

Demonstrating a lack of brand/cause effects on point of sale donations

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Abstract. *Point of sale cause-related marketing has raised over \$2 billion for charities over the past 30 years, yet the subject remains largely unexplored in academic literature. The subject of brand/cause fit, however, is prolific throughout extant research, with many studies showing that high congruence between a company and a charity is necessary to achieve philanthropic success. This paper challenges current marketing thinking both conceptually and empirically. Employing tests of no-effect hypotheses following the guidelines set out by Cortina and Folger (1998), it is established that, in the point of sale cause-related marketing context, the traditional effects of brand/cause fits do not apply. Across three studies involving experimental designs and over 500 respondents, the results of one-way ANOVA analyses consistently demonstrate that a low brand/cause fit can be just as effective as a high/brand cause fit. These findings contribute to a profound understanding of social efforts such as cause-related marketing may not be as simple or easily understood as was once thought.*

Keywords: cause-related marketing, brand/cause fit, point of sale, retailing, null hypothesis testing.

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Introduction

"Would you like to add \$1.00 to your purchase today to support children's health?" Such marketing tactics may seem inconsequential at best – after all, how far can \$1.00 really go? – but recent statistics indicate that during one year, 63 companies raised \$358.4 million for charities using these very techniques (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). This relatively new form of cause-related marketing (CRM), referred to herein as point of sale CRM, is being rapidly adopted by companies across the nation, yet the topic is vastly underexplored throughout the academic literature. This research is an attempt to investigate one aspect of CRM as it relates to the context of the brand/cause fit. Traditionally, a lot of the literature on the subject purports that a high brand/cause fit, typically described as natural congruence between a company and a charitable cause, is significantly better on many aspects than a low brand/cause fit (Kim et al., 2015; Robinson et al., 2012; Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006). However, this paper

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proposes an exception to this ubiquitous finding by proposing a context in which the differential effects of low and high brand/cause fits do not apply.

Utilizing a methodological technique not often published in academic literature, that of testing no-effect hypotheses (Cortina and Folger 1998), this research shows that, despite what extant literature may purport, low brand/cause fits do not always result in significant differences from high brand/cause fits. Focusing on a point of sale CRM context, it is demonstrated across three studies that, in this context, testing the differences between low and high brand/cause fits on both attitudes and behavioral intentions consistently result in non-significance. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to challenge traditional thought in this area by exploring a context in which results contrary to extant literature can be consistently demonstrated. Stated differently, this paper seeks to show that, in a point of sale CRM context, a low brand/cause fit may be just as effective as a high brand/cause fit.

Previous research

CRM is a powerful and influential tool. In their seminal study on the subject, Varadarajan and Menon (1988) describe CRM as the marketing activity in which a company makes charitable donations in tandem with consumer transactions. Extant research demonstrates the benefits of employing CRM, such as positive brand evaluations (Ellen et al., 2006; Lafferty and Edmondson, 2014; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005), better brand positioning (Du et al., 2007; La Ferle et al., 2013), increased firm performance (Simionescu and Gherghina 2014), and even potentially higher stock value (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2009). Similarly, consumers increasingly desire for companies to engage in socially responsible behaviors: one study reports that more than 80% of respondents feel as though companies should associate with social initiatives (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006), and a recent nationwide survey reveals that 91% of respondents desire to see more brands contributing to social issues (Cone, 2013).

In light of the growing importance of CRM to both companies and consumers, much research has been undertaken to understand the concept of the brand/cause fit. Described as the perceived link between the brand and the social cause (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), some authors propose that the brand/cause fit “is the single most important aspect determining the quality of outcome for [CRM] initiatives” (Hamlin and Wilson, 2004, p. 675). Others conclude that “it is generally agreed that a high level of fit affects firms more positively than a low level of fit” (Kim et al., 2012, p. 163). However, several authors illuminate the complex nature of the relationship between fit and CRM effectiveness (Alacañizet al., 2010; Fleck and Quester, 2007; Lafferty, 2007). Some studies confirm the positive relationship between high fit and performance (Pracejus and Olsen, 2004; Samu and Wymer, 2009), and some findings reflect the negative relationship between low fit and performance (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). However, others propose conditions in which a low fit can provide similar benefits to what a high fit would traditionally accrue (Robinson et al., 2012; Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006; Sohn, Han, and Lee, 2012; Uhrich et al., 2014). Such findings corroborate recent developments in business research which illuminate the dark sides of the social efforts in which companies are engaged (i.e., Popa and Salanta 2014).

While brand/cause fits have been explored in many domains, one context that

MMCKS 228 has been overlooked is that of point of sale CRM. Rising in popularity, this CRM tactic involves asking consumers just before they conclude their transaction if they would like to contribute to a charitable cause with which the company is partnered. Methods of eliciting consumer support range from asking for a specific monetary amount (typically \$1.00) to rounding up the total of the purchase to the nearest dollar, with the rounded up portion supporting the charitable cause. A recent study reveals that 63 companies using a point of sale CRM tactic raised nearly \$360 million in one year, and these companies alone have raised over \$2 billion in the past 30 years (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). The amount of money companies have raised for charities by collecting a few cents at a time may be staggering, but the influence of these activities on consumers is overwhelmingly absent from academic literature. This paper focuses on one of the most prolifically studied aspects of CRM, the brand/cause fit, as it relates to this underexplored context of CRM.

The financial benefits of point of sale CRM are abundantly clear, but some have pointed out potential drawbacks of the marketing tactic. One consumer poll reveals that such tactics are perceived as an ambush that guilt consumers into making hasty and unwarranted charitable decisions (Taylor, 2014). Robson (2015) notes how the rapidity of the donation request may bring in money for the charity but does not allow the consumer time to elaborate on the beneficiary, reducing the potential for long-term relationships as well as the development of future donors and supporters. Roseman (2014) describes how many shoppers are uncomfortable declining the offer to support the charity when asked so blatantly in a public setting such as a shopping line. Furthermore, research on impulse buying, which point of sale CRM closely parallels, relates individual tendencies toward impulsivity to the action of following through with an impulsive behavior (i.e., Punj, 2011; Sharma et al., 2010).

Seeing as how point of sale CRM is certainly successful, but consumer reactions toward such campaigns may be mixed, this paper considers the impact such dichotomous perspectives have on the notion of brand/cause fit. Some of the most successful point of sale CRM campaigns involve partnerships that could be perceived as low fits, such as Lowe's and the Muscular Dystrophy Association or Kmart and the March of Dimes, both of which have brought in over \$130 million since their respective inceptions (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). Other successful campaigns involve supposed high fits, such as CVS Pharmacy and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or Toys "R" Us and Toys for Tots, the likes of which have raised nearly \$80 million since they began (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). Furthermore, from consumers' perspectives, the speed with which the decision to support the charity must be made, especially when under pressure with shoppers waiting in line behind them, does not allow for much elaboration on the partnership.

To briefly demonstrate the impetus for this paper, the amount of money raised by companies that implemented point of sale CRM in 2012, as identified by the Cause Marketing Forum's (2013) report, was assessed. Four doctoral students in marketing rated the company and its charitable partner as either a low fit or a high fit based on Simmons and Becker-Olsen's (2006) definition of the term: "Fit between a firm and a

sponsored cause is high when the two are perceived as congruent (i.e., as going together), whether that congruity is derived from mission, products, markets, technologies, attributes, brand concepts, or any other key association" (p. 155). Initial inter-rater reliability was 93.18%, and all discrepancies were discussed and resolved before conducting the analysis.

The Cause Marketing Forum (2013) report lists the amount of money each point of sale CRM campaign raised in both 2012 and over a 30-year period. These amounts were combined for partnerships that were classified as low fits as well as partnerships classified as high fits. The average amount of money raised by the low fit partnerships in 2012 was \$5.4 million, while the average amount of money raised by the high fit partnerships in 2012 was \$5.6 million. An independent samples t-test indicated that these differences are not statistically significant ($t = -.086$, $p = .932$). Over a 30-year period, the average amount of money raised by the low fit partnerships was \$74.6 million, and the average amount raised by the high fit partnerships was \$46.6 million. According to another independent samples t-test, these differences were not significantly different either ($t = .603$, $p = .552$). These initial results based on actual data from companies' point of sale CRM performances provide preliminary insight that, in this context, the traditional notion that a high brand/cause fit is critical for success may not be applicable.

Thus, this paper utilizes the procedure of testing no-effect hypotheses (Cortina and Folger, 1998). Specifically, this paper proposes that in a point of sale CRM context, there will not be significant differences between low and high brand/cause fits. Some have already expressed the potentially negative reactions point of sale CRM tactics may produce in consumers, so one outcome variable this paper addresses is that of consumers' attitudes toward the company engaged in the CRM campaign. Also, as recent statistics indicate, companies are raising vast amounts of money for charities, indicating that the campaigns must be working to some degree. Thus, behavioral intentions are assessed as well. This paper does not focus on what these attitudes or intentions might be per se, but rather whether or not they are significantly different for companies possessing a low fit with the charitable cause being supported and those with a high fit. Three studies explore this context across a variety of scenarios, each of which will be explained in greater detail. For now, stated formally:

H1. There are no significant differences between low and high brand/cause fits in a point of sale CRM donation context.

H2. There are no significant differences between low and high brand/cause fits in a point of sale CRM round up context.

H3. There are no significant differences between low and high brand/cause fits in a point of sale CRM round up context for medium or high purchase totals.

Research methodology

As far back as Platt (1964), numerous scholars have implored researchers in the social sciences to publish tests of non-significance (i.e., Cashen and Geiger, 2004; Cortina and

Folger, 1998), proposing that knowledge can be advanced by knowing when an effect does not occur in addition to when it does. Despite these calls, there still seems to be a tendency among publishers to only produce results that meet the golden, albeit often abused, standard of .05 levels of significance. This paper is an attempt to rectify this paucity in at least one research domain, that of the brand/cause fit, and establish boundary conditions on which two dimensions have no significant differential effect, the implications of which could be profound for both retailers and nonprofit managers.

However, in current publishers' collective defenses, reporting results on non-significance is not as straightforward as traditional null hypothesis significance testing procedures. Finding out that after months of design, data collection, and statistical analyses, the differences between two groups do not in fact meet the standard criteria for concluding significance does not mean that one can conclude the opposite. Rather, several steps should be taken to ensure that the non-significant results accurately reflect the population of interest and were not attained merely by measurement error or shoddy research design. This paper follows the steps outlined by Cortina and Folger (1998, pp. 344-345) for testing no-effect hypotheses:

1. Establish that the relationship or relationships in question can be detected under a certain level of a second predictor.
2. Establish that the p value or values associated with the relationship(s) hypothesized to be near zero fail to meet even liberal cutoffs.
3. Show that the slopes and/or fit values associated with Steps 1 and 2 are significantly different from one another.
4. Compute and evaluate confidence intervals about observed values.

Following the guidelines listed above, an outline of this paper's methodology and a summary of results is displayed in Table 1.

The first of these steps, as prescribed by Cortina and Folger (1998), is to establish that the effect in question does in fact exist in a context similar to the one being investigated. That is, if the effect does not hold in one context, is it due to negligent manipulations on the researcher's part, or is it because it is not present in said context? If the effect is found to exist in the theorized directions in one context but not in another, evidence is provided that the manipulations themselves may not be producing the differential results.

Table 1: Methodological Overview

| | Pretest | Study 1 | Study 2 | Study 3 |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Goal | establish the differential effects of low and high brand/cause fits | demonstrate the lack of an effect of brand/cause fit in a point of sale CRM donation context | demonstrate the lack of an effect of brand/cause fit in a point of sale CRM round up context | demonstrate the lack of an effect of brand/cause fit in a point of sale CRM round up context across multiple purchase totals |
| Independent Variables | - corporate boundary | - corporate boundary | - corporate boundary | - corporate boundary |
| Dependent Variables | - attitude toward the company - purchase | - attitude toward the company - donation | - attitude toward the company - round up | - attitude toward the company - round up |

| | intentions | intentions | intentions | intentions |
|----------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Context | traditional CRM context | donate \$1 before completing transaction | round up total to nearest dollar before completing transaction | round up total to nearest dollar before completing transaction |
| Sample | n = 102, Mechanical Turk | n = 128, online survey | n = 298, online survey | n = 299, online survey |
| Analysis | independent samples t-test | one-way ANOVA | one-way ANOVA | one-way ANOVA |

Source: Authors' own research.

Thus, a pretest was conducted to establish that the effects of brand/cause fit, as prescribed by most of the literature, are indeed upheld in a traditional CRM context. As heralded throughout previous research, it was expected that a low brand/cause fit would have a weaker impact on both impressions of the firm conducting the CRM and purchase intentions than a high brand/cause fit. This paper derives its definition from Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006), which was discussed above.

The pretest randomly presented one of two scenarios to respondents, each of which included a hypothetical retailer type (home improvement store) and a charitable cause the retailer was supporting (either community restoration project or local museum). An example of the scenarios used can be found in Appendix 1. These manipulations were chosen to corroborate previous research that has utilized similar scenarios (i.e., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill, 2006; Ellen, Mohr, and Webb, 2000) and to further validate the presence of the effects of brand/cause fit. That is, not only are the effects present in the manipulations used in this pretest, but they have been demonstrated extensively throughout the literature as well. Respondents were collected through a Mechanical Turk run by Amazon.com, and the final sample consisted of 102 respondents (62.4% male, average age 31 years, 57.9% with college degree or higher).

After reading the scenario, respondents were asked several questions corresponding to the information in the scenario. Impressions of the company supporting the charitable cause were measured using a four item bipolar scale adapted from Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2001), herein referred to as attitude toward the company. Intentions to purchase at the store in the future, or purchase intentions were measured using a three item bipolar scale adapted from Lafferty (2009). Perceptions of the appropriateness of companies to ask for charitable support, referred to as corporate boundary, were measured using a three item, five-point semantic differential scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree adapted from Lichtenstein et al. (2004). A manipulation check was also included to confirm that the manipulations portrayed the intended levels of brand/cause fit using a five point bipolar scale adapted from Rifon et al. (2004). The items for each scale can be found in Appendix 2.

The results from the pretest can be seen in Table 2. Significant differences on the manipulation check for fit indicated that the manipulations worked as intended (low fit, mean = 3.76; high fit, mean = 6.34; $t = -11.83$, $p < .0001$). As expected, in a traditional CRM context, a low brand/cause fit resulted in significantly lower attitudes toward the company and purchase intentions. Utilizing a median split, there were also significant differences between low and high levels of corporate boundary, a finding that will

MMCKS 232 contribute to the establishment of non-significant results throughout the proceeding studies. Thus, with differential effects between low and high brand/cause fits having been demonstrated with these manipulations, this paper turns to a new context in which to test these manipulations.

Table 2: Pretest Results

| | Brand/Cause Fit | | t-value | Significance |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | | |
| Attitude Toward the Company | 4.21 | 4.71 | -3.692 | < .0001 |
| Purchase Intentions | 5.35 | 5.89 | -2.459 | .016 |
| | | | | |
| Corporate Boundary | | | | |
| | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | t-value | Significance |
| Attitude Toward the Company | 4.71 | 4.19 | 3.84 | < .0001 |
| Purchase Intentions | 5.97 | 5.26 | 3.33 | .001 |

Source: Authors' own research.

Study 1

As discussed previously, in a point of sale CRM setting in which consumers are asked to participate in a charitable activity before concluding their purchase, brand/cause fit should have no effect due to the brevity of the event and lack of cognition required to make a decision. Study 1 looks at a point of sale CRM setting in which consumers are asked to donate \$1.00 to the retailer's charitable partner in addition to their purchase. This is a very common method that retailers use when implementing point of sale CRM (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). Though some retailers give consumers the option of choosing more than one donation amount (such as \$5.00, \$10.00, or \$20.00), \$1.00 was chosen as a realistic and minimally upsetting option. That is, a customer purchasing \$10.00 worth of products may be hesitant to donate \$20.00 in addition to his purchase, no matter how positively he perceived the company or the charity.

The company and charities chosen for Study 1 were identical to those used in the pretest. A low fit scenario was determined as one that included a home improvement store and a local museum, while a high fit scenario included a home improvement store and a community restoration project. The only difference in the scenarios between Study 1 and the pretest is that, instead of stating, "The cashier informs you that the store is currently supporting a local museum [a community restoration project]," the scenarios read, "The cashier informs you that your total is \$16.00 and asks you if you would like to donate \$1.00 to make your total \$17.00. The additional donated amount will be used to support a local museum [a community restoration project]."

Participants were emailed a request to take an online survey. A total of 134 respondents completed the online study, a one-factor (brand/cause fit: high, low) between-subjects design. 6 respondents were eliminated because their responses were incomplete. This resulted in a final sample of 128 responses (15.3% male, average age 43 years, 63.9% with college degree or higher). The survey included a randomly presented stimulus (either the low fit scenario or the high fit scenario) as well as several

questions. After reading the scenario, respondents were asked the same questions as those on the pretest, with the only adaptations being the purchase intentions question, which was changed to reflect the likelihood of respondents choosing to donate the extra dollar. The constructs that were measured included attitude toward the company, donation intentions, and corporate boundary, all of which used the same scales as those shown in Appendix 2.

One-way ANOVA was utilized for the analysis. The results from Study 1 are displayed in Table 3, which provides the statistics of both significance testing and confidence intervals, as prescribed by Steps 2 and 4 in Cortina and Folger's (1998) guidelines. For attitude toward the company, the means for Brand/Cause Fit are in the direction proposed by the literature (low fit, $M = 3.77$; high fit, $M = 3.85$); that is, the low fit scenario resulted in a lower attitude toward the company than the high fit scenario. However, these differences are not statistically significant ($p = .628$, $CI = -.397$ to $.240$). The same can be said for donation intentions: the low fit scenario resulted in lower donation intentions than the high fit scenario (low fit, $M = 4.84$, high fit, $M = 4.87$). Again, though, these differences are not statistically significant ($p = .933$, $CI = -.583$ to $.535$). This provides preliminary evidence that the differential effects of Brand/Cause Fit are not statistically significant in a point of sale CRM context.

To provide further evidence toward this end, a separate independent variable was included in the analysis to demonstrate not only its intended effect in the provided scenarios but the impact of the initial variable as well, in line with Step 3 of Cortina and Folger's (1998) guidelines. That is, does this context only impact the effects of brand/cause fit, or is it changing other variables as well? If this were the case, the findings would be more indicative of the context than the isolated variation among the variable in question, brand/cause fit. Thus, the independent variable of corporate boundary was analyzed in tandem with brand/cause fit through a median split similar to the one used in the pretest.

Table 3: Study 1 Results

| | | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | F | p-value | CI Lower Bound | CI Upper Bound |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|--------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Attitude Toward the Company | Brand/Cause Fit | 3.771 | 3.850 | .237 | .628 | -.397 | .240 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.125 | 4.496 | 72.587 | < .0001 | -1.689 | -1.052 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | 3.769 | .054 | | |
| Donation Intentions | Brand/Cause Fit | 4.841 | 4.865 | .007 | .933 | -.583 | .535 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.964 | 5.742 | 39.663 | < .001 | -2.337 | -1.219 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .381 | .538 | | |

Source: Authors' own research.

The results from the one-way ANOVA that included corporate boundary are also presented in Table 3. It can be seen that for attitude toward the company, there are significant differences between low ($M = 3.13$) and high ($M = 4.50$) levels of corporate boundary ($p < .0001$, $CI = 1.052$ to 1.689). Similarly, for donation intentions, there are

significant differences between low ($M = 3.96$) and high ($M = 5.74$) levels of corporate boundary ($p < .0001$, $CI = 1.219$ to 2.337). Furthermore, the interaction of Brand/Cause Fit with corporate boundary results in nonsignificant differences for both attitude toward the company ($p = .054$) and donation intentions ($p = .538$). This indicates that, in isolation, corporate boundary results in the expected differential impact on both of the dependent variables included in the analysis, but when combined with Brand/Cause Fit, the impact of corporate boundary is nonsignificant.

The results of the significance testing, confidence intervals, and distinct independent variable demonstrate evidence that, when donating \$1.00 in a point of sale CRM context, the differential effects of brand/cause fit are not statistically significant. Thus, Hypothesis 1 cannot be rejected. To extend these findings, Cortina and Folger (1998) suggest testing the effects in a variety of experimental contexts. Thus, Studies 2 and 3 replicate the analyses of Study 1 in a different point of sale CRM context.

Study 2

Another commonly used method of point of sale CRM is that of rounding up the purchase total to the nearest dollar, with the rounded portion of the transaction supporting a charitable cause (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013). Study 2 tested the same findings from Study 1 in this similar but distinct form of point of sale CRM. Two versions of this study were conducted, one with a medium amount to be rounded up (49 cents) and one with a high amount to be rounded up (93 cents). The scenarios were identical to those used in Study 1 with one change: instead of stating, "The cashier informs you that your total is \$16.00 and asks you if you would like to donate \$1.00 to make your total \$17.00," these scenarios read, "The cashier informs you that your total is \$16.51 [\$16.07] and asks you if you would like to round up your total to \$17.00." The survey containing these scenarios was distributed through e-mail and taken online, and respondents again saw only one of the four scenarios through a between-subjects design. The scales were identical to those used before with the only adaptation being round up intentions instead of donation intentions (i.e., the likelihood that respondents would round up their purchase total to the nearest dollar in this situation).

Participants were emailed a request to take an online survey. A total of 325 respondents completed the online study, a 2 (brand/cause fit: high, low) x 2 (round-up amount: medium, high) between-subjects design. 27 respondents were eliminated because their responses were incomplete. The final sample consisted of 298 respondents: 151 respondents viewed the medium round up amount scenario (21.9% male, average age 46 years, 70.3% with college degree or higher), and 147 viewed the high round up amount scenario (17.6% male, average age 47 years, 63.2% with college degree or higher).

One-way ANOVA was again utilized for the analysis. The results from Study 2 are displayed in Tables 4 and 5. The results for the medium round up amount revealed no significant difference in attitude toward the company (Table 4) for the low fit ($M = 3.62$) and high fit conditions ($M = 3.97$) ($p = .055$, $CI = -.706$ to $.007$). The results for round up intentions follow a similar pattern as there was no significant difference in the low fit (M

= 4.80) and high fit scenarios ($M = 5.21$) ($p = .146$, $CI = -.963$ to $.145$).

When including corporate boundary, Study 2 again mimics Study 1. In the medium round up scenario, for attitude toward the company, there are significant differences between low ($M = 3.27$) and high ($M = 4.31$) levels of corporate boundary ($p < .0001$, $CI = .682$ to 1.396). For round up intentions, there are also significant differences between low ($M = 4.34$) and high ($M = 5.67$) levels of corporate boundary ($p < .0001$, $CI = .778$ to 1.885). The interaction of Brand/Cause Fit with corporate boundary results in nonsignificant differences for both attitude toward the company ($p = .082$) and round up intentions ($p = .538$).

Table 4: Study 2 Results (Medium Round-Up Amount)

| | | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | F | p-value | CI Lower Bound | CI Upper Bound |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|--------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Attitude Toward the Company | Brand/Cause Fit | 3.619 | 3.968 | 3.753 | .055 | -.706 | .007 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.274 | 4.313 | 33.135 | <.0001 | -1.396 | -.682 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .082 | .775 | | |
| Round Up Intentions | Brand/Cause Fit | 4.804 | 5.213 | 2.133 | .146 | -.963 | .145 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 4.343 | 5.674 | 22.575 | <.0001 | -1.885 | -.778 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .538 | .464 | | |

Source: Authors' own research.

When looking at the scenarios that included the high round up amount, the results are again in the proposed directions (Table 5). For attitude toward the company, the low fit scenario ($M = 3.62$) resulted in lower attitudes than the high fit scenario ($M = 3.82$), though the differences were not significantly different ($p = .286$, $CI = -.566$ to $.168$). Round up intentions displayed similar findings: the low fit scenario resulted in lower intentions ($M = 4.63$) than the high fit scenario ($M = 5.03$). Once again, these differences were not statistically significant ($p = .188$, $CI = -1.003$ to 1.99).

When analyzed independently of Brand/Cause Fit, corporate boundary again resulted in significant differences between low and high levels for both attitude toward the company (low corporate boundary, $M = 3.20$; high corporate boundary, $M = 4.25$; $p < .0001$, $CI = .684$ to 1.418) and round up intentions (low corporate boundary, $M = 4.14$; high corporate boundary, $M = 5.52$; $p < .0001$, $CI = .775$ to 1.977). The interaction of corporate boundary and Brand/Cause Fit again resulted in nonsignificant differences for attitude toward the company ($p = .227$) and round up intentions ($p = .986$).

Study 2 has demonstrated that there are no significant differences between low and high fits in a round up point of sale CRM context. Thus, Hypothesis 2 cannot be rejected. It can be said that in two distinct point of sale CRM contexts, fit appears to have no significant effect on consumers' impressions of the company enacting the CRM campaign or on their behavioral intentions. In other words, a company and charity that possess low natural congruence could produce just as effective results as a company and

MMCKS charity partnership with high natural congruence. To ensure the robustness of these results, this paper extends the manipulations to one more study.

236

Table 5: Study 2 Results (High Round-Up Amount)

| | | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | F | p-value | CI Lower Bound | CI Upper Bound |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Attitude Toward the Company | Brand/Cause Fit | 3.621 | 3.820 | 1.146 | .286 | -.566 | .168 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.195 | 4.246 | 31.969 | < .0001 | -1.418 | -.684 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | 1.472 | .227 | | |
| Round Up Intentions | Brand/Cause Fit | 4.630 | 5.032 | 1.746 | .188 | -1.003 | .199 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 4.143 | 5.519 | 20.496 | < .0001 | -1.977 | -.775 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .000 | .986 | | |

Source: Authors' own research.

Study 3

Continuing with the point of sale CRM context that involves rounding up a consumer's total to the nearest dollar, Study 3 extends the round up scenarios to include two different purchase totals. For some retailers, such as consumer electronics stores, the nature of the products sold necessitate higher purchase totals than the roughly \$16.00 total used in Study 2. Thus, this study replicates Study 2 with two different purchase totals: \$47.07 and \$97.07. The high round up amount of 93 cents was kept constant between the two purchase totals. The scenarios were identical to those used in Study 2 with only the purchase total of \$16.07 or \$16.51 being changed to either \$47.07 or \$97.07. The survey containing these scenarios was once again distributed through e-mail and taken online, and respondents again saw only one of the four scenarios through a between-subjects design. The scales were identical to those used in Study 2.

Participants were emailed a request to take an online survey. A total of 318 respondents completed the online study, a 2 (brand/cause fit: high, low) x 2 (transaction amount: high, medium) between-subjects design. 19 respondents were eliminated because their responses were incomplete. The final sample consisted of 299 respondents: 140 respondents viewed the medium purchase total scenario (14.6% male, average age 46 years, 69.7% with college degree or higher), and 159 viewed the high purchase total scenario (15.8% male, average age 45 years, 68.6% with college degree or higher).

One-way ANOVA was utilized for the analysis. The results from Study 3 are displayed in Tables 6 and 7. For the medium purchase total scenarios (Table 6), the means for attitude toward the company are actually reversed from what was expected. That is, the low fit scenario resulted in a higher mean (M = 3.86) than the high fit scenario (M = 3.62). However, these differences were still not statistically significant (p = .199, CI = -.127 to .604). The means for round up intentions were also opposite from what was expected (low fit, M = 5.20; high fit, M = 4.82), but these differences were also not statistically significant (p = .207, CI = -.212 to .967). Per the nature of this paper, the unexpected directions of the means also provide tangential evidence that brand/cause

fits do not perform as expected in this context.

The results from corporate boundary were in line with those found earlier. The mean for attitude toward the company for low corporate boundary ($M = 3.36$) was lower than that for high corporate boundary ($M = 4.12$), and the difference between the two groups was significant ($p < .0001$, $CI = .398$ to 1.128). The same can be said for round up intentions: the mean for low corporate boundary ($M = 4.69$) was lower than the mean for high corporate boundary ($M = 5.32$), and the difference between the two was significant ($p = .035$, $CI = .045$ to 1.224). As before, the interaction of Brand/Cause Fit and corporate boundary resulted in nonsignificant differences for attitude toward the company ($p = .328$) and round up intentions ($p = .414$).

Table 6: Study 3 Results (Medium Purchase Total Amount)

| | | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | F | p-value | CI Lower Bound | CI Upper Bound |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Attitude Toward the Company | Brand/Cause Fit | 3.859 | 3.621 | 1.665 | .199 | -.127 | .604 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.358 | 4.121 | 17.065 | < .0001 | -1.128 | -.398 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .962 | .328 | | |
| Round Up Intentions | Brand/Cause Fit | 5.195 | 4.818 | 1.605 | .207 | -.212 | .967 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 4.689 | 5.324 | 4.536 | .035 | -1.224 | -.045 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .671 | .414 | | |

Source: Authors' own research.

When considering the high purchase total scenarios (Table 7), the results are in line with the previous two studies. For attitude toward the company, the mean of the low fit scenario ($M = 3.79$) was not significantly different than the mean from the high fit scenario ($M = 3.96$) ($p = .310$, $CI = -.484$ to $.155$). For round up intentions, similar results were found: the mean of the low fit scenario ($M = 4.91$) was not significantly different than the mean of the high fit scenario ($M = 4.92$) ($p = .965$, $CI = -.553$ to $.529$).

The results for corporate boundary were also upheld. The mean for attitude toward the company for low corporate boundary ($M = 3.48$) was lower than the mean for high corporate boundary ($M = 4.27$), and the difference between the two was significant ($p < .0001$, $CI = .476$ to 1.116). The mean for round up intentions for low corporate boundary ($M = 4.32$) was also lower than the mean for high corporate boundary ($M = 5.52$). The difference between these was significant as well ($p < .0001$, $CI = .660$ to 1.74). Finally, the interaction between Brand/Cause Fit and corporate boundary did not result in significant differences for either attitude toward the company ($p = .172$) or round up intentions ($p = .413$).

Table 7: Study 3 Results (High Purchase Total Amount)

| | | Mean (Low) | Mean (High) | F | p-value | CI Lower Bound | CI Upper Bound |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Attitude Toward the Company | Brand/Cause Fit | 3.791 | 3.956 | 1.037 | .310 | -.484 | .155 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 3.475 | 4.271 | 24.195 | < .0001 | -1.116 | -.476 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | 1.880 | .172 | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | | |
| Round Up Intentions | Brand/Cause Fit | 4.909 | 4.921 | .002 | .965 | -.553 | .529 |
| | Corporate Boundary | 4.315 | 5.516 | 19.260 | < .0001 | -1.741 | -.660 |
| | Brand/Cause Fit x Corporate Boundary | | | .674 | .413 | | |

Source: Authors' own research.

The results from these analyses provide sufficient evidence that across several purchase totals, the effects of brand/cause fit do not produce significant differences. Thus, Hypothesis 3 cannot be rejected. Taken in tandem, the three studies demonstrate across many different scenarios that, in a point of sale CRM context, low brand/cause fits do not result in significantly different attitudes or behavioral intentions than high brand/cause fits.

Discussion

This paper has attempted to conduct research in a way that is supposedly highly unpublishable throughout academic literature in the field of marketing, that of testing no-effect hypotheses. Because the notion of brand/cause fit is so ingrained in the CRM literature, and because this paper has identified a context in which such a traditionally heralded concept may have no effect, such nonsignificance testing is of great importance. It is not only beneficial to know when and how an effect exists but also the contexts in which the effect does not exist, especially when said context has been responsible for over \$2 billion raised for charities over a period of 30 years (Cause Marketing Forum, 2013).

The three studies have collectively produced evidence that the nonsignificant results obtained are not due to measurement error or chance. Following the suggestions of Cortina and Folger (1998), this paper has attempted to: (1) establish that an effect exists within a context; (2) demonstrated that the effect does not exist in a similar context using the same manipulations; (3) shown that the nonexistent effect is not due to a confound of the new context with the previously used manipulations by demonstrating the consistent intended effects of a separate independent variable; (4) demonstrated the nonsignificant effects over several experimental contexts and manipulations. The results from the three studies can be corroborated to provide sufficient evidence that in the context of point of sale CRM, low and high brand/cause fits do not have a significant impact on either consumer attitudes or behavioral intentions.

Extant literature concludes that low brand/cause fits are less effective than high brand/cause fits (Kim et al., 2012), and many studies have demonstrated that this conclusion is indeed the case in many contexts. This paper does not attempt to negate previous research but rather show a newly developing context in which the previous findings are not applicable. By showing that low and high fits do not influence attitudes or intentions in significantly different ways, this paper has identified an exception to the generalized rule of the effect of brand/cause fits. Also, the effects were replicated across two different methods of incorporating point of sale CRM, that of donating \$1.00 or rounding the purchase total to the nearest dollar. The effects of the round up method

were also replicated across different purchase totals, ranging from approximately \$16.07 to \$97.07. In no case did low and high brand/cause fits produce significantly different results, indicating that the context of point of sale CRM may indeed be one in which the differential effects of brand/cause fits do not apply.

Managerial implications

For managers, the findings in this paper are great news. In essence, when incorporating a point of sale CRM, managers do not have to worry about whether or not their company fits well with the charitable cause being supported. As was mentioned earlier, some of the most successful point of sale CRM campaigns involved companies and charities with low natural congruence. Whereas more involved corporate philanthropy programs may be affected by the notion of brand/cause fits, the brevity of the point of sale CRM tactic is not impacted by the effects that have been demonstrated throughout the past. Were managers to conclude that their point of sale CRM efforts were no different than other CRM tactics, their decisions based on extant research to only pursue charities providing high brand/cause fits would be made in vain?

Specifically, these studies revealed that impressions of a company implementing a point of sale CRM campaign will not differ between a low fit partnership and one that possesses a high fit. Much of the literature discusses the negative attitudes that result from companies sponsoring seemingly unrelated social causes. However, in this context, consumer attitudes do not seem to differ no matter how related or unrelated the company may be toward its charitable partner. Intentions to donate or round up, depending on the scenario at hand, are also unaffected by the congruence of the company and the charity.

Sometimes, managers are limited in the charities their company can support to achieve natural congruence. Big-box retailers with vast product lines are an example of this limitation. At other times, popular charities may be oversaturated with corporate partners, and the company's association may be perceived as more of a bandwagon effect than a genuine attempt at philanthropy. Managers can use the results of this research to strategically position their companies in charitable alliances in a point of sale CRM campaign. When not held back by the negative associations of a low fit with a charitable partner, managers have seemingly unlimited options for choosing a charitable partner.

For nonprofit managers, the results are just as encouraging. No longer do managers of charitable organizations have to seek the most congruent corporate partners to accrue monetary support. Just as managers are unlimited in their choice of philanthropic opportunities, so too are nonprofit managers unrestrained when seeking corporate sponsors for a point of sale CRM tactic. And, as has been demonstrated, such tactics can be surprisingly lucrative for participating organizations. If a nonprofit manager is having difficulty finding a long term corporate partner, he can focus instead on accruing the benefits attributable to short term point of sale CRM alliances, the likes of which could bring in more money and support in the long run than traditional brand/cause sponsorships.

This research is limited in several ways. The most obvious limitation is the lack of robustness for testing nonsignificance. Though this paper followed guidelines and suggestions of previous authors (Cortina and Folger, 1998), the lack of published tests of nonsignificance provides little external support for the research at hand. Thus, while the procedures used were meticulously conceived and carried out, the lack of a strong foundation for this type of research renders it open to potential unforeseeable flaws.

Also, because the context at hand is underexplored, its operationalization may not be inerrant. Some of the effects of point of sale CRM, such as the social pressure of waiting in a line full of impatient consumers, are difficult to provide through an online scenario. The differences of general support of charitable causes and elicitation of \$1.00 may seem simple, but there are possible nuances that are as yet uncovered due to the lack of research on the subject. Future research could extend the manipulations in this paper to more robust contexts, especially those found in field or observational studies.

Future research should also explore the concept of point of sale CRM in greater detail. This research narrowed its focus to issues concerning brand/cause fit, but there are a myriad of other topics throughout the extensive literature base of CRM that could be analyzed in the light of this new context. These studies have been an attempt to not only demonstrate the lack of an effect of brand/cause fits in a point of sale CRM context but an attempt to contribute to the deplorable amount of research intentionally testing nonsignificance. It is hoped that the findings herein will contribute to a growing knowledge base both in terms of CRM and methodological rigor, the implications of which are profound for managers of companies and nonprofits alike.

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Appendix 1 – Scenarios

Pre-test: Suppose you are shopping at a home improvement store that you occasionally visit. The store charges reasonable prices that are comparable to other stores. After choosing something to purchase, you walk up to the cashier to pay. The cashier informs you that the store is currently supporting a local museum [a community restoration project].

Study 1: Suppose you are shopping at a home improvement store that you occasionally visit. The store charges reasonable prices that are comparable to other stores. After choosing something to purchase, you walk up to the cashier to pay. The cashier informs you that your total is \$16.00 and asks you if you would like to donate \$1.00 to make your total \$17.00. The additional donated amount will be used to support a local museum [a community restoration project].”

Appendix 2 – Scales

Attitude Toward the Company (Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell, 2001)

five-point bipolar scale

bad/good

unfavorable/favorable

dislike/like

negative/positive

Intentions (Lafferty, 2009)

five-point bipolar scale

very unlikely/very likely

improbable/probable

definitely would not/definitely would

Corporate Boundary (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig, 2004)

five-point semantic differential scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”

Companies are asking too much of customers if they ask them to donate to a charity

It's not a company's role to raise money for charities

Companies are asking too much of customers if they ask them to donate in addition to the purchase

Perceived Fit (Rifon et al., 2004)

five-point bipolar scale

atypical/typical

does not make sense/makes sense

low fit/high hit

unconvincing/convincing

dissimilar/similar