

This item is the archived peer-reviewed author-version of:

When do social alliances pay off? How the effect on corporate image depends on consumers' prosocial attitudes

Reference:

Roosens Bram, Dens Nathalie.- When do social alliances pay off? How the effect on corporate image depends on consumers' prosocial attitudes
Journal of brand management - ISSN 1350-231X - 26:2(2019), p. 195-208
Full text (Publisher's DOI): <https://doi.org/10.1057/S41262-018-0126-0>
To cite this reference: <https://hdl.handle.net/10067/1512210151162165141>

When do social alliances pay off? How the effect on corporate image depends on consumers' prosocial attitudes

Bram Roosens

University of Antwerp, Prinsstraat 13, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium.

E-mail: bram.roosens@uantwerpen.be

Nathalie Dens

University of Antwerp, Prinsstraat 13, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium.

Antwerp Management School, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

E-mail: nathalie.dens@uantwerpen.be

Abstract

This study examines the potential benefits for a company's corporate image in forming a social alliance with a social profit organization. Drawing on Associative Network theory, consumers' attitude towards the social profit partner should transfer to the company's corporate image. In addition, this article explores the moderating role of consumers' attitude towards helping others and their global attitude towards charitable organizations on the strength of this relationship. An online experiment (n=133) is conducted to test the hypotheses. The results show that, in a social alliance, a positive attitude toward the social profit partner positively impacts the corporate image of the company. Furthermore, we demonstrate that the more positive consumers' general attitude towards charitable organizations, the more positive their attitude towards a company involved in a social alliance. Consumers' attitude towards helping others positively moderates the effect of attitude towards the social profit on attitude towards the company. As a result, this study adds to a better understanding of how and when companies can strengthen their corporate image through social alliances.

Keywords

Social alliances, corporate image, corporate social responsibility, associative network theory, attitude towards helping others, attitude towards charitable organizations

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) – discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources intended to improve societal well-being (Korschun et al., 2014) – has grown significantly over the past years to become an integral part of business practice (Servaes and Tamayo, 2013, van Rekom et al., 2013). One of the major reasons for companies to pursue CSR initiatives is to enhance their reputation and engender goodwill among customers (Chernev and Blair, 2015). Extant literature extensively demonstrates that consumers value companies and brands that commit their resources for the better cause (e.g. Demetriou et al., 2010, Gatti et al., 2012, Melo and Galan, 2011, Skard and Thorbjørnsen, 2014). As a result, CSR is positively linked to corporate financial performance (Wang et al., 2015).

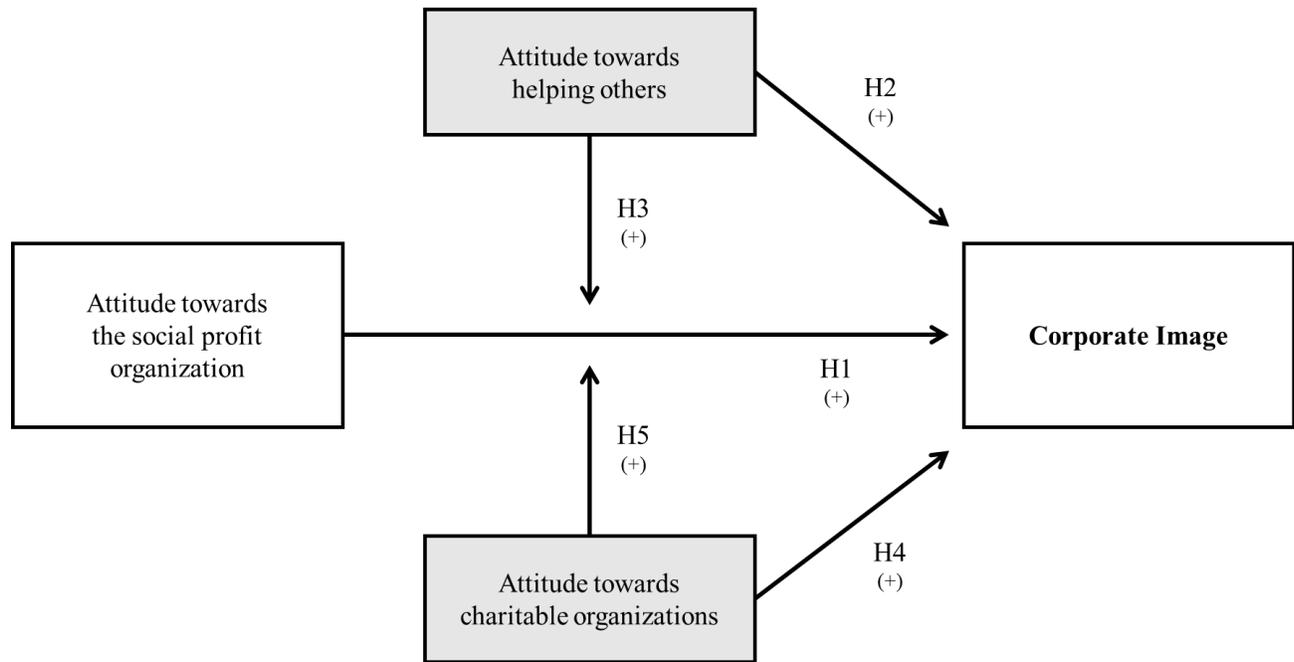
One of the ways in which companies pursue CSR is by forming social alliances (Birth et al., 2008, Du et al., 2010, Myers et al., 2013), i.e. alliances or partnerships with social profit organizations favoring both society in general and the partner's specific organizational goals (Vock et al., 2013), for example by means of sustainable co-innovation. Other terms used to describe social alliances include business nonprofit partnerships (Irmak et al., 2015, Sanzo et al., 2015), cause-brand alliances (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010, Lafferty, 2007, Myers et al., 2013) or co-branded cause related marketing (Baghi and Gabrielli, 2013). Examples of social alliances are numerous, attributable to a shift in corporations' CSR strategy from one based on pure philanthropy and goodwill building to one that is strategically embedded into the company activities and culture (Baumgartner, 2009, Joyce Stuart, 2013, Lozano, 2015, Porter and Kramer, 2002). Think of IKEA developing innovative refugee shelters together with the UN's Refugee Agency or Chiquita partnering with the Rainforest Alliance to grow their bananas in a more environmentally friendly way. Social alliances can typically result in a win-win situation for the

partnering organizations (Vock et al., 2013). Social profit organizations receive access to resources and knowledge, whereas the company partner may benefit from higher brand awareness and loyalty. In accordance with Associative Network theory (Anderson and Bower, 2014, Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001), research documents that social alliances often influence consumers' perceptions about corporations and their brands in a positive way (Austin and Seitani, 2012). At the same time, not all social alliances are well received by the public (Skarmeas and Leonidou, 2013, Wymer and Samu, 2009). Several authors have called for more research on social alliances to increase the current understanding of this promising form of collaboration. As prior empirical studies provide indefinite conclusions, it is critical to gain a better understanding of when social alliances will lead to positive perceptions, and when not.

There are a number of factors, such as the fit between partners (e.g., Guzmán and Davis, 2017, Irmak et al., 2015) and the perceived company motives (Forehand and Grier, 2003), that contribute to brand image and reputation in response to social alliances. In this paper, we focus on the spillover of people's attitude towards the social profit partner organization to the corporate image of the company partner. While previous studies have documented a positive relationship between the two (Lafferty et al., 2004), this relationship may be stronger or weaker depending on the circumstances. We propose that audience characteristics moderate the spillover effect. This is important because, first, there is relatively little research that documents how characteristics of the audience influence responses to social alliances (Vock et al., 2013). Second, according to Bhattacharya and Elsbach (2002), companies engaging in social marketing initiatives face the risk that some customer segments will indeed support the initiative, while other segments could be put off. To ensure companies' long-term commitment to (and benefits from) social alliances, insights with regard to the type of consumers for whom social alliances matter seem particularly important

to obtain. This study aims to contribute to this understanding by studying two dimensions of prosocial attitudes that are often considered together in social marketing literature, namely consumers' attitude towards helping others and their (general) attitude towards charitable organizations. Consumers' attitude towards helping others can be defined as "*global and relatively enduring evaluations with regard to helping or assisting other people*" (Webb et al., 2000, p.300) and is conceptually similar to altruism (Ranganathan and Henley, 2008). In contrast, the attitude towards charitable organizations is defined as "*global and relatively enduring evaluations with regard to the nonprofit organizations that help individuals*" (Webb et al., 2000, p.300). Although these two attitudes are related, we treat them as two distinct factors, in line with earlier research (Webb et al., 2000). Where the attitude towards helping others relates to the degree to which people believe that people should generally help other people, the attitude towards charitable organizations captures the degree to which people value the work of social profit organizations (e.g., whether these organizations are generally effective). The importance of studying prosocial attitudes in the context of consumers' responses to corporate social initiatives has previously been theoretically suggested (Du et al., 2010), but empirical evidence is largely missing. This is addressed in this study. The contribution of this paper is that we investigate how these two variables influence a brand's corporate image in response to a social alliance, both directly (as main effects) and as moderators to the well-documented spillover effects of the attitude towards the social profit partner to the brand's corporate image. By taking into account the moderating role of consumers' attitude towards helping others and towards charitable organizations, this paper adds to a better understanding of when social alliances are (more) positively perceived. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Social alliances: Affect transfer

Picking an alliance partner is not an easy decision to make, both for businesses as for social profit organizations, and depends on numerous factors (Andreasen, 1996, Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004, Liu and Ko, 2011, Wymer Jr and Samu, 2003). The potential positive effects of a social alliance on a company's brand image has already been extensively investigated in recent decades. Scholars acknowledge that results may differ depending on, among other factors, the social ally with whom a company collaborates (Baghi and Gabrielli, 2013). The majority of articles focus on the effects of company-cause fit on evaluations of the partnership as a whole, the company's brand(s) and its products (e.g. Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010, Irmak et al., 2015, Kim et al., 2012,

Lafferty, 2007, Vock et al., 2013). Most studies demonstrate that companies benefit from a good fit between their company and the social profit partner(s), for example because it induces a more positive CSR image for the company (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010). Other scholars however find no significant effect of company-cause fit on evaluations of the company (Lafferty, 2007). At the same time, several studies advocate that fit is not the only factor of interest, and that consumers' perceptions about the social profit organization play a crucial role in their evaluations of social alliances. Both Lafferty et al. (2004) and Gupta and Pirsch (2006) document a positive effect of consumers' attitude towards the social profit organization on evaluations of the social alliance. Similarly, a study by Dickinson and Barker (2007) indicates that an overall positive attitude towards both partners (brand plus social profit organization) before the alliance leads to positive evaluations of the partnership.

The attitude towards the specific social profit organization is thus not only of importance for the social profit organization itself, but also for the collaborating company. When they communicate about their collaboration, a company and a social profit partner organization become associated in consumers' minds. Therefore, in this study, we apply Associative Network theory (Anderson and Bower, 2014, Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001) to explain the effects of social alliances on a companies' brand image. Associative Network theory states that human memory is a network of interconnected nodes that activate each other in relevant contexts. The more associative links exist between two attitude objects, the easier it becomes to transfer affect and other associations from one attitude object to another (Bower, 1981). In recent years, Associative Network theory has been used, for example, to explain affect transfer or spillover effects in the context of brand portfolios (Borah and Tellis, 2016, He et al., 2016), brand extensions (Carter and Curry, 2013), co-branding (Baxter and Ilicic, 2015, Cunha et al., 2015, Heslop et al., 2013) and

brand placement (Verhellen et al., 2016a). In the context of social alliances, communications about an alliance increase the number and strength of associative links between the two partners. Associative Network theory posits that the transfer of affect is most probable if there is a strong link between organizations (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001). A social alliance will thus make the transfer of associations from the social profit partner to the corporate image of the company more likely. The more positive consumers' associations with the social profit organization are, the greater the potential benefits of an affect transfer for the companies' corporate image.

H1: Consumers with a more positive attitude towards the social profit partner organization will express more positive perceptions of a company's corporate image in response to a social alliance.

The role of consumers' attitude towards helping others and towards charitable organizations

Extensive research in different areas of marketing and brand management demonstrates that consumers' personality, attitudes or values strongly influence their consumer behavior (e.g. Basil and Weber, 2006, Chesbrough and Crowther, 2006, Ind and Coates, 2013, Romani et al., 2013). In the context of social alliances, there is evidence that consumers respond differently based on how familiar they are with the cause (Trimble and Rifon, 2006) or the brand (Lee and Rim, 2017), their involvement with the company (Irmak et al., 2015) or the cause (Trimble and Rifon, 2006), and the company-cause-customer fit (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006).

The present paper focuses on consumers' prosocial attitudes, based on social marketing literature. Ranganathan and Henley (2008) identify two important determinants of people's

charitable donation intentions: the attitude towards helping others and the attitude towards charitable organizations. The attitude towards helping others is defined as how people think and feel about helping or assisting other people, whereas the attitude towards charitable organizations reflects the degree to which people appreciate social profit organizations helping individuals (Webb et al., 2000). It should be stressed that both constructs reflect global attitudes, and not attitudes towards helping one particular individual or supporting one particular charitable organization. Several studies provide evidence that the attitude towards helping others and the attitude towards charitable organizations are positively correlated (Arlı and Lasmono, 2015, Ranganathan and Henley, 2008). However, the definitions above illustrate that they capture something else. The attitude towards helping others covers how people value helping others themselves, while the attitude towards charitable organizations captures how people value the work of charities. According to Ranganathan and Henley (2008), the extant marketing literature testifies that using a single construct to measure both would pose a threat to internal validity and reliability.

In the CSR literature, prosocial attitudes have been linked to brand responses. Generally, people who are highly prosocially motivated, i.e. express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others, respond more positively to companies' CSR actions (Basil and Weber, 2006, Romani et al., 2013). These studies clearly suggest that prosocial attitudes exert a main effect on brand responses. We will argue below that prosocial attitudes also moderate spillover effects from the social profit partner organization to a company's corporate image.

Attitude towards helping others

In the literature, consumers' attitude towards helping others is frequently associated with the concept of altruism (Ranganathan and Henley, 2008, Webb et al., 2000). Both concepts are regularly acknowledged as important determinants of charitable giving (Opoku, 2013). For example, D'Antonio (2014) finds that attitude towards helping others positively impacts consumers' willingness to donate to a charity. Similarly, Paek and Nelson (2009) document a positive effect of consumer altruism on consumers' response to cause-related advertising. Moreover, research suggests that altruistic values are strongly related to the broader concept of prosocial behavior (Vock et al., 2013). So-called prosocials – people who exhibit prosocial behavior – “*tend to maximize outcomes for both themselves and others (i.e., cooperation) and to minimize differences between outcomes for themselves and others (i.e., equality)*” (Van Lange et al., 1997, p.733). They are described as people who care about helping others and convert these feelings into actual helping behavior (Basil and Weber, 2006, Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989). Prosocials are (in comparison to more self-oriented individuals) more keen to donate to charities (Van Lange et al., 2007) and to volunteer for nonprofit organizations (Briggs et al., 2010).

Importantly, people's attitude towards helping others does not only influence their attitude and behavior in relation to social profit organizations, but also affects their evaluations of a company involved in a social alliance. Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) demonstrate that consumers with a positive attitude towards helping others react more positively to companies that donate a great amount of money to a social profit organization than consumers who care less about helping others. Other scholars show that more social-oriented people respond more positively to social alliances than self-oriented people, when there is a high perceived fit between both partners (Basil and Weber, 2006, Romani et al., 2013, Vock et al., 2013). In line with this research, we can expect

that a positive attitude towards helping others also positively influences consumers' perceptions of companies that are involved in a social alliance.

H2: Consumers with a more positive attitude towards helping others will express more positive perceptions of a company's corporate image in response to a social alliance.

Next to the direct effect of the attitude towards helping others on a company's corporate image, we also examine potential moderations. As stated in hypothesis 1, when people read about a social alliance, we expect that they will transfer their attitude towards the social profit partner to that of the company. We expect this effect to be stronger for people with a more positive attitude towards helping others, as explained in the rationale below.

Consumers with more negative attitudes towards helping others are less likely to value a company being involved in a social alliance. As a result, the potential positive effect of an affect transfer from the social profit organization is limited. It will not matter whether the social profit partner elicits positive or negative associations, as the upward potential of positive associations is limited. In contrast, consumers with more positive attitudes towards helping others are very keen to do what's best for others and for society in general (Webb et al., 2000). If they are very positive about the social profit organization with whom the company collaborates, they will also be very positive about the company. At the same time, striving for good also makes altruists more critical towards social alliances, as they are more cautious not to be misinformed or deceived, and supporting a bad cause (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2009). If they react unfavorably toward the particular social profit partner, their critical mindset may translate into a highly negative evaluation of the

company. The transfer of affect is thus expected to be stronger for consumers with more positive attitudes towards helping others, and weaker for consumers with more negative attitudes. In sum:

H3: A more positive attitude towards helping others strengthens the positive effect of consumers' attitude towards the social profit organization on corporate image.

Attitude towards charitable organizations

As stated, next to the attitude towards helping others, consumers' attitude towards charitable organizations is also acknowledged as an important determinant of people's charitable donation intentions. Hereby, charitable donations are not only determined by consumers' individual affinity with the particular cause they donate to, but also by a more general belief about the role of charities in society (Radley and Kennedy, 1995). The more people value the work of charitable organizations in general, the more likely they are to donate to a specific organization (Ranganathan and Henley, 2008).

Similarly as for hypothesis 2, one can expect that a positive effect of a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations will also persist in consumer evaluations of social alliances. People who believe charitable organizations deliver good work, will be more positive about an alliance between a company and a social profit than people who aren't generally favorable towards the work of charities. In turn, positive attitudes towards a partnership exert a positive influence on evaluations of the individual partners involved in the partnership (Dickinson and Barker, 2007, Dickinson and Heath, 2008, Simonin and Ruth, 1998), in this case the company involved in the alliance. As a result:

H4: Consumers with a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations will express more positive perceptions of a company's corporate image in response to a social alliance.

In line with the reasoning leading up to hypothesis 3, moreover, it seems reasonable to expect that consumers' attitude towards charitable organizations will play a moderating role in the affect transfer between the social profit organization and the corporate image of the company (hypothesis 1). Consumers with a more negative attitude towards charitable organizations will not like the company more or less regardless of whether they collaborate with a particular social profit organization or not. Contrarily, consumers with a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations will strongly care about a company's alliance with a social profit organization, and judge their corporate image based on the charities it collaborates with. As a result:

H5: A more positive attitude towards charitable organizations strengthens the positive effect of consumers' attitude towards the social profit organization on corporate image.

Method

Design and participants

To test the hypotheses, we designed a fictitious news article that informed respondents about a fictitious new social alliance between an existing clothing brand (Uniqlo®) and a charity. The choice for Uniqlo® as the test brand was driven by the fact that it is an existing brand, which enhances the ecological validity of the study. At the same time, Uniqlo® had been present on the Belgian market (where the data were collected) for only seven months at the time of the survey, with only two stores. As it is well documented in prior research that brand attitudes towards well-

established brands are difficult to change after a single communication (e.g., Dens and De Pelsmacker, 2010, Stammerjohan et al., 2005), we chose a brand that was not established (yet).

Through a literature review of recent literature (2007 or younger) on social alliances, we then distinguished characteristics of social alliances that can impact how consumers perceive social alliances and the organizations involved. First, extant literature postulates that consumers' familiarity with a social profit partner impacts their evaluations of social alliances (Kim et al., 2012). Second, there is evidence that consumers take the motives of the business to participate in a social alliance into account when evaluating such an alliance (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010). As a result, we drafted four slightly different news articles to correspond to a 2 (social profit familiarity: low, high) x 2 (motives: commercial, social) experimental design. This should improve the robustness of our results, as we have 4 stimuli and thus can test our hypotheses across these conditions. As the highly familiar charity, we selected UNICEF®, an internationally renowned organization promoting fair chances for children everywhere. As the lowly familiar charity, we invented a fictitious social profit named "Hope for Tomorrow", whose purpose was also described as promoting the welfare of children across the world. In the "commercial motives" condition, the company is said to collaborate with the charity to simulate shopping experiences with kids in Asia, helping not only the kids in developing thoughtful shopping behavior, but also the company to better understand the shopping experience of kids. In the "social motives" condition, the goal of the alliance is to improve the conditions in which Asian schools operate, like better hygiene or solving safety issues.

The experiment was conducted online. A sample of Belgian participants from a panel database collected by the research team was contacted by e-mail and asked to participate in the online experiment. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (between-

subjects design). After reading the news article, participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire. Participants that did not complete the entire questionnaire were excluded in further analyses of the data. Our final sample consists of 133 respondents. From these respondents, 61% was female. 36% of the participants had a Bachelor degree (or currently studying to obtain one), 50% a Master degree or higher (or currently studying to obtain one). The mean age of our sample was 25 years ($SD\ age = 8$ years), ranging from 16 years (youngest) to 68 years (oldest).

Measures

The questionnaire included the measures for the independent and dependent variable, the moderators and control variables. All variables were measured using multi-item 7-point Likert or semantic differential scales. We measured respondents' familiarity with the social profit (3 items, e.g., 'I have no knowledge/knowledge about Unicef® / Hope for Tomorrow', $\alpha = .962$) (Machleit et al., 1993) and with the for-profit brand (Uniqlo®) (same scale, $\alpha = .916$) as control variables. As the independent variable, we measured the attitude towards the social profit organization (4 items, e.g., 'Unicef/Hope for Tomorrow is a social profit that I do not support/support', $\alpha = .858$) (Irmak et al., 2015). Next, we measured the dependent variable 'corporate image' (5 items, e.g., 'Uniqlo has poor/good products', 'is/is not involved in the community', $\alpha = .836$) (Pope et al., 2004) and moderators 'attitude towards helping others' (4 items, e.g., 'helping troubled people with their problems is important for me', $\alpha = .895$) (Webb et al., 2000) and 'attitude towards charitable organizations' (6 items, e.g., 'social profit organizations perform a valuable role in society', $\alpha = .829$) (Webb et al., 2000). Finally, participants reported their age, gender and level of education. For multi-item scales, we computed the average score across the different items for use in the main analysis.

Results

The hypotheses presented above were tested by running a moderation analysis on the full sample in IBM SPSS Statistics 20, based on Hayes' PROCESS macro (model 2) (Hayes, 2013). We included the attitude towards the social profit organization as the independent variable ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.05$) and corporate image as the dependent variable ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .74$). Furthermore, two moderators were added to the model: consumers' attitude towards helping others ($M = 5.59$, $SD = .97$) and their attitude towards charitable organizations ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .94$). A Pearson's correlation test confirmed a significant but relatively weak correlation between both moderators ($r = 0.371$, $p < .001$), justifying the inclusion of both variables as separate moderators. Importantly, Pearson's correlation tests revealed a weak, yet significant correlation ($.190$, $p < .05$) between consumers' attitude towards helping others and their attitude towards the social profit organization, and a moderate and highly significant ($r = .344$, $p < .001$) correlation between consumers' attitude towards charitable organizations (in general) and their attitude towards the (specific) social profit organization. A strong correlation between the independent variable and a moderator may cause estimation problems in moderation analyses (Hayes, 2013). As discussed by Verhellen et al. (2016b), potential confounding effects due to the correlation between an independent variable and our two moderators can be averted by partialling out the influence of consumers' attitude towards the social profit organization (independent variable) on their attitude towards helping others (moderator 1), and on their attitude towards charitable organizations (moderator 2). We therefore regressed consumers' attitude towards the social profit organization on their attitude towards helping others and their attitude towards charitable organizations, respectively, in two separate linear regressions. The standardized residuals resulting from these analyses were saved into two new variables ('Residual attitude towards helping others' and 'Residual attitude towards charitable

organizations’). These residual variables were then included as moderators in our final model instead of the measured variables. In the remainder of this paper, ‘attitude towards helping others’ and ‘attitude towards charitable organizations’ thus always refer to their corresponding residuals. However, the same conclusions with respect to the hypotheses apply for this analysis as for a model including the original measures.

Additionally, three covariates were included in the model. As mentioned above, extant literature demonstrates that consumers evaluate social alliances differently depending on their familiarity with the partners (Harwood and Garry, 2014, Kim et al., 2012). Therefore, we included respondents’ self-reported familiarity with the social profit organization ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 2.24$) and with the company ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 2.03$) as covariates in the model. We also controlled for the company’s motive in the alliance by including the ‘goal’ as a dummy variable (social = 0, commercial = 1). To facilitate interpretation of the moderation analysis, all continuous independent variables, control variables and moderators were mean-centered. Besides, we used heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors to correct for potential incorrect inferences in case of the presence of heteroscedasticity (Carlo et al., 2003, Pater, 2009).

The results of the moderation analysis (Table 1) show that all three covariates exert a (marginally) significant effect on corporate image. Furthermore, the results reveal a significant positive effect of attitude towards the social profit organization on corporate image ($b = .152$, $t(124) = 2.47$, $p < .05$). This confirms H1, in that consumers with a more positive attitude towards the social profit organization also report a more positive corporate image after reading about the social alliance. Contrary to expectations, the direct effect of attitude towards helping others on corporate image is not significant ($b = -.083$, $t(124) = -1.25$, $p = .213$). We must therefore reject H2. We do, however, find a significant interaction effect between consumers’ attitude towards the

social profit organization and their attitude towards helping others ($b = .147$, $t(124) = 2.37$, $p < .05$). The positive effect of attitude towards the social profit organization on corporate image is stronger for people with a more positive attitude towards helping others, as shown in Figure 2. This confirms H3.

Table 1: Results – Effect on corporate image

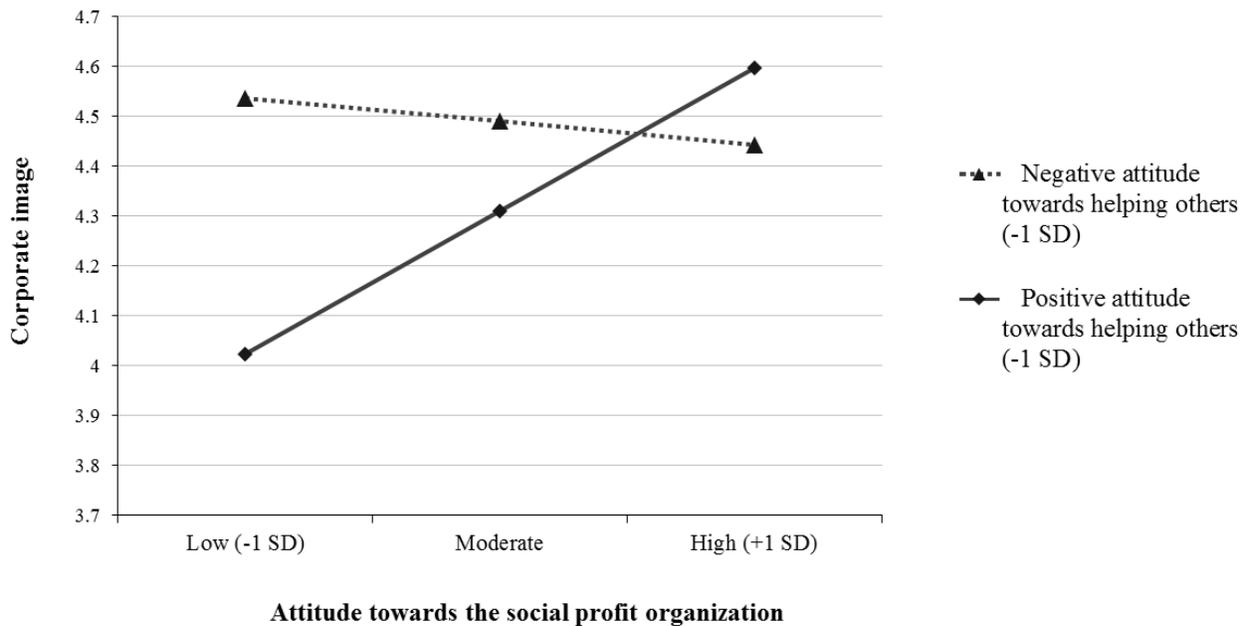
| Independent variables (direct effects) | Hypothesized effect | Unstandardized regression weight | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Attitude towards the social profit organization | + | .152 | 2.465 | < .05 | .030 | .275 |
| Attitude towards helping others | n.s. | -.083 | -1.251 | .213 | -.214 | .048 |
| Attitude towards charitable organizations | + | .215 | 3.713 | < .001 | .100 | .329 |
| Interaction effects (moderation) | | | | | | |
| Attitude towards the social profit organization * Attitude towards helping others | + | .147 | 2.367 | < .05 | .024 | .269 |
| Attitude towards the social profit organization * Attitude towards charitable organizations | n.s. | .047 | .883 | .379 | -.058 | .152 |
| Covariates | | | | | | |
| Social profit familiarity | | -.121 | -3.791 | < .001 | -.184 | -.058 |
| Company familiarity | | .092 | 2.768 | < .01 | .026 | .157 |
| Goal (social = 0, commercial = 1) | | -.154 | -1.454 | .148 | -.363 | .056 |

Model summary: $R = .545$, $R^2 = .297$, $F = 7.182$, $p < .001$

There is also a significant positive direct effect of consumers' attitude towards charitable organizations on corporate image ($b = .215$, $t(124) = 3.71$, $p < .001$). Consumers with a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations thus evaluate companies involved in social

alliances more positively than people with a more negative attitude towards charitable organizations, confirming H4. Conversely, no interaction effect between attitude towards the social profit organization and attitude towards charitable organizations is found ($b = .047$, $t(124) = .88$, $p = .379$). We must therefore reject H5.

*Figure 2: Interaction effect attitude towards social profit organization * attitude towards helping others*



Discussion

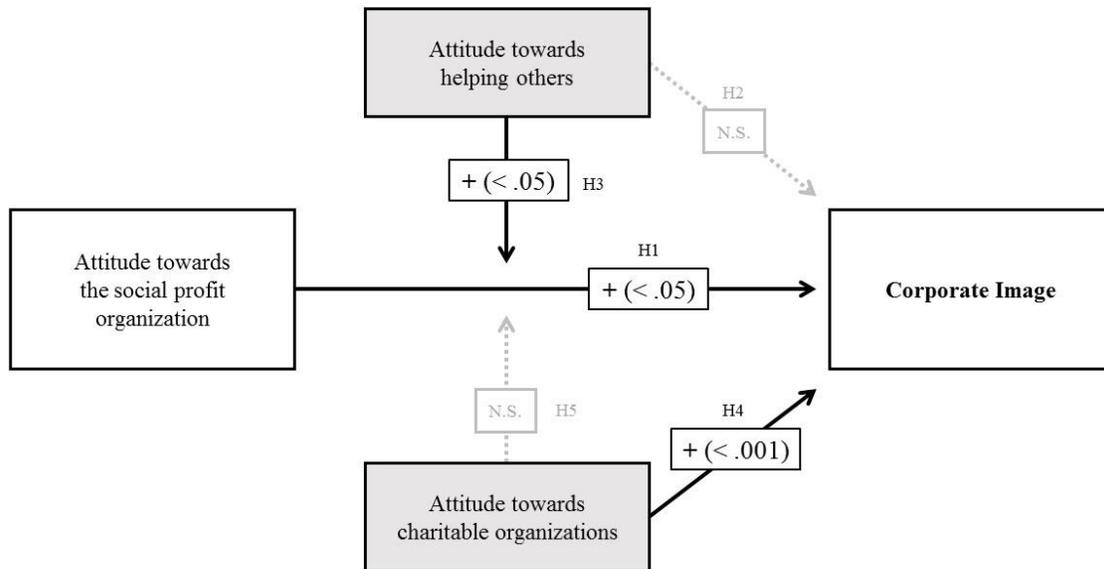
In this study, we investigate how consumers' attitude towards a social profit organization impacts the corporate image of a company involved in a social alliance. Furthermore, we examine the role of consumers' attitude towards helping others and towards charitable organizations in influencing the corporate image of these companies. Previous research had already demonstrated

that consumers' prosocial mindset is an important determinant in predicting the degree to which people will support charities (Ranganathan and Henley, 2008) and social alliances in general (Vock et al., 2013). Our study extends this research by showing how prosocial attitudes also stimulate positive perceptions of a for-profit company involved in a social alliance, both directly and as a moderator to the relationship between the attitude towards the social profit partner organization and corporate image.

The results confirm three of our five hypotheses (see Figure 3). First, we find that consumers' attitude towards a social profit organization transfers to the corporate image of a (for-profit) partner in a social alliance. A more positive attitude towards the social profit partner will lead to more positive associations with the company (and vice versa). The alliance forges links between the two partners. As defined by Associative Network theory, the transfer of affect is typically apparent when a strong link between two organizations exists (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001). A consistent communication about social alliances as part of the broader public relations strategy could help strengthen associations between partners, and lead to increased joint effectiveness of social alliances and public relations (Clark, 2000, Kim, 2011).

In contrast to our expectations, our results did not show a direct effect of people's attitude towards helping others on corporate image in response to a social alliance. Therefore, a more positive attitude towards helping others does not directly translate into a more positive image of a company involved in a social alliance (and through that, helping others). Importantly, however, the effect is qualified by a significant interaction. The transfer of affect is stronger for people with a more positive attitude towards helping others than for people who are less concerned with helping others. Research had already suggested that altruists (a trait related to the attitude towards helping others) are relatively critical about social alliances. Altruists are very concerned about supporting

Figure 3: Results – Conceptual framework



a cause they do not like (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2009). However, when they do like the cause, there is a great potential for a positive spillover effect of the attitude towards the charitable organization on corporate image. This is again in line with Associative Network theory: People with a more positive attitude toward helping others will hold stronger and more positive associations with helping others. When the social profit partner also elicits positive associations about the way in which they help others, this could lead to a synergetic effect. People with a more negative attitude towards helping others are likely more indifferent about the kind of social profit partner organization the company partners with.

Third, we show that people with a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations perceive for-profit companies involved in social alliances more positively than people with a more negative attitude towards charitable organizations. Consumers do not only have a network of

associations about particular social profit organizations, they also have a network of more general associations about charitable organizations. As such, Associative Network theory can explain our results. When a company appears to be involved in collaboration with a social profit, consumers' positive associations with social profits or charitable organization in general will transfer to the company, leading to a more positive corporate image of the business. On the other hand, we do not find an interaction effect between attitude towards the social profit organization and attitude towards charitable organizations. This implies that people with a more positive attitude towards charitable organizations will tend to value all companies that get involved in social alliances, regardless of whether they like the specific social profit partner in particular.

It is interesting to note that the results differ for the “attitude towards helping others” and the “attitude towards charitable organizations”. Different mechanisms seem at play. This provides further support for the fact that the two attitudes are distinct concepts and should be treated as such.

Managerial implications

The results of this study have some important implications for practitioners. CSR has a similar objective to public relations– to enhance the quality of the relationship of an organization with key stakeholder groups (Clark, 2000). Therefore, it is interesting to know which type of stakeholders might respond positively to such practices. First, entering into a social profit alliance is particularly fruitful if the company's target audience generally holds positive attitudes towards charitable organizations. People who value the work of charities in general, will also value a company that cooperates with charities. It can thus be interesting to specifically target this type of consumers, e.g. regular donors to charities, with information about the company's social alliances. According to Ramaswamy (2009), donation levels increase with respect to people's age, income

and level of education. When we consider the effect sizes, attitude towards charitable organizations is the factor that most strongly influences corporate image. Companies whose target audience does not generally value the work of charities (e.g. younger, lower-educated people with a lower income), therefore have little to gain from social alliances.

Second, the results of our study confirm the importance of a thoughtful selection of social alliance partners. Prior research has suggested that companies should select social profit partners that fit with their corporate image (e.g. Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010, Irmak et al., 2015). Our results suggests that it is also important to select a social profit that “fits” with (potential) customers in the sense that the social profit partner should elicit highly positive associations in the target group. This is in line with earlier suggestions that there should be a three-way fit between the company, the cause and the customer (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). Companies should make sure that they choose a social alliance partner that is positively perceived by their (potential) customers, as our study shows that consumers’ attitudes towards the social alliance partner transfer to the company’s corporate image. Therefore, selecting a social alliance partner that elicits more favorable responses provides for a greater upward potential for the company. Note that Associative Network theory prescribes that a positive transfer of affect is more likely the stronger the association between the company and social profit partner organization. Consumers are often unaware of companies’ CSR activities (Pomeroy and Dolnicar, 2009). In such cases, a transfer of associations is impossible. Building and maintaining strong associations requires a continuous communication effort from both the company and its social profit partner. We would advise to selectively choose a limited number of partners and to invest in strong, visible and long-term relationships with them. Stakeholder theory recognizes the high value of developing long-term mutual relationships with stakeholders rather than simply focusing on immediate profit (Andriof et al., 2017, Morsing and

Schultz, 2006). One way in which these long-term relationships can create value is thus the transfer of affect from the social profit partner to the company. Companies can for example strengthen their relationship, and as such their associations with the social profit, by demonstrating engagement in the social profit's activities and actively collaborating (instead of only donating money) in helping the social profit organization achieve their goals (Kourula and Halme, 2008, Slack et al., 2015).

Interestingly, selecting a positively perceived social profit partner for a social alliance is especially important when the company's target audience generally holds positive attitudes towards helping others. Especially young adults appear to value helping others themselves more than they value charities that help others. A study by Urbain et al. (2013, p.159) observed that Generation Y individuals (individuals born between 1977 and 1995) "*appear to be sociable, yet they evoke more sharing and solidarity than charity. Institutionalized forms of giving, particularly via charities and not-for-profit organizations, are rejected.*" There is also evidence that women have a more positive attitude toward helping than men (Carlo et al., 2003, Harwood and Garry, 2014, Nickell, 1998). However, our results do not show any significant differences between men and women in their attitude towards helping others ($t(131) = -.686, p = .494$) or their attitude towards charitable organizations ($t(131) = .043, p = .965$). As individuals with more positive attitudes towards helping others tend to be more cautious not to be misinformed or deceived through social alliances (Alcañiz et al., 2009), picking a social partner that is positively perceived by this group can thus be crucial. When they strongly like the cause with which the company collaborates, this will positively reflect upon the company. However, when they dislike the cause, they will also perceive the company more negatively. In that sense, when a company knows that its target audience is likely to have a positive attitude towards helping others, they may benefit

from researching the social profit organizations that their targets already donate to or volunteer for, as these are likely organizations that elicit highly positive (and strong) associations. Stakeholder management theory hereby suggests that companies should move from ‘informing’ and ‘responding’ to ‘involving’ customers and other stakeholders in their CSR communication (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). By doing so, strong associations can be built and misfit between cause and customer avoided.

In sum, our research demonstrates that both selecting the right partner and targeting the right audience with information about the social alliance can provide managers with a more positive corporate image. While companies cannot influence consumers’ stable personality traits, it is important to consider the characteristics of the target audience and identify important correlates with prosocial behavior (e.g., age, gender) that are easier to target on. Additionally, focusing on factors which companies are able to control, e.g., the selection of the partner, may help them to cope with specific personality characteristics. Brand managers should invest in associating their corporate brand with the social profit partner on a continuous basis (via e.g. public relations or advertising), to sustain the positive transfer of affect between alliance partners. As recent research demonstrates the positive effect of CSR on corporate financial performance (Wang et al., 2015), investing in social alliances should also provide financial returns for companies.

Limitations and further research

The present study has a number of limitations that could inspire future research. First, we did not measure pre-existing attitudes towards the company. While this choice was deliberate, as a pre-measurement of attitudes could have caused bias, we cannot say anything on whether social alliances actually lead to an INCREASE in brand attitude or corporate image, compared to before

the alliance. We also selected a company (Uniqlo®) that was not strongly established (yet) in Belgium at the moment of the experiment. Respondents on average reported a rather low familiarity with the company ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 2.03$). Although we included brand familiarity as a covariate in the model to reduce potential confounds, it is possible that spillover effects from a social alliance are weaker for well-established companies.

Next, we conceptualized the transfer of attitude as one-way, from the social profit partner to company corporate image. Associative Network Theory, however, describes that affect is transferred between two objects, and could therefore also run in the other direction. We cannot distinguish between the two directions in the current setup. Several authors already provide evidence that a social alliance can be win-win for all stakeholders involved (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005, Vock et al., 2013). Further research could assess who benefits most from network alliance effects – company, social profit organization, customers – under what circumstances and at what cost. In addition, we solely focused on attitude towards the charity, and corporate image, as relatively broad constructs. Associative Network Theory prescribes that a bunch of associations exist in consumers' minds about an organization. As such, when a social profit partner and a company become connected through a social alliance, other associations than reputation or brand image may also transfer between partners. Future research should test the extent to which more specific associations of a social profit partner, for example trustworthiness (Lichtenstein et al., 2004) or warmth (Aaker et al., 2010), may transfer to a company. Moreover, the transfer of associations could be tested for a larger variety of organizations in order to test the robustness of the findings. For example, Johnson et al. (2018) show that consumers tend to value social responsibility more (compared to ability) when considering consumption experiences (as opposed to considering product attributes). Clothing can likely be classified as an experience good,

so it would be interesting to test whether the same results hold for search goods. Subsequent studies can also further examine the role of the business motives for the social alliance (social/commercial) and consumers' familiarity with the two partners, as this article only includes these factors as covariates.

It should also be noted that we used convenience sampling to acquire the necessary amount of respondents for our experiment, leading to an overrepresentation of relatively young, higher educated people (students) in our sample. While some studies argue that student samples may lead to problems relating to external validity, the sample is relevant, as it corresponds to the target audience of the fashion retailer under study. These consumers mainly belong to the so-called "Generation Y" (Finn and Donovan, 2013). In line with earlier research (Urbain et al., 2013), participants in our sample on average reported a strong positive attitude towards helping others. Although the average attitude towards charitable organizations was considerably lower, it was not negative as suggested by Urbain et al. (2013). This may be due to the high amount of highly educated respondents. An extensive body of research illustrates a positive correlation between the level of education and charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011). Future research can corroborate our results for other age groups or a sample with a more diverse level of education.

Finally, an interesting path for further research is to further investigate the effects of consumers' (prosocial) values, such as *social value orientation* (prosocials vs proselfs), benevolence or individualism/collectivism from respectively Schwartz's (2016) and Hofstede's (2012) value frameworks. As mentioned in the introduction, the literature investigating consumer characteristics in relation to consumer perceptions of social alliances remains scarce. Our results provide further evidence that personal values are important to consider. Therefore, we encourage the further examination of other personality traits. Moreover, measuring respondents' attitude

towards helping others and towards charitable organizations on a self-reported scales may have led to misrepresentations of consumers' real thoughts and/or behavior (Alves et al., 2016). While self-reports are a common approach in this type of research (e.g. Chesbrough and Crowther, 2006, Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, Saarijärvi et al., 2013), using games measures like the ones used by Vock et al. (2013) and Van Lange et al. (2007) to classify people as either being prosocial or proself can be an interesting way to validate our results in future research. This research should then also investigate potential mediators to the effects we found, to better understand the underlying processes. This could also help to explain the discrepancies in the results for the attitude towards helping others and the attitude towards charitable organizations. Maybe the attitude towards helping others reflects a belief that PEOPLE should help other people, and not necessarily organizations?

References

- Aaker, J., Vohs, K.D. and Mogilner, C. (2010) Nonprofits are seen as warm and for-profits as competent: Firm stereotypes matter. *Journal of Consumer Research* 37(2): 224-237.
- Alves, H., Fernandes, C. and Raposo, M. (2016) Value co-creation: Concept and contexts of application and study. *Journal of Business Research* 69(5): 1626-1633.
- Anderson, J.R. and Bower, G.H. (2014) *Human associative memory*. New York: Psychology press.
- Andreasen, A.R. (1996) Profits for nonprofits: Find a corporate partner. *Harvard Business Review* 74(6): 47-59.
- Andriof, J., Waddock, S., Husted, B. and Rahman, S.S. (2017) *Unfolding stakeholder thinking: Theory, responsibility and engagement*. Routledge.
- Arli, D. and Lasmono, H. (2015) Are religious people more caring? Exploring the impact of religiosity on charitable organizations in a developing country. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 20(1): 38-51.

- Austin, J.E. and Seitanidi, M.M. (2012) Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses. Part 2: Partnership processes and outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 41(6): 929-968.
- Baghi, I. and Gabrielli, V. (2013) Co-branded cause-related marketing campaigns: The importance of linking two strong brands. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing* 10(1): 13-29.
- Basil, D.Z. and Weber, D. (2006) Values motivation and concern for appearances: The effect of personality traits on responses to corporate social responsibility. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 11(1): 61-72.
- Baumgartner, R.J. (2009) Organizational culture and leadership: Preconditions for the development of a sustainable corporation. *Sustainable Development* 17(2): 102-113.
- Baxter, S.M. and Ilicic, J. (2015) Three's company: Investigating cognitive and sentiment unit imbalance in co-branding partnerships. *Journal of Brand Management* 22(4): 281-298.
- Bekkers, R. and Wiepking, P. (2011) Who gives? A literature review of predictors of charitable giving part one: Religion, education, age and socialisation. *Voluntary Sector Review* 2(3): 337-365.
- Bhattacharya, C.B. and Elsbach, K.D. (2002) Us versus them: The roles of organizational identification and disidentification in social marketing initiatives. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 21(1): 26-36.
- Bhattacharya, C.B. and Sen, S. (2004) Doing better at doing good: When, why, and how consumers respond to corporate social initiatives. *California Management Review* 47(1): 9-24.
- Bigné-Alcañiz, E., Currás-Pérez, R. and Sánchez-García, I. (2009) Brand credibility in cause-related marketing: The moderating role of consumer values. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 18(6): 437-447.
- Bigné-Alcañiz, E., Chumpitaz-Cáceres, R. and Currás-Pérez, R. (2010) Alliances between brands and social causes: The influence of company credibility on social responsibility image. *Journal of Business Ethics* 96(2): 169-186.
- Birth, G., Illia, L., Lurati, F. and Zamparini, A. (2008) Communicating CSR: Practices among Switzerland's top 300 companies. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 13(2): 182-196.
- Borah, A. and Tellis, G.J. (2016) Halo (spillover) effects in social media: Do product recalls of one brand hurt or help rival brands? *Journal of Marketing Research* 53(2): 143-160.
- Bower, G.H. (1981) Mood and memory. *American Psychologist* 36(2): 129.

- Briggs, E., Peterson, M. and Gregory, G. (2010) Toward a better understanding of volunteering for nonprofit organizations: Explaining volunteers' pro-social attitudes. *Journal of Macromarketing* 30(1): 61-76.
- Carlo, G., Hausmann, A., Christiansen, S. and Randall, B.A. (2003) Sociocognitive and behavioral correlates of a measure of prosocial tendencies for adolescents. *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 23(1): 107-134.
- Carter, R.E. and Curry, D.J. (2013) Perceptions versus performance when managing extensions: New evidence about the role of fit between a parent brand and an extension. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 41(2): 253-269.
- Chernev, A. and Blair, S. (2015) Doing well by doing good: The benevolent halo of corporate social responsibility *Journal of Consumer Research* 41(6): 1412-1425.
- Chesbrough, H. and Crowther, A.K. (2006) Beyond high tech: Early adopters of open innovation in other industries. *R&D Management* 36(3): 229-236.
- Clark, C.E. (2000) Differences between public relations and corporate social responsibility: An analysis. *Public Relations Review* 26(3): 363-380.
- Cunha, M., Forehand, M.R. and Angle, J.W. (2015) Riding coattails: When co-branding helps versus hurts less-known brands. *Journal of Consumer Research* 41(5): 1284-1300.
- D'Antonio, J. (2014) The role of diffusion of responsibility, responsibility, and attitude in willingness to donate to a world hunger-related charity. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing* 11(1): 1-11.
- Demetriou, M., Pappasolomou, I. and Vrontis, D. (2010) Cause-related marketing: Building the corporate image while supporting worthwhile causes. *Journal of Brand Management* 17(4): 266-278.
- Dens, N. and De Pelsmacker, P. (2010) Consumer response to different advertising appeals for new products: The moderating influence of branding strategy and product category involvement. *Journal of Brand Management* 18(1): 50-65.
- Dickinson, S. and Barker, A. (2007) Evaluations of branding alliances between non-profit and commercial brand partners: The transfer of affect. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 12(1): 75-89.
- Dickinson, S.J. and Heath, T. (2008) Cooperative brand alliances: How to generate positive evaluations. *Australasian Marketing Journal* 16(2): 22-38.
- Du, S., Bhattacharya, C.B. and Sen, S. (2010) Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 12(1): 8-19.

- Eisenberg, N. and Mussen, P.H. (1989) *The roots of prosocial behavior in children*. Cambridge University Press.
- Finn, D. and Donovan, A. (2013) *PwC's nextgen: A global generational study: Evolving talent strategy to match the new workforce reality: Summary and compendium of findings*.
- Forehand, M.R. and Grier, S. (2003) When is honesty the best policy? The effect of stated company intent on consumer skepticism. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 13: 349-356.
- Gatti, L., Caruana, A. and Snehota, I. (2012) The role of corporate social responsibility, perceived quality and corporate reputation on purchase intention: Implications for brand management. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(1): 65-76.
- Gupta, S. and Pirsch, J. (2006) The company-cause-customer fit decision in cause-related marketing. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 23(6): 314-326.
- Guzmán, F. and Davis, D. (2017) The impact of corporate social responsibility on brand equity: Consumer responses to two types of fit. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 26(5): 435-446.
- Harwood, T. and Garry, T. (2014) Co-creation and ambiguous ownership within virtual communities: The case of the machinima community. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 13(2): 148-156.
- Hayes, A.F. (2013) *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- He, Y., Chen, Q., Tam, L. and Lee, R.P. (2016) Managing sub-branding affect transfer: The role of consideration set size and brand loyalty. *Marketing Letters* 27(1): 103-113.
- Heslop, L.A., Nadeau, J., O'reilly, N. and Armenakyan, A. (2013) Mega-event and country co-branding: Image shifts, transfers and reputational impacts. *Corporate Reputation Review* 16(1): 7-33.
- Ind, N. and Coates, N. (2013) The meanings of co-creation. *European Business Review* 25(1): 86-95.
- Irmak, C., Sen, S. and Bhattacharya, C. (2015) Consumer reactions to business-nonprofit alliances: Who benefits and when? *Marketing Letters* 26(1): 29-42.
- Johnson, Z.S., Lee, Y.J. and Ashoori, M.T. (2018) Brand associations: The value of ability versus social responsibility depends on consumer goals. *Journal of Brand Management* 25(1): 27-37.
- Joyce Stuart, H. (2013) Positioning the corporate brand as sustainable: Leadership de rigueur. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(9): 793-799.

- Kim, N., Sung, Y. and Lee, M. (2012) Consumer evaluations of social alliances: The effects of perceived fit between companies and non-profit organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics* 109(2): 163-174.
- Kim, S. (2011) Transferring effects of CSR strategy on consumer responses: The synergistic model of corporate communication strategy. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 23(2): 218-241.
- Korschun, D., Bhattacharya, C.B. and Swain, S.D. (2014) Corporate social responsibility, customer orientation, and the job performance of frontline employees. *Journal of Marketing* 78(3): 20-37.
- Koschate-Fischer, N., Stefan, I.V. and Hoyer, W.D. (2012) Willingness to pay for cause-related marketing: The impact of donation amount and moderating effects. *Journal of Marketing Research* 49(6): 910-927.
- Kourula, A. and Halme, M. (2008) Types of corporate responsibility and engagement with ngos: An exploration of business and societal outcomes. *Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society* 8(4): 557-570.
- Lafferty, B.A., Goldsmith, R.E. and Hult, G.T.M. (2004) The impact of the alliance on the partners: A look at cause-brand alliances. *Psychology & Marketing* 21(7): 509-531.
- Lafferty, B.A. and Goldsmith, R.E. (2005) Cause-brand alliances: Does the cause help the brand or does the brand help the cause? *Journal of Business Research* 58(4): 423-429.
- Lafferty, B.A. (2007) The relevance of fit in a cause-brand alliance when consumers evaluate corporate credibility. *Journal of Business Research* 60(5): 447-453.
- Lee, J. and Rim, H. (2017) Consumer evaluation of cause-brand alliance in cause-related advertising: The role of brand familiarity and personal relevance. *Business Management and Strategy* 8(1): 103-122.
- Lichtenstein, D.R., Drumwright, M. and Braig, B.M. (2004) The effect of corporate social responsibility on customer donations to corporate-supported nonprofits. *Journal of Marketing* 68(4): 16-32.
- Liu, G. and Ko, W.-W. (2011) An analysis of cause-related marketing implementation strategies through social alliance: Partnership conditions and strategic objectives. *Journal of Business Ethics* 100(2): 253-281.
- Lozano, R. (2015) A holistic perspective on corporate sustainability drivers. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 22(1): 32-44.
- Machleit, K.A., Allen, C.T. and Madden, T.J. (1993) The mature brand and brand interest: An alternative consequence of ad-evoked affect. *The Journal of Marketing*: 72-82.
- Melo, T. and Galan, I.J. (2011) Effects of corporate social responsibility on brand value. *Journal of Brand Management* 18(6): 423-437.

- Morsing, M. and Schultz, M. (2006) Corporate social responsibility communication: Stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. *Business Ethics: A European Review* 15(4): 323-338.
- Myers, B., Kwon, W.-S. and Forsythe, S. (2013) Creating successful cause–brand alliances: The role of cause involvement, perceived brand motivations and cause–brand alliance attitude. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(3): 205-217.
- Nickell, G.S. (1998) The helping attitude scale. Proceedings of the 106th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association; San Francisco.
- Opoku, R.A. (2013) Examining the motivational factors behind charitable giving among young people in a prominent islamic country. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 18(3): 172-186.
- Paek, H.-J. and Nelson, M.R. (2009) To buy or not to buy: Determinants of socially responsible consumer behavior and consumer reactions to cause-related and boycotting ads. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* 31(2): 75-90.
- Pater, M. (2009) Co-creation's 5 guiding principles or... What is successful co-creation made of. IN F. Strategy (Ed.) *Fronteer Strategy*: Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- Pomeroy, A. and Dolnicar, S. (2009) Assessing the prerequisite of successful CSR implementation: Are consumers aware of CSR initiatives? *Journal of Business Ethics* 85(2): 285-301.
- Pope, N.K.L., Voges, K.E. and Brown, M.R. (2004) The effect of provocation in the form of mild erotica on attitude to the ad and corporate image : Differences between cause-related and product-based advertising. *Journal of Advertising* 33(1): 69-82.
- Porter, M.E. and Kramer, M.R. (2002) The competitive advantage of corporate philanthropy. *Harvard Business Review* 80(12): 56-68.
- Prahalad, C.K. and Ramaswamy, V. (2004) Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy & Leadership* 32(3): 4-9.
- Radley, A. and Kennedy, M. (1995) Charitable giving by individuals: A study of attitudes and practice. *Human Relations* 48(6): 685-709.
- Ramaswamy, V. (2009) Co-creation of value — towards an expanded paradigm of value creation. *Marketing Review St. Gallen* 26(6): 11-17.
- Ranganathan, S.K. and Henley, W.H. (2008) Determinants of charitable donation intentions: A structural equation model. *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13(1): 1-11.

- Romani, S., Grappi, S. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2013) Explaining consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility: The role of gratitude and altruistic values. *Journal of Business Ethics* 114(2): 193-206.
- Saarijärvi, H., Kannan, P.K. and Kuusela, H. (2013) Value co-creation: Theoretical approaches and practical implications. *European Business Review* 25(1): 6-19.
- Sanzo, M.J., Álvarez, L.I., Rey, M. and García, N. (2015) Business–nonprofit partnerships: A new form of collaboration in a corporate responsibility and social innovation context. *Service Business* 9(4): 611-636.
- Servaes, H. and Tamayo, A. (2013) The impact of corporate social responsibility on firm value: The role of customer awareness. *Management Science* 59(5): 1045-1061.
- Simonin, B.L. and Ruth, J.A. (1998) Is a company known by the company it keeps? Assessing the spillover effects of brand alliances on consumer brand attitudes. *Journal of Marketing Research* 35(1): 30-42.
- Skard, S. and Thorbjørnsen, H. (2014) Is publicity always better than advertising? The role of brand reputation in communicating corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics* 124(1): 149-160.
- Skarmeas, D. and Leonidou, C.N. (2013) When consumers doubt, watch out! The role of CSR skepticism. *Journal of Business Research* 66(10): 1831-1838.
- Slack, R.E., Corlett, S. and Morris, R. (2015) Exploring employee engagement with (corporate) social responsibility: A social exchange perspective on organisational participation. *Journal of Business Ethics* 127(3): 537-548.
- Stammerjohan, C., Wood, C.M., Chang, Y. and Thorson, E. (2005) An empirical investigation of the interaction between publicity, advertising, and previous brand attitudes and knowledge. *Journal of Advertising* 34(4): 55-67.
- Trimble, C.S. and Rifon, N.J. (2006) Consumer perceptions of compatibility in cause-related marketing messages. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 11(1): 29-47.
- Urbain, C., Gonzalez, C. and Gall-Ely, M.L. (2013) What does the future hold for giving? An approach using the social representations of generation y. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 18(3): 159-171.
- Van Lange, P.a.M., De Bruin, E., Otten, W. and Joireman, J.A. (1997) Development of prosocial, individualistic, and competitive orientations: Theory and preliminary evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73(4): 733.
- Van Lange, P.a.M., Bekkers, R., Schuyt, T.N.M. and Vugt, M.V. (2007) From games to giving: Social value orientation predicts donations to noble causes. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 29(4): 375-384.

- Van Osselaer, S.M. and Janiszewski, C. (2001) Two ways of learning brand associations. *Journal of Consumer Research* 28(2): 202-223.
- Van Rekom, J., Berens, G. and Van Halderen, M. (2013) Corporate social responsibility: Playing to win, or playing not to lose? Doing good by increasing the social benefits of a company's core activities. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(9): 800-814.
- Verhellen, Y., Dens, N. and De Pelsmacker, P. (2016a) Do I know you? How brand familiarity and perceived fit affect consumers' attitudes towards brands placed in movies. *Marketing Letters* 27(3): 461-471.
- Verhellen, Y., Eelen, J., Dens, N. and De Pelsmacker, P. (2016b) The short- and long-term impact of brand placement in an advertiser-funded tv program on viewers' attitudes toward the sponsor brand and its main competitor. *International Journal of Advertising* 35(6): 932-948.
- Vock, M., Dolen, W.V. and Kolk, A. (2013) Changing behaviour through business-nonprofit collaboration? Consumer responses to social alliances. *European Journal of Marketing* 47(9): 1476-1503.
- Wang, Q., Dou, J. and Jia, S. (2015) A meta-analytic review of corporate social responsibility and corporate financial performance: The moderating effect of contextual factors. *Business & Society* 55(8): 1083-1121.
- Webb, D.J., Green, C.L. and Brashear, T.G. (2000) Development and validation of scales to measure attitudes influencing monetary donations to charitable organizations. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 28(2): 299-309.
- Wymer Jr, W.W. and Samu, S. (2003) Dimensions of business and nonprofit collaborative relationships. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* 11(1): 3-22.
- Wymer, W. and Samu, S. (2009) The influence of cause marketing associations on product and cause brand value. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 14(1): 1-20.

Appendix: Stimulus examples

Example A (Highly familiar social profit organisation / Social motives)

UNICEF COLLABORATES WITH JAPANESE FASHION RETAILER Unicef

UNICEF has entered into a new alliance with UNIQLO, working together to help poor children in schools in Asia. The Japanese multinational, with two branches in Antwerp, is mainly known for their well-designed and affordable quality clothing. In addition, the company appears to be socially involved in various initiatives. One of the initiatives is the "Clothes for Smiles" project. With this, UNIQLO supports various projects to give children around the world a better future. With "Clothes for Smiles" UNIQLO works with UNICEF in the "Schools for Asia initiative".

The collaboration focuses on four projects in four different countries. In Bangladesh schools are made child-friendly, in China children are being taught about hygiene, in the Philippines emphasis is put on safe and healthy schools, and in Indonesia innovative ways are sought to reduce the number of school leavers in poor Indonesian schools.

Example B (Unfamiliar social profit organization / Commercial motives)

HOPE FOR TOMORROW COLLABORATES WITH JAPANESE FASHION RETAILER UNIQLO

Hope for Tomorrow, a nonprofit focusing on the wellbeing of children all around the world, has entered into a new alliance with UNIQLO, working together to give children in Indonesia a fun experience through retail simulations. UNIQLO will use some of their profit generated through *heattech* and *ultra light down* products to support the project. The Japanese multinational, with two branches in Antwerp, is mainly known for their well-designed and affordable quality clothing. In addition, the company appears to be socially involved in various initiatives. One of the initiatives is the "Clothes for Smiles" project. With this, UNIQLO supports various projects to give children around the world a better future. Through "Clothes for Smiles" UNIQLO works together with Hope for Tomorrow for the "Shopping Experience Project".

The cooperation focuses on children in Indonesia. Through different simulations in a UNIQLO store, they can experience how it feels to go shopping. Through this experience, they want to give the children a chance to express their individuality, which is important for healthy psychological development. Uniqlo hopes to better understand and improve the shopping experience for children in our country. The project is supported by some of the revenue from the sale of *heattech* (thermal clothing) and *ultra light down* products from UNIQLO.