). Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups according to donation amount and construal level.

2) Experimental Stimuli

We selected ice cream as the experimental product category based on Hamby (2016). Experimental stimuli were produced in two different versions according to donation amount (see Figure 1). Following Yoo et al. (2018), the small amount was set at 5% of the price and the large amount was set at 40% of the price. Pretesting results ($n = 30$) on donation amount showed that participants perceived that donation amount was larger at 40% ($M = 4.87$) versus 5% ($M = 3.27$; $t = 4.870$, $p < .001$).



Figure 1. Example of stimuli: large donation amount condition

3) Experimental procedure

Participants performed three different tasks. First, they responded to the social connectedness items. They then performed construal level tasks (manipulation and manipulation checks). We manipulated the construal level of the participants following Fujita, Trope, Liberman, and Levin–Sagi (2006) and Wang, Hong, and Zhou (2017). Specifically, participants were presented with a list of 15 nouns (e.g., Pasta), and were then asked to write another word associated with the word presented. Participants with high construal level (HCL) were asked to write the abstract and higher category (e.g., food) of the words, while those with low construal level (LCL) were

asked to write a concrete and subordinate example (e.g., carbonara) of the words. Afterward, participants responded to the Behavioral Identification Form (BIF) (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989), which is manipulation check items of the construal level.

After performing the tasks related to construal level, they read the scenario with the experimental stimulus (see Figure 1) and responded to the questionnaire. The scenario contained information about the ice cream manufacturer and the current CM activities of company. Finally, participants completed measures of donation amount, perceived benefits, perceived monetary sacrifice, and intentions to participate in CM.

4) Measures

Social connectedness was measured using twenty items (e.g., “I am able to connect with other people” / “My friends feel like family” / “I feel comfortable in the presence of strangers”; $\alpha = .959$) following Lee, Draper, and Lee (2001).

The construal level of participants was measured by the BIF. The BIF describes each of 25 actions (e.g., reading) in two ways using a high-level (e.g., gaining knowledge) and a low-level (e.g., following lines of print) construal. Participants were

asked to choose the most appropriate option for each action. We coded 1 for high-level construal and 0 for low-level construal. The BIF score of the participants score is ranged from 0-25. The higher the BIF score, the higher the construal level of the participants.

Donation amount, which is the manipulation check item, was measured using two items (high amount/low amount, a below average amount/an above average amount; $\alpha = .822$) following Koschate-Fischer, Stefan, and Hoyer (2012).

Perceived benefits were measured using three items (“I derive benefit from supporting good causes used by purchasing advertised product” / “After purchasing the advertised product I am satisfied as my money helps support a good cause” / “I like that the company uses my money to support a good cause”; $\alpha = .888$) as in Andrews et al. (2014) and Green and Peloza (2014).

Perceived monetary sacrifice was measured using the two items (“I think the price of advertised product will be very high due to the donation size” / “I think the advertised product will be very expensive due to the donation size”; $\alpha = .829$) employed by Yoo et al. (2018).

Finally, participation intentions were measured using four items (“I think this cause marketing campaign is a good idea”

/ “I would be willing to participate in this cause marketing campaign” / “I would consider purchasing this product in order to provide help to the cause” / “It is likely that I would contribute to this cause by getting involved in this cause marketing campaign”; $\alpha = .922$) employed by Grau and Folse (2007).

4. Results

1) Manipulation check

The 2 (donation amount) x 2 (construal level) ANOVA for the donation amount showed that only the main effect of the donation amount as significant ($F = 144.056$, $p < .001$). Participants perceived that the donation amount was larger at 40% ($M = 5.51$) versus 5% ($M = 3.18$).

The 2 (donation amount) x 2 (construal

level) ANOVA for the BIF score showed that only the main effect of the construal level was significant ($F = 22.792$, $p < .001$). HCL participants ($M = 15.46$) have a higher construal level than LCL participants ($M = 12.53$). Therefore, the manipulations of donation amount and construal level were well supported.

2) Perceived benefits

We regressed perceived benefits on mean centered social connectedness index, donation amount, construal level, and their interaction terms. The results showed a significant main effect of donation amount ($\beta = .208$, $t = 2.578$, $p < .05$) on perceived benefits. Also, the results revealed significant interaction effect between social connectedness index, donation amount, and construal level ($\beta = -.270$, $t = -2.034$, $p < .05$) on perceived benefits. We conducted a spotlight analysis

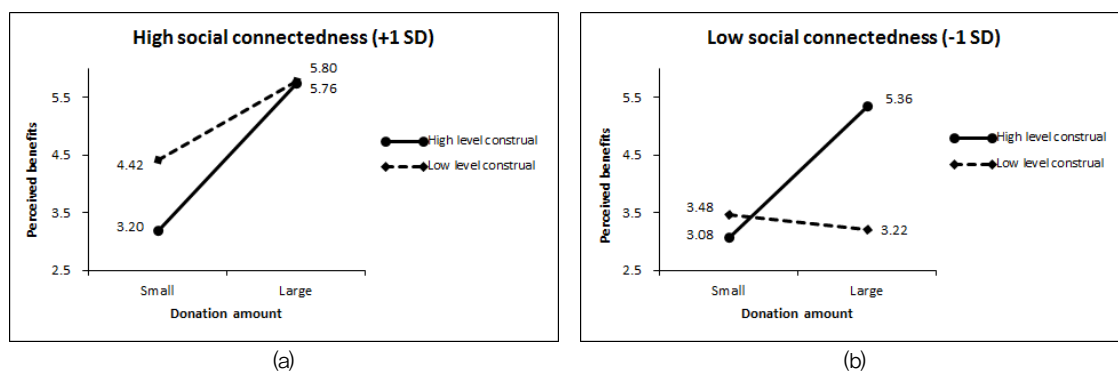


Figure 2. Interaction effects on perceived benefits: (a) high social connectedness condition and (b) low social connectedness condition.

(Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991) at one standard deviation below and above the mean of the social connectedness index (see Figure 2).

The results showed that in the case of high social connectedness (+1 SD), HCL participants (small amount: 3.20 vs. large amount: 5.76; $\beta = -2.56$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .01$) and LCL participants (small amount: 4.42 vs. large amount: 5.80; $\beta = 1.38$, $t = 2.55$, $p < .05$) were both more likely to perceive benefits as donation amount increases. However, in the case of low social connectedness (-1 SD), perceived benefits varied according to donation amount and construal level. More specifically, HCL participants perceived more benefits when donation amount was large ($M = 5.36$) than when it was small ($M = 3.08$; $\beta = 2.28$, $t = 3.60$, $p < .001$), whereas among LCL participants, differences in participants' perceived benefits according to donation

amount were not significant (small amount: 3.48 vs. large amount: 3.22; $\beta = -.26$, $t = -.46$, $p > .1$). This shows that the interaction effect between donation amount and construal level on perceived benefits was significant only when social connectedness of consumers was low. This is consistent with H1 and H3.

3) Perceived monetary sacrifice

The results of the regression analysis on perceived monetary sacrifice showed a significant main effect of donation amount ($\beta = .414$, $t = 4.533$, $p < .001$), qualified by a three-way interaction effect between social connectedness index, donation amount, and construal level ($\beta = .328$, $t = 2.719$, $p < .05$). The spotlight analysis (see Figure 3) showed that in the case of high social connectedness (+1 SD), there were no significant differences in perceived monetary

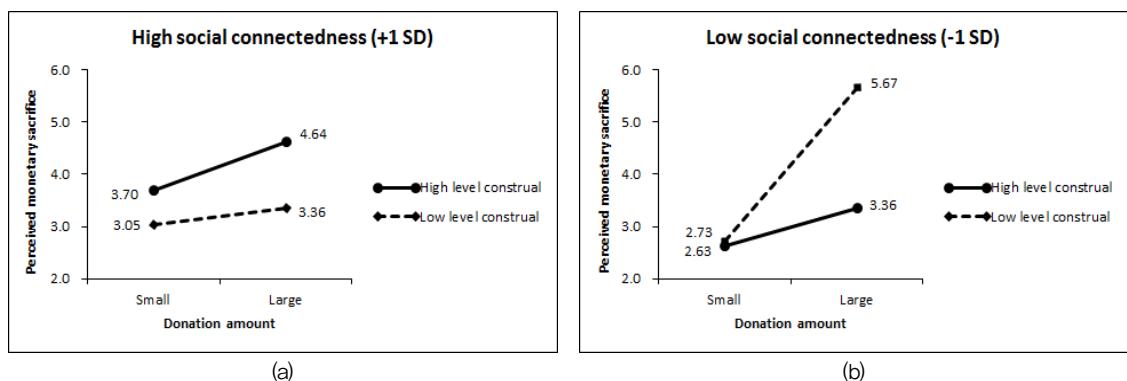


Figure 3. Interaction effects on perceived monetary sacrifice: (a) high social connectedness condition and (b) low social connectedness condition

sacrifice according to donation amount, regardless of construal level (all, $p > .1$). However, in the case of low social connectedness (-1 SD), LCL participants perceived more monetary sacrifice when donation amount was large ($M = 5.67$) versus small ($M = 2.73$; $\beta = 2.94$, $t = 5.79$, $p < .001$), unlike HCL participants (small amount: 2.63 vs. large amount: 3.36; $\beta = .74$, $t = 1.31$, $p > .1$). This means that the significant interaction effect between donation amount and construal level on the perceived monetary sacrifice, just as perceived benefits, occurs only when social connectedness of consumers is low. Therefore, H2 was supported. And this is consistent with H3.

4) Participation intentions

The results of the regression analysis on

participant intentions showed a significant and positive main effect of donation amount ($\beta = .216$, $t = 2.699$, $p < .01$). More importantly, we found a significant three-way interaction effect ($\beta = -.302$, $t = -2.291$, $p < .05$). The spotlight analysis (see Figure 4) showed that in the case of high social connectedness ($+1$ SD), HCL participants (small amount: 3.35 vs. large amount: 6.09; $\beta = 2.74$, $t = 4.37$, $p < .001$) and LCL participants (small amount: 4.57 vs. large amount: 5.90; $\beta = 1.33$, $t = 2.53$, $p < .05$) both had positive participation intentions as the donation amount increased. However, in the case of low social connectedness (-1 SD), participant intentions varied according to donation amount and construal level. More specifically, HCL participants had more positive participation intentions when donation amount was large ($M = 5.55$) versus small ($M = 3.22$; $\beta = 2.33$, $t = 4.81$, $p < .001$). Conversely, LCL participants had

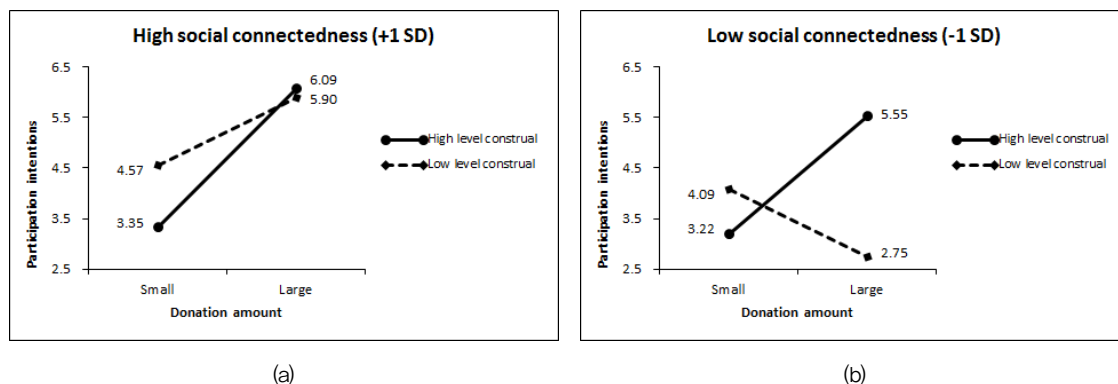


Figure 4. Interaction effects on participation intentions: (a) high social connectedness condition and (b) low social connectedness condition

more positive participation intentions when donation amount was small ($M = 4.09$) versus large ($M = 2.75$; $\beta = -1.34$, $t = -3.09$, $p < .01$).

5) Mediation analysis

To clarify the mechanism behind the effect of donation amount, construal level, and social connectedness on participation intentions, we performed mediation analyses by PROCESS macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) using 10,000 bootstrap resamples (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010) (see Table 1).

In the case of high social connectedness (+1 SD) and HCL, the indirect effect of perceived benefits was significant ($\beta = 2.10$, 95% CI: 1.05~3.05), indicating mediation. However, the indirect effect of perceived

monetary sacrifice was not significant ($\beta = .18$, 95% CI: $-.23 \sim 1.03$), indicating no mediation.

In the case of high social connectedness (+1 SD) and LCL, the indirect effect of perceived benefits was significant ($\beta = .88$, 95% CI: $.16 \sim 1.81$), indicating mediation. However, the indirect effect of perceived monetary sacrifice was not significant ($\beta = .18$, 95% CI: $-.07 \sim .75$), indicating no mediation.

This means that regardless of construal level, consumers with high social connectedness are more likely to perceive benefits rather than monetary sacrifice as the donation amount increases, leading to positive participation intentions in CM.

In the case of low social connectedness (-1 SD) and HCL, the indirect effect of

Table 1. Mediation Analysis Results

+1 SD social connectedness & high level construal				
IV	MV	DV	indirect effect	95% CI
donation amount	benefits	participation intentions	2.10	1.05 ~ 3.05
	monetary sacrifice		.18	-.23 ~ 1.03
+1 SD social connectedness & low level construal				
donation amount	benefits	participation intentions	.88	.16 ~ 1.81
	monetary sacrifice		.18	-.07 ~ .75
-1 SD social connectedness & high level construal				
IV	MV	DV	indirect effect	95% CI
donation amount	benefits	participation intentions	1.16	.36 ~ 2.23
	monetary sacrifice		-.09	-.54 ~ .08
-1 SD social connectedness & low level construal				
donation amount	benefits	participation intentions	-.03	-.76 ~ .16
	monetary sacrifice		-1.90	-3.46 ~ -.71

Note: IV = independent variable; MV = mediate variables; DV = dependent variable.

perceived benefits was significant ($\beta = 1.16$, 95% CI: .36~2.23), indicating mediation. However, the indirect effect of perceived monetary sacrifice was not significant ($\beta = -.09$, 95% CI: $-.54 \sim .08$), indicating no mediation.

In the case of low social connectedness (-1 SD) and the LCL, the indirect effect of perceived benefits was not significant ($\beta = -.03$, 95% CI: $-.76 \sim .16$), indicating no mediation. However, the indirect effect of perceived monetary sacrifice was significant ($\beta = -1.90$, 95% CI: $-3.36 \sim -.71$), indicating mediation.

This implies that consumers with low social connectedness and HCL (LCL) were more likely to perceive benefits (monetary sacrifice) as the donation increased, leading to positive (negative) participation intentions.

5. Discussion

We examined the effects of the dual roles (benefits or monetary sacrifice) of donation amount, construal level, and social connectedness on consumer participation intentions in CM. Findings of our study suggest that consumers with high-level construal perceive donation amount as a benefit and tend to have more positive participation intentions as donation amount

increases. However, those with low-level construal appear to perceive donation amount as a monetary sacrifice and tend to have more negative participation intentions. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the interaction effects of donation amount and construal level occur only when consumer social connectedness is low. When consumers' social connectedness is high, consumers perceive donation amount as a benefit, regardless of construal level.

This study has the following theoretical implications. With regard to donation amount in CM, we found that it influences participation intentions through perceived benefits and monetary sacrifice. We also confirmed that construal level determines the relationship between donation amount, perceived benefits, perceived monetary sacrifice, and participation intentions. In this sense, our study extends the results in Yoo et al. (2018). This study also presents a clear mechanism to account for the influence of donation amount.

This study also expands the CM framework by incorporating social connectedness. Our findings suggest ways to lower the monetary sacrifice perceived by consumers about donation amount using the social connectedness. Indeed, high social connectedness plays a role in lowering the perception of monetary sacrifice while enhancing CM

participation intentions. Our findings also provide additional support to previous studies on the interchangeable relationship between money and social relations (Xu et al., 2015) to the CM framework.

This study has several practical implications for company donation amount strategy. First, our results show that the donation amount strategy should be changed according to the construal level of consumers. High-level construal consumers perceive more benefits as donation amount increases, whereas low-level construal consumers perceive more monetary sacrifice as donation amount increases. Therefore, companies should offer a large donation amount for consumers with a high-level construal, but a small donation amount for those with low-level construal. If companies offer a large donation amount to consumers with a low-level construal, the companies may face negative consumer response despite their social contribution activities. In this case, companies should also develop a strategy to stimulate the construal level of consumers in order to reach a high level. According to previous research, “why” aspects stimulates consumers to reach a high construal level (Freitas, Gollwitzer, & Trope, 2004). Therefore, in conducting CM campaigns, companies should persuade consumers to focus on the purpose or value

of the campaign. In addition, companies can implement a CM campaign using psychological distance including the temporal, social, spatial, and experiential distance. The farther the psychological distance is, the higher the construal level of consumers (Liberman et al., 2002; Trope & Liberman, 2010). In implementing the CM campaign, companies should consider ways to change the construal level of consumers by using social distance or spatial distance in the actual purchasing situation.

Second, companies need to manage factors that affect the construal level of consumers. According to previous studies, construal level is influenced not only by psychological distance, but also by luxury perception (Hansen & Wänke, 2011), self-construal (Spasova & Lee, 2013), and mood (Labroo & Patrick, 2009). Companies can manipulate construal level of consumers through these factors. For example, consumers with positive mood have a high-level construal as opposed to those with a negative mood (Labroo & Patrick, 2009). Therefore, it is more effective to offer a large donation amount during times (e.g., Halloween, Christmas) or places (e.g., music festivals) when consumers may feel happier.

In addition, the results of this study show that the perceived monetary sacrifice

is alleviated when consumer social connectedness is high. The results also show that high social connectedness makes consumers perceive donation amount as a benefit. This means that companies need to consider ways to increase the social connectedness of consumers. In a similar vein, companies can develop strategies that use social support. Previous research shows that social support enhances social connectedness. For example, Xu et al. (2015) showed that placing messages such as “Don’t forget to put on your coat when you leave; it’s cold outside” in the store can increase the consumer perceptions of social support. By placing messages about social support in places where consumers may see information about CM, companies may be able to make consumers place more weight on the benefits instead of the monetary sacrifice involved in CM. Finally, when the service is provided, linguistic and nonverbal communication of employees can enhance the social connectedness of consumers (Adelman & Ahuvia, 1995; Buttle, 1998). Therefore, companies also need to actively use the communication between employees and consumers to help reduce consumer perceptions of monetary sacrifice and increase their participation intentions in CM.

Nevertheless, before generalizing the

results of this study, a number of caveats should be considered. First, the products used in this study are relatively inexpensive (ice cream). In future studies, it is necessary to conduct experiments using products with a higher price. As donation amount increases, consumers may perceive more monetary sacrifice in expensive products compared to inexpensive products. Therefore, it is necessary to check whether the influence of social connectedness on the monetary sacrifice still occurs at the expensive products.

Second, we did not investigate the differences according to product types. According to previous studies, the effect of CM is greater in hedonic products than in utilitarian products because CM reduces the sense of guilt involved when buying hedonic products (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Therefore, future studies need to examine the influence of product types.

Third, all the subjects who participated in the experiments in this study were American. But consumers’ perceptions of gains and losses can vary depending on their culture (Aaker & Lee, 2001). In future research, it is necessary to proceed with the experiment by reflecting this.

Finally, future research should consider other variables that may affect the effectiveness of CM. For example, in this

study, donation amount was presented as a ratio (%), but previous studies showed that consumer responses vary according to the framing (% vs. \$) of donation amount (Chang, 2008; Chen, Marmorstein, Tsiros, & Rao, 2012). Variables such as social distance to beneficiaries, the characteristics of NPOs in CM, and the similarity between the company and the causes contributed to may affect consumer perception of perceived benefits, perceived monetary sacrifice, and participation intentions in CM. In addition, it is necessary to examine whether the message framing strategy using benefits and monetary sacrifice, rather than examining the mediating effect of consumer perceptions of benefits and monetary sacrifice, affects consumers' intention to participate in CM. Future research should consider the influence of these factors.

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공익연계마케팅에서 사회적 연결감의 역할: 기부금액은 혜택인가 또는 금전적 희생인가?

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기부 금액이 소비자 반응에 미치는 영향에 대해 명확히 이해하는 것은 공익연계마케팅의 성공에 있어 매우 중요하다. 그렇지만 공익연계마케팅에서 기부 금액이 참여 의도에 미치는 영향은 여전히 논쟁적인 연구주제로 남아있다. 최근 선행연구들은 소비자들의 해석 수준에 따라 기부 금액 관련 정보가 상반된 2가지 방식(혜택 또는 금전적 희생)으로 처리 된다고 제안하였다. 이에, 본 연구는 사회적 연결감의 정도에 따른 기부 금액과 해석 수준 간의 상호작용효과를 분석하였으며, 소비자의 사회적 연결감이 낮을 때만 이러한 효과가 발생한다는 연구결과를 도출하였다. 이러한 결과는 높은 사회적 연결감이 금전적 희생의 인식을 낮춰주는 역할을 하여 소비자들의 공익연계마케팅 참여 의도를 높인다는 의미를 제공한다. 마지막으로, 연구결과와 시사점과 향후 연구에 대해 논의하였다.

주제어 : 공익연계마케팅, 기부 금액, 해석 수준, 사회적 연결감, 지각된 혜택, 지각된 금전적 희생

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