

Cause branding attitude: An assessment of the role of cause immediacy and customers'  
psychographic characteristics

A quantitative study

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# **Cause branding attitude: An assessment of the role of cause immediacy and customers' psychographic characteristics: A quantitative research**

## **Abstract**

In this highly competitive market, brands struggle to differentiate themselves to increasingly conscious customers. Seeing the brands as social constructs, customers expect them to take a stance towards social and environmental issues; this expectation has given rise to “cause branding”, a strategy in which the customers are offered the opportunity to support a social/environmental cause by purchasing from a cause-branded company. Nevertheless, cause branding alone does not give a company a competitive advantage, as the immediacy of the cause and customers' characteristics play a crucial role in its success.

Although the existing literature on donation behaviors suggested that people tend to respond more positively to a disaster cause, as it is more immediate compared with an ongoing cause, this relationship has never been examined in a business-related field. Thus, the present study aimed to contribute to the existing literature on cause branding by examining the potential effect of cause immediacy on customer's attitude towards cause branding and the brand that employs it. In addition, the moderation role of customers' psychographic characteristics on the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding was investigated. Hence, the research questions developed were: *“How are customers' attitudes towards cause branding and the brand that employs it influenced by the immediacy of the cause? What is the role of costumers' psychographic characteristics?”*

To answer this research question, a quantitative approach was applied, and an online experimental survey was used to collect data from the Netherlands' residents (N = 150). To test the hypotheses, the participants were randomly assigned to two different conditions, in which they were provided with an ongoing cause or a disaster one. The results show a significant positive relationship between neither cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding nor cause immediacy and brand reputation. In addition, the customers' psychographic characteristics failed to be a significant moderator for the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding. The results do indicate a significant positive relationship between cause/brand fit with attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation. This finding provides insight for brands that want to opt for cause branding into how choosing a cause that is congruent with their values and identity can positively influence the customers' attitudes towards them.

Finally, as the failure in manipulation is predicted to be the main reason breeding the insignificant results, further research will be necessary to fully explore the relationship between cause immediacy, attitude towards cause branding, and brand reputation.

**KEYWORDS:** Cause branding, psychographic characteristics, cause-affinity, cause/brand fit, brand reputation

# Table of Contents

## Abstract

## Preface

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 Theoretical and social relevance .....	3
1.2 Chapter outline.....	4
<b>2. Literature Overview</b> .....	5
2.1 Cause branding and cause marketing.....	5
2.2 Cause immediacy .....	6
2.3 Brand reputation.....	7
2.4 Cause/brand fit.....	8
2.5 Cause-affinity.....	9
2.6 Psychographic characteristics .....	10
2.7 Conceptual framework.....	11
<b>3. Methods</b> .....	13
3.1 Choice of method.....	13
3.2 Sampling .....	14
3.3 Procedure .....	15
3.4 Stimulus material .....	16
3.5 Measurements .....	16
3.5.1 Independent variable .....	16
3.5.2 Dependent variable .....	17
3.5.3 Moderator variable.....	17
3.6 Data analysis .....	18
3.7 Validity and reliability .....	19
<b>4. Results</b> .....	20

4.1 Sample Characteristics.....	20
4.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations.....	21
4.3 Factor analysis.....	22
4.4 Hypothesis testing.....	24
4.5 Additional results.....	26
<b>5. Discussion.....</b>	<b>29</b>
5.1 Theoretical implications.....	29
5.2 Practical implications.....	31
5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research.....	31
<b>References.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Appendix A: Questionnaire.....	40
Appendix B: Factor analysis and Reliability test.....	45
Appendix C: Hypotheses testing with perceived immediacy as the predictor.....	47
Appendix D: Hypotheses testing with 134 participants.....	49

## **Preface**

I wrote this thesis in one of the darkest periods of my country, when my compatriots were buried under the rubble of the Metropol building, died in the Mashhad-Yazd train derailment, and got arrested for asking for their basic rights. To me, writing this thesis was not only educative but a safe place where I could detach from all those heart-breaking events and experience the sweet sense of learning.

I would not be able to manage all this without the help of my supervisor, Serge Rijsdijk, who encouraged me to dive into the world that was unknown to me, supported me whenever I felt disappointed and gave me a fresh and different perspective on research-related fields. Furthermore, the opportunity to pursue my master's would not have been possible without Hamideh, my sister who supported me in every way and was always there for me. I also would like to thank my parents, who showed me their love although being so far from me. Last but not least, I want to thank Fardad, my boyfriend, who believed in me and loved me when I was at my worst.

# 1. Introduction

Branding is the act of recognizing the characteristics that make a business or product unique and different from its competitors (Hall, 2021). To reach this aim, different strategies can be adopted, and cause branding is one of the most used ones. In essence, cause branding refers to “a strategy that offers consumers opportunities to make cause-based purchases for making positive changes for social issues other than personal benefits” (Kim and Johnson, 2011 as cited in Kim & Sullivan, 2019, p.9). Simply put, by employing this strategy, the care for social issues becomes a competitive advantage helping the company stand out from the competition and build an excellent reputation (Galan-Ladero et al., 2021; Gupta, 2019).

Regarding the customers, studies show that they are becoming more conscious and concerned about the brands and their aims, in the sense that they do not consider brands simply as an economic construct anymore but a social one that should be morally evaluated (Fan, 2005). Knowing that the company is involved in a social/environmental cause affects the customer’s perception of a company as they consider it to be more acceptable and credible (Zhang et al., 2020). A national survey conducted by Golin-Harris (2005) shows that 72% of the participants believed it is acceptable if companies affiliate with causes as a part of their marketing, 86% of them stated that they are willing to switch brands in favor of a company which supports social causes (Kim & Youn, 2008), and even 76% would refuse to purchase from a company that is supporting a cause contrary to their values (Cone, 2017).

However, the act of supporting a cause itself does not necessarily lead to a competitive advantage for the brand. If used in the wrong way, not only cannot cause branding benefit the businesses but also it damages their reputation. This usually happens when the customers consider the employment of this strategy to be solely a marketing ploy (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Nevertheless, there are a number of factors such as cause immediacy, cause-affinity, cause/brand fit, and customers’ psychographic characteristics that, if considered, can positively shape the customers’ attitude towards cause branding. Cause immediacy refers to how psychologically near or far a cause is. Studies show that with regard to supporting a cause, people tend to support the one they consider more psychologically immediate rather than a far one. Simply put, different causes give rise to different emotions: immediate emotions and previous ones. These are the immediate emotions that act as a strong stimulus forming our judgments and behaviors; thus, the causes that evoke immediate emotions are more likely to be supported (Tangari et al., 2010; Lafferty et al., 2016, Huber et al., 2011). This fact explains why people are usually more eager to support a disaster cause as opposed to an ongoing cause. Being more psychologically near, a disaster cause evokes immediate emotions while an ongoing cause solely triggers the previous ones (Cui et al., 2003).

Cause/ brand fit is another factor that should be taken into consideration. Simply put, there is a higher chance of getting a positive response from the customers when the social/environmental cause the brand is supporting is congruent with its values, mission, and identity (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2020; Hamiln & Wilson, 2004). Moreover, the chosen cause should be relevant and familiar to the customers, and they should have an affinity for it. Studies show that people are more likely to support a cause they have an affinity for (Bloom et al., 2006; Zdravkovic et al., 2010). Finally, customers' specific psychographic characteristics can be a predictor of their attitudes toward cause branding in general and specific causes in particular (Gupta, 2019; Srivastava & Chawla, 2017; Youn & Kim, 2008). For instance, socially responsible individuals are more likely to support cause branding, while people with individualistic mindsets are usually more skeptical of it (Chang & Cheng, 2015, Youn & Kim, 2008).

Although there are some studies investigating the role of cause immediacy, such as the one conducted by Huber et al. (2011), they are mostly investigating it in independent charity behaviors rather than in marketing and branding. Will the role of immediacy be the same when it comes to influencing attitudes towards cause branding and the brand that is employing it? It is a question that the current literature fails to answer. Hence this study aims to build and test a conceptual model to examine the mentioned relationship. Considering the above, the following research question has been formed:

*How are customers' attitudes towards cause branding and the brand that employs it, brand reputation, influenced by the immediacy of the cause?*

Furthermore, while various studies have investigated the effect of psychographic characteristics on customers' attitudes towards cause branding and cause marketing, none have used them as a moderator to see whether they enhance or reduce the potential causal effect of the cause immediacy on attitude towards cause branding. Hence, the following sub-question has been formulated:

*What is the role of customers' psychographic characteristics?*

Since this research aims to examine the relationship between different variables, a quantitative method is adopted. An online experimental questionnaire is used for data collection through different channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as well as different survey exchange sites such as SurveySwap and SurveyCircle. In this experiment, two advertisements produced by Ben & Jerry's company are chosen. In the first condition, the advertisement regarding an ongoing cause (the climate change problem) is presented, and in the second condition, the advertisement which is in favour of a disaster cause (the refugee problem) is provided. The purpose of this experiment is to find whether cause immediacy affects customers' attitudes towards cause branding and the brand that employs it (Ben & Jerry's in this case).



## 1.1 Theoretical and social relevance

This study contributes to the existing literature by testing a conceptual model that has been tested for independent charity behaviors but not in a business-related field. As mentioned before although, previous research on charity behaviors (Cui et al., 2003, Tangari et al., 2010; Lafferty et al., 2016, Huber et al., 2011) indicate that there is a significant relationship between the cause immediacy and individuals' tendency to support it, there have been few research testing this relationship in cause branding. Of note is that the limited studies conducted in this field are carried out mostly in the United States (Cui et al., 2003), which is culturally different from the Netherlands, where the present study was conducted. Studies show that customers' attitudes toward cause branding can be influenced by customers' culture. Having different and sometimes even opposing values, not all customers react to cause branding in the same way (Lavack & Kropp, 2003), and therefore, the results of the studies conducted in other countries are not necessarily applicable in the Netherlands. Thus, this study contributes to the existing theory on cause branding while filling the gap in the literature regarding the impact of cause immediacy on attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation by testing this model in a business-related field, cause branding.

This study has practical and societal relevance as well. As mentioned before, customers are increasingly pushing the businesses to take a moral stance when it comes to social and environmental issues (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Living in a fast-paced society that is filled with social and environmental issues makes it hard for companies to decide which cause to support. By choosing the wrong cause, companies may become accused of woke-washing (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Thus, the results of this study can be of practical use for brands and businesses who aim to employ cause branding to opt for the right cause in terms of immediacy and by considering their target groups' psychographic characteristics.

Finally, although the fact that employing cause branding has some financial benefits for the brand is undeniable using it is a win-win situation for other involved parties as well, such as customers, and the people influenced by that supported social/environmental cause (Adkins, 1999, Galan-Ladero et al., 2021). Hence, once the right cause is chosen, all these stakeholders will be benefited.

## 1.2 Chapter outline

This thesis focuses on the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding/brand reputation with the moderation of psychographic characteristics. The theoretical framework, which is the basis of the present research, is presented in the first chapter after the introduction. Based on previous literature, five hypotheses were created, one of them presented in the cause immediacy section, the other one is presented in the section on brand reputation, and the remaining three are provided in the last section of this chapter, psychographic characteristics. The third chapter provides a rationale for the choice of quantitative method and an online survey as the data collection tool. Moreover, the sampling method, the operationalization, the reliability and validity of this research are elaborated on. In the results chapter, the findings of the conducted analyses are presented, and finally, in the discussion chapter, theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are provided.

## 2. Literature Overview

This chapter aims to elaborate on key concepts that are important to understand cause branding attitude. First, the central concepts of this study, cause branding, cause immediacy, and brand reputation, will be discussed. Furthermore, the notions that play a key role in the success or failure of cause branding are elaborated on. Finally, the conceptual framework is presented.

### 2.1 Cause branding and cause marketing

Being almost 40 years old, there is considerable literature on cause branding. However, in this part, the focus will be on the most relevant ones to the aim of this study. Moreover, the literature on both cause branding and cause marketing will be used as their definitions are almost identical. They both refer to a strategy that allows customers to make a positive change in social or environmental issues by purchasing a product (Kim & Sullivan, 2019; Bhatti et al., 2022). Regarding the aim, both help the companies build an emotional relationship with their customers (Cone et al., 2003; Kim & Sullivan, 2019). The only difference is that cause branding refers to more long-term associations while cause marketing is about short-term ones (Fisher, n.d.)<sup>1</sup>.

In general, cause branding can be carried out in different ways, however “traditional” and “one-for-one” cause branding are the two types that are more frequently used by the companies. Traditional cause branding happens when the company donates a part of its sales or revenue to a particular social or environmental issue. Take Patagonia, the outdoor clothing and gear brand, which donates 1% of its sales to sustainability causes, as an example. On the other hand, one-for-one cause branding refers to the act of donating a matched item for every item that is sold (Rapert et al., 2021). For instance, TOMS, the shoe company, donates a pair of shoes to the children in developing countries for every pair of shoes sold (Rapert et al., 2021, Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

Some scholars, such as Adkins (1999), believe that adopting cause marketing and cause branding is a win-win situation as it benefits both involved parties, the brand, and the customers. By purchasing from a cause-branded company, customers feel that they have made a difference in the world by influencing others to support a cause and showing them, they are sophisticated citizens (Altıntaş et al., 2017; Chang & Cheng, 2015; Zdravkovic et al., 2010). The results of research conducted on customers’ attitudes towards cause branding show that approximately half of customers (56%) believe contributing to

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<sup>1</sup> In this research, the term “cause branding” and “cause marketing” will be used interchangeably.

a charitable cause is essential, and they have even stated that they would switch brands to do so (Lii & Lee, 2011).

Regarding the brands, the main reason motivating them to employ this strategy is to build a long-term strong positive brand image and brand reputation in which the organization depicts itself as a socially and ethically conscious and responsible entity (Galan-Ladero et al., 2021, Kim & Sullivan, 2019). This positive brand image generates a competitive advantage helping the company stand out from the competition (Christofi et al., 2013; Hawkins, 2012). Tax incentives, giving the customers an extra purchase motivation, a higher level of employee's loyalty and commitment, having more access to the media, a more positive word of mouth, and even free advertising are some of the other benefits of employing this strategy (Chang & Cheng, 2015, Galan-Ladero et al., 2021; Berglind & Nakata, 2005).

However, further studies have indicated that employing this strategy may have some drawbacks as well. Adopting this strategy may lead to a negative brand image and a damaged reputation if the customers consider that social/ environmental activism to be only commercial and for the sake of profit generation (Galan-Ladero et al., 2021; Lii & Lee, 2011). The examples of the companies using cause branding and cause marketing provided by Kim & Sullivan (2019) help gain a deeper understanding of how the usage of this strategy can be either beneficial or threatening for brands. Take TOMS and Levi Strauss & Co as an example. The former almost faced brand damage due to being accused of woke-washing, and the latter gained popularity with the help of this strategy.

All in all, although employing cause branding has some potential risks, the advantages of employing it outweigh the disadvantages. A recent survey conducted by the Public Relations Society of America shows that cause branding and cause marketing is taking root. More and more companies plan to get involved in corporate social responsibility by using this strategy (Berglind & Nakata, 2005).

## 2.2 Cause immediacy

Deciding which social/environmental cause to support plays a key role in the success or failure of cause branding as people react to different causes in different ways. This reaction depends on how immediate people perceive that cause to be (Lafferty et al., 2016). Simply put, different causes with different levels of immediacy give rise to two different kinds of emotions: immediate emotions and previous ones. Although almost similarly experienced, these two kinds of emotions are different in phenomenology. Immediate emotions are directly experienced and perceived, while previous emotions are remembered, and not experienced. Being more intense, these are the immediate emotions that act as

strong stimuli directly influencing judgments and, consequently, decisions and behaviors. Previous emotions, on the other hand, are more of pallid stimuli, unable to form attitudes and behaviors (van Boven et al., 2009). Consequently, people usually tend to allocate their limited charitable budget to a cause that they consider to be more immediate. The influence of cause immediacy on individuals is such that it may lead to a bias in their decision-making, what is usually referred to as ‘immediacy bias’. Studies show that people tend to support a more immediate cause even if it is less destructive, severe and deadly compared with a more destructive psychologically far cause (Huber et al., 2011). The result of the study conducted by Xue & Zhou (2022) on the effect of cause immediacy on donor engagement in Facebook fundraising is in line with Huber et al.’ study (2011) as it shows that the more immediate a cause is, the higher the intention to donate becomes.

Although this psychological fact can be especially important for marketers who aim to employ cause marketing and cause branding, there are limited studies investigating it in these fields. The study conducted by Cui et al. (2003) in the United States is one of the few pieces of research examining this relationship in marketing. In their study, they have investigated the response of generation Y to cause marketing. The results indicate that this generation tends to respond more positively to disaster causes, such as helping the victims of September 11, as opposed to ongoing causes which seemed to be less urgent and immediate, such as helping the poor. This is because disaster causes evoked immediate emotions that are necessary for attitude formation. In another study, Tangari et al. (2010) have investigated the influence of temporal framing of CRM messages on consumers’ attitudes and, consequently, purchase intentions. According to the result of their experiment, when it comes to making ethical purchase decisions, customers usually tend to opt for the product which is in favor of a more psychologically near cause than a far one. Based on the information above, the following hypothesis was formed:

H1: Immediacy of a cause is positively associated with attitude towards cause branding.

### 2.3 Brand reputation

Brand reputation is gained over time and refers to how the brand’s audience evaluates it. A brand should have a positive reputation in order to be successful and profitable. Simply put, having a good reputation has some benefits for the company, such as being able to charge premium prices, attracting better investors, and improving their access to capital markets. As mentioned earlier, employing cause branding and cause marketing is one of the factors that can help companies earn an excellent reputation (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Demetriou et al., 2009). Previous studies show that customers are becoming more

conscious and concerned about the brands and their aims, in the sense that they do not consider brands simply as an economic construct but a social one that should be morally evaluated (Fan, 2005). Knowing that the company is involved in a social/environmental cause affects the consumer's perception of a company as they consider it to be more acceptable and credible (Zhang et al., 2020). However, employing cause branding to enhance the company's reputation is not as straightforward as it may seem. According to Brønn & Vrioni (2001), as customers are becoming more concerned, they look more closely at companies who use cause branding. In other words, there is a level of skepticism that makes customers doubt the company's claims, and as the number of companies employing cause branding increases, the mentioned skepticism rises as well. However, if used in the right way, cause branding may even tie the company's identity with the cause. Take Avon, the British beauty product company, as an example. It has supported breast cancer in such a good way over time that in the customers' eyes, its logo may be incomplete without a pink ribbon, the symbol of breast cancer (Berglind & Nakata, 2005).

As mentioned above, different research has been done on brand reputation and how the employment of cause branding can enhance it. However, there is almost no research on how the nature of the cause a company supports can impact its brand reputation. As previously mentioned, studies show that the immediacy of a cause can affect the individuals' respond to it (Huber et al., 2011; Tangari et al., 2010). In this research, a step forward was taken, and the following hypothesis was tested:

H2: Immediacy of a cause is positively associated with brand reputation.

## 2.4 Cause/brand fit

Cause/brand fit refers to whether the cause a company supports is compatible with the company's image and identity. Simply put, supporting a social/environmental cause that fits the company's mission and values leads to a more positive attitude towards both the company and the cause branding itself. Studies indicate that customers show a more positive attitude toward a company with a high cause/brand fit as opposed to a low one (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012; Gupta & Pirsch, 2006; Zhang et al., 2020; Hamiln & Wilson, 2004; Chéron et al., 2012; Melero & Montaner, 2016). Take the KFC campaign "buckets for the cure" as an example. In this campaign, KFC partnered with a foundation in order to contribute to breast cancer research. However, the act of making unhealthy food, which itself is a cause of cancer, and supporting breast cancer did not seem congruent; hence not only did not cause marketing help KFC build a positive reputation but damaged it (Chang & Cheng, 2015, Viljoen, 2021).

The company's size is another contributing factor in cause/brand fit. Simply put, the influence of cause/brand fit on customers' attitudes towards cause branding and the brand itself depends on the level of the company's reputation. Low-reputation companies may even benefit from being involved in low cause/brand fit campaigns. But, having more power and wealth, high-reputation companies are expected to take part in high cause/brand fit campaigns to fulfill their customers' expectations. Interestingly, studies show that the customers tend to be less skeptical regarding the usage of cause branding by high-reputation companies as if they are allowed to have more self-driven motivations because of their size (Zhang et al., 2020). On the other hand, an experiment conducted by Nan and Heo (2007) shows that cause/brand fit has an impact solely when the customers have a high level of brand consciousness. In other words, cause/brand fit solely has a positive influence on customers' attitudes when they are already familiar with a brand; when it comes to unfamiliar brands, this fit does not make much difference in customers' attitudes towards the brand.

However, as Zdravkovic et al. (2010) claim, a natural fit between a cause and the company's identity is not enough; companies should try to communicate the fit to the customers. When the companies present and explain the cause they are supporting to their potential customers, a familiarity with the cause and consequently an affinity for it is shaped, leading to a more successful cause branding. The importance of cause-affinity is to the extent that some scholars believe customers do not care about cause/brand fit when they have a high affinity for a cause (Sheikh & Beise-Zee, 2011).

## 2.5 Cause-affinity

Cause-affinity refers to the customer's association with a cause. Being interested in the cause itself, the customers are offered another opportunity to support it by purchasing from a cause-branded company (Beise-Zee, 2013). Studies show that customers are more likely to show a positive response to cause branding when they have an affinity for that specific cause the company is supporting. Of note is that this affinity can be through actively supporting the cause or just liking it (Huertas-García et al., 2017).

Although having a high cause-affinity guarantees the success of cause branding, having a negative affinity can be dangerous for brands. That is why it is usually suggested that brands do not opt to support controversial causes such as gender or religious issues. As much as having customers who have an affinity for a cause can help the success of cause branding, and consequently enhance the brand's reputation, having customers who are against that cause can be dangerous. The customers who oppose a

cause usually may actively affect the attitude of other market segments through word-of-mouth (Sheikh & Beise-Zee, 2011).

## 2.6 Psychographic characteristics

Psychographic characteristics are one of the key factors shaping customers' attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs (Youn & Kim, 2008). Previous studies show that individuals' differences in their psychographic characteristics play a crucial role in determining whether they are supportive of cause branding or skeptical about it (Gupta, 2019; Srivastava & Chawla, 2017; Youn & Kim, 2008). Take personal responsibility and individualism as an example. A consumer with the former psychographic characteristic is more likely to support cause branding, while the latter characteristic makes the consumer more doubtful about this branding strategy (Chang & Cheng, 2015; Youn & Kim, 2008). Thus, segmenting the consumers based on their psychographic characteristics is especially important for marketers as it helps them make tactical and strategic decisions such as message strategy, targeting, media planning, and, more importantly, selecting the right cause (Youn & Kim, 2008).

As mentioned above, people's attitude towards cause branding in general and different causes specifically depends on the level of certain psychographic characteristics they hold. Studies suggest that social responsibility, empathetic concern, and public self-consciousness are the psychographic characteristics that have the most influence on customers' advocacy for supporting social and environmental causes (Berenguer, 2007; Onwezen et al., 2013; Rapert et al., 2021; Sharma & Christopoulos, 2021; Wells et al., 2011; Youn & Kim, 2008).

Regarding the marketing domain, social responsibility refers to a kind of consumption in which the harmful effects are minimized while the social impacts are maximized. Previous studies show that social responsibility is one of the main motives for prosocial behaviors. Simply put, people with a higher sense of social responsibility are more likely to be engaged in efforts to buy products that align with a social cause (Youn & Kim, 2008; Rapert et al., 2021). On the other hand, public self-consciousness or self-monitoring refers to the concerns one has about what other people may think of him/her. People with a high sense of public self-consciousness have a great tendency to create an acceptable impression in front of others. Being a socially desirable activity, cause branding provides a great opportunity for these people to present themselves in a good light and as socially responsible citizens (Luan & Chen, 2020; Youn & Kim, 2008). Finally, empathetic concern refers to sensitivity towards others' mental states; thus, it is more about the others' situation rather than someone's own (Laufer & Gillespie, 2003; Rapert et al., 2021).



People with a high level of empathetic concern tend to focus on the person in need in order to reduce his/her stress.

There are several studies that investigate the role of psychographic characteristics in cause branding and cause marketing, such as the one conducted by Youn & Kim (2008), that examines the effect of these characteristics on attitude towards cause marketing, or research carried out by Rapert et al. (2021) in which the influence of these characteristics on purchase behavior of cause-related products is examined. However, the role of these characteristics as a moderator, and not a direct predictor for attitude towards cause branding and cause marketing has never been investigated. Thus, the present study aims to examine whether the mentioned psychographic characteristics moderate, that is, either enhance or reduce the causal effect of cause immediacy on attitude towards cause branding. Based on the information above, the following hypotheses have been formed:

H3: As the value of the public self-consciousness increases, the positive relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding is strengthened.

H4: As the value of social responsibility increases, the positive relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding is strengthened.

H5: As the value of empathetic concern increases, the positive relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding is strengthened.

## 2.7 Conceptual framework

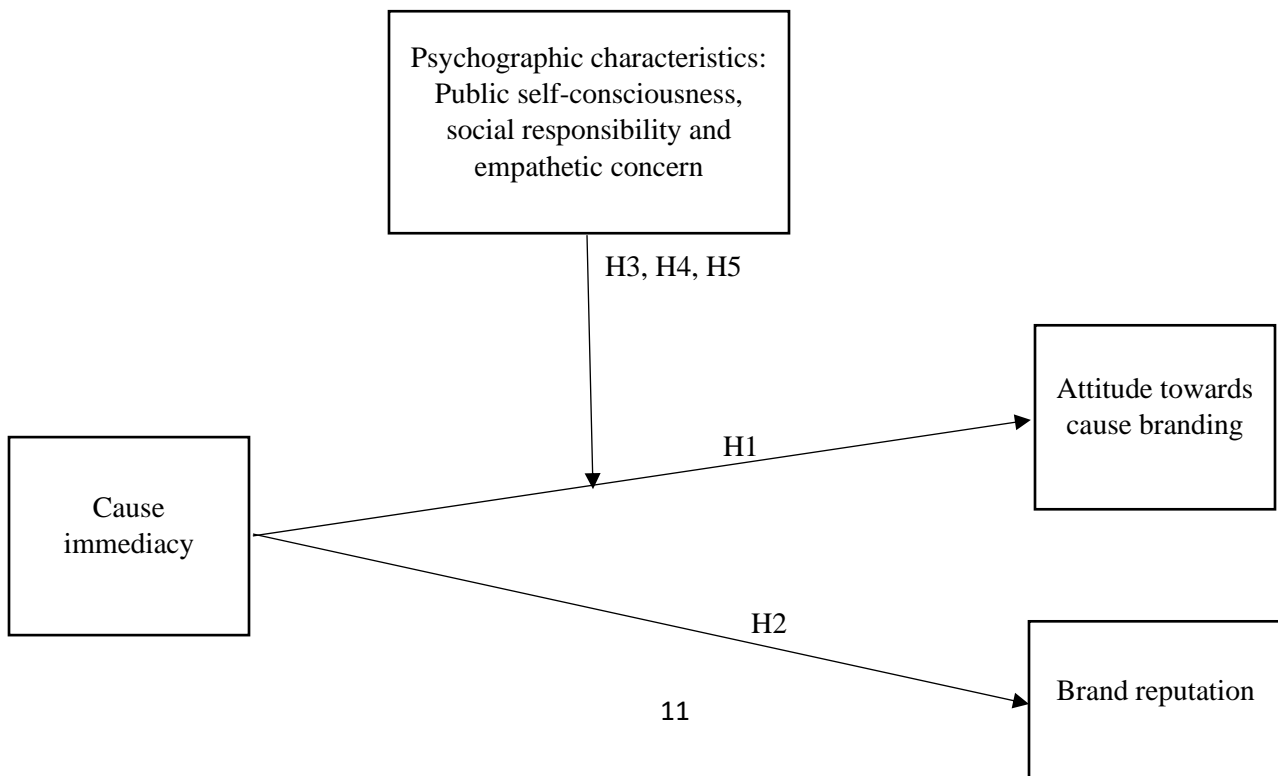


Figure 2.7.1. Conceptual framework including the hypotheses

### 3. Methods

In this chapter, an overview of the current research's methodology is presented. First, the choice of method, sampling strategy, operationalization of the variables, and analysis approaches are elaborated on. Finally, the validity and reliability of the research are discussed.

#### 3.1 Choice of method

Unlike the qualitative approach, which follows an inductive process and looks for theory creation, quantitative methodology aims to test the patterns and models derived from the already existing theories (Babbie, 2016). In other words, qualitative research is about constructing social reality and cultural meaning, while quantitative one is about measuring objective facts (Nauman, 2014). Since the aim of this research was to examine the relationship between different variables and to be able to determine whether the independent variable, cause immediacy, does influence the dependent variables, attitude towards cause branding, and brand reputation, a quantitative approach was adopted as the most suitable method. To examine the causal relationship between the variables, five hypotheses were proposed based on the literature research that has already been conducted. Since the independent variable of this study had two levels, the hypotheses were tested using an experimental design with two conditions: ongoing cause (climate change) group and disaster cause (refugee) group. The type of experimental design used was a between-subject experiment, meaning that participants were randomly assigned to two different conditions (Nauman, 2014).

Being interested in the effect of cause immediacy itself, a control group was not included in the present study. Although it could provide some insights in general, it did not necessarily add information regarding the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding/brand reputation. Simply put, in the field research, unlike in the laboratory settings, experimental and control groups are more likely to be systematically different in important dimensions other than the independent variable and having a control group does not necessarily lead to an unbiased estimate of the independent variable's impact (McKillip, 1992).

For data collection purposes, an online experimental questionnaire was used. There are several reasons for this choice. Firstly, a questionnaire is the tool that provides the opportunity to measure people's characteristics and attitudes, which was the main focus of this research (Matthews & Ross, 2010 as cited in Yang, 2020). Secondly, having a limited amount of time, the questionnaire provided the opportunity to collect a large amount of data from a relatively large group of people in a short time. Besides, it increased the chance of getting truthful replies, especially regarding embarrassing and

sensitive questions; take the ones designed to measure social responsibility as an example. Finally, since the questionnaire was online, the respondents had the privilege to fill it out anywhere and anytime they wished and had the time to check the facts and think about the questions carefully; thus, it increased the chance of collecting more accurate information (Walliman, 2006).

Using an online questionnaire as a data collection tool had some drawbacks as well. First of all, online surveys usually have lower response rates compared with other survey modes. To tackle this problem, a user-friendly questionnaire, able to function on different devices such as laptops or mobile phones, was designed to motivate respondents to provide accurate answers (Fielding et al., 2017). Secondly, not having control, the researcher is not able to keep the participants concentrated on the questions, and this may lead to not accurate enough answers. To address this problem, the scales with complicated and hard-to-understand items were not chosen, and the researcher tried to keep the questionnaire as short as possible to increase the chance of getting accurate answers.

### 3.2 Sampling

This study was conducted by asking the Netherlands' residents to fill in an online survey. To get participants, a non-probability sampling method was used. Although this sampling method is not as reliable as probability one as it is based on non-random selection, having time constrictions made the researcher opt for it. First of all, a convenient sampling method was used. Convenient sampling refers to the approach in which the researcher recruits participants based on being available, eager to take part in the research, and, more importantly, assessable (Walliman, 2006). Thus, survey link was shared on different social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as well as different survey exchange sites such as SurveySwap and SurveyCircle. To share the survey link on social media platforms, the researcher's own account was not used as it could have led to a bias in the results.

However, convenient sampling did not suffice as it could not get enough participants for this study. Thus, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling is a method of sampling in which the researcher contacts the people of the target population and gets them to introduce him/her to their network. Of note is that, to avoid bias, the researcher tried to ask the people who were not in her close network to take part in the study and send the link to others as well (Walliman, 2006). 243 respondents started the survey, however many either did not finish it or left the whole questionnaire unanswered. Consequently, this led to a sample of 150 participants whose answers were recorded between April 13<sup>th</sup> and May 12<sup>th</sup> (see **Table 4.1** for sample characteristics).

### 3.3 Procedure

As mentioned before, the existing literature indicates that people are inclined to respond more positively to a disaster cause as opposed to an ongoing cause since they consider the former to be more immediate (Cui et al., 2003). Hence, to measure the independent variable of the present study, the climate change problem and refugee problem were chosen as the refugee problem could be representative of the disaster cause, considering the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and a sudden increase in the number of Ukrainian refugees, and the climate change problem could be a symbol of an ongoing cause. However, before conducting the main research, a pretest was carried out to be assured whether the two chosen causes were indeed the representative of a disaster cause and an ongoing cause and, consequently, significantly different in terms of immediacy. To reach this aim, a short experimental survey designed by Qualtrics was sent to 20 participants with the desired characteristic, residing in the Netherlands. The questionnaire started with an introduction, including an explanation of the procedure, time estimation, and anonymity assurance. Then, the participants were randomly assigned to two different conditions. Ten respondents watched the advertisement about the refugee problem, and the other ten watched the climate change advertisement. Following that, they answered three questions regarding cause immediacy borrowed from Kim et al. (2020). The pretest results showed that the participants indeed perceived the refugee problem to be more immediate than the climate change problem; thus, the main study could be conducted.

*Table 3.3.1: Pretest results (n = 20)*

Group	N	Perceived cause immediacy
Climate change	10	4.15 (1.43)
Refugee	10	5.90 (1.10)

As mentioned before, the main questionnaire was designed to function on different devices such as mobile phones, computers, and laptops. The survey started with an introduction explaining the procedure, a completion time estimation, and the guarantee of participating anonymously. Moreover, the researcher's email address was provided in case the participants had any questions regarding the survey. Despite this, no emails were received with additional questions or concerns about the survey. The participants then had to consent that their data would be used in this study. Next, all participants answered 18 questions regarding their psychographic characteristics. Following that, there were the stimuli of the study. The participants were randomly assigned to two different groups using the randomizer option in

Qualtrics; one watched the advertisement about the climate change (n=74) problem, and the other (n=76) watched the advertisement regarding the refugee problem (the same advertisements that were shown in the pretest). In the following sub-section (Stimulus material), the two conditions are more elaborated on.

The video was followed by some questions about cause/brand fit and cause immediacy. Afterward, the participants were asked to answer some questions regarding cause-affinity, brand reputation, and attitude towards cause branding. Thereafter, there were five demographic questions. Finally, the participants indicated whether they had been familiar with Ben & Jerry's brand before completing the survey or not, and the survey ended with thanking the participants (see Appendix A for the questionnaire).

### 3.4 Stimulus material

As previously mentioned, participants were randomly assigned to two different conditions. The random assignment facilitated between-groups comparison by creating two similar groups that were identical in all respects except for the immediacy of the cause they were provided with (Neuman. 2014).

The videos used as stimuli were both one-minute-long and produced by Ben & Jerry's company. The one regarding the climate change problem was released in 2015 and the one about the refugees in 2017. In both advertisements, first, a description of the problem was given, and then the audience was encouraged to contribute to solving these problems. These two videos were chosen as they had the most similarity to each other, ranging from their duration to the narration; this similarity reduced the influence of unwanted effects that could arise from marginal factors and not the content of the video itself. Of note is that the participants did not know that the survey came in two versions and that the condition each received and responded to was different.

### 3.5 Measurements

#### 3.5.1 Independent variable

The cause immediacy was the independent variable of this study. It was stimulated by showing two different videos that were expected to have two different levels of immediacy. According to the theory, it was expected that the participants who watched the refugee problem video score higher on attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation.

However, to check the manipulation, the scale for measuring perceived immediacy was put in the survey again. The scale used for measuring this variable was borrowed from Kim et al. (2020) and consisted of three items measured on a 7-point Bipolar Likert (1 = not urgent/ is currently relevant to the Netherlands/ is currently essential to the Netherlands, 7 = urgent/ will become relevant to the Netherlands in the distant future/ will become essential to the Netherlands in the distant future). However, the items had to be changed slightly to be applicable in the context of this study. Of note is that after conducting factor analysis, the first item was excluded as deleting it could turn an acceptable alpha ( $\alpha = .72$ ) into a preferable alpha ( $\alpha = .90$ ). In the next chapter more details regarding the factor analysis and reliability test are provided. Finally, being negatively worded, the two remaining items were reversed coded for further analyses.

### 3.5.2 Dependent variable

Attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation were the two dependent variables of this study. Attitude towards cause branding (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ), was taken from Galan Ladero et al. (2014) and included four items. Items were formulated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

The second dependent variable, brand reputation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ), consisted of five items which were the combination of two scales that were used in two different studies. This combination was due to the fact that each of these scales consisted of just two or three items, thus, to improve the reliability and validity, the two scales were combined, and the items which were repetitive were deleted. The two items "*I believe that X is a product of high quality*" and "*It seems like X has a good leadership*" were from Fombrun et al.'s (2000) study, and the rest of the items were borrowed from Han et al. (2015). Answers were given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

### 3.5.3 Moderator variable

Three psychographic characteristics, public self-consciousness, social responsibility, and empathetic concern, were the moderator variables of this study. Public self-consciousness (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .74$ ) was taken from Youn & Kim (2008) and included five items formulated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Social responsibility (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .69$ ) was borrowed from Rapert et al. (2021) and consisted of six items. However, after conducting factor analysis, the first item of social responsibility was excluded as it was assigned to a second component. Items were formulated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly

disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Of note is that the items were reverse coded for further analyses since they were worded in a way that the participant who chose, 5 = strongly agree, had the lowest level of social responsibility.

Empathetic concern (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ) was also taken from Rapert et al. (2021). It included seven items that were formulated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

#### 3.5.4 Control variables

Cause/brand fit, and cause-affinity were the two control variables of this study. Cause/brand fit (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ) was taken from Bigné-Alcañiz et al. (2012) with a slight change to be applicable in the context of the present study. The scale included three items formulated on a 7-point Bipolar Likert (1 = not congruent/ not compatible/ doesn't go together, 7 = congruent, compatible, goes together).

Cause-affinity was borrowed from Sen Gupta and Wadera (2020) with a minor change to match the context of the present study. It consisted of one item based on a 7-point Bipolar Likert (1 = not important, 7 = extremely important).

### 3.6 Data analysis

After data collection, the gathered data was put into SPSS for further analysis. Before starting the main analysis, several steps were taken to prepare the data. First of all, principal component analysis was conducted on all the scales consisting of at least three items and measured on a continuous level. The aim was to purify the scales with an eigenvalue of 1.0 and factor loadings of 0.40 as cut-off points. After purifying the scales, a reliability analysis was conducted to test whether the scales were internally consistent (see Appendix B for the factor analyses and reliability test). After excluding the items which either had reduced the reliability of the scale or fell under another component, and reversing the ones that needed reversion, new variables were computed based on the means of the remaining items. The prepared data was then used for further analyses.

The relationship between the independent variable (immediacy conditions) and the first dependent variable (attitude towards cause branding) was tested through Hayes's PROCESS method (2012) since it included a moderator variable. PROCESS is a tool that makes the practice of conducting moderation and mediation tests easier. Of note is that the control variables were also included in the model. Moreover, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the independent variable and the second dependent variable (brand reputation) by considering the control



variables. Hierarchical regression analysis was chosen as it is beneficial when the researcher wants to consider the control variables that are known to impact the dependent variable.

### 3.7 Validity and reliability

The validity of a research tool refers to its ability to measure what it is supposed to measure (Matthews & Ross, 2010). In this research, validity was improved in different ways. Firstly, already established scales were used. Using the existing scales can improve the validity of research as they have been tested at least once. Of note is that, although all scales were derived from previous research, factor analysis was conducted on each of them to make sure they measured solely one single concept. Secondly, the participants were randomly assigned to the two different conditions by Qualtrics to avoid selection bias. Simply put, this random assignment reduced bias and increased the internal validity as all participants had an equal chance of being assigned to the climate change group or the refugee group (Neuman, 2014). Finally, a manipulation check was provided to increase the internal validity. Manipulation check helps the researcher to understand whether the conditions of the experiment had the desired effect (Neuman, 2014). Regarding the present study, the scale for the perceived immediacy was the manipulation check to see whether there is a significant difference in terms of immediacy between the two conditions. Finally, control variables were included in all analyses to ensure that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not affected by them.

Reliability is the second factor that should be taken into consideration when conducting quantitative research. It refers to the accuracy of an instrument and whether using it leads to the same results if used in the same situation. To ensure the instrument is reliable, different steps were taken. Firstly, a reliability analysis was run on each scale and ensured the Cronbach's Alpha of each scale met or exceeded the 0.70 thresholds (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Moreover, the conditions of the experiment were standardized. Simply put, the reliability was guaranteed by using a standardized questionnaire and providing clear instructions for filling in the survey for all participants to ensure that they were treated under the same conditions.

## 4. Results

This chapter elaborates on the findings of the study. First, the characteristics of the participants are provided, and then the descriptive statistics are discussed. Following that, the exploratory factor analysis run for each scale are elaborated on. Finally, the hypotheses are tested.

### 4.1 Sample Characteristics

A total of 243 responses were recorded. However, 60 were deleted as they were either not filled out completely or filled out in less than one minute, which is practically impossible. After data cleaning, 150 observations were included in further analyses. In the final sample, the percentage of women is 62.7%, and the male share is 34.7%. The remaining 2.7% (N = 4) were either non-binary/third gender or preferred not to say their gender. The age range is between 18 to 60 years old. The most named highest education level was Master degree (52.7%), followed by Bachelor degree (35.3%), PhD, MBA or other equivalents (8%), and vocational degree (2.7%). Regarding their employment status, most of the respondents (58%) were students, 34.6% were employed, 6.7% were unemployed, and the remaining 0.7% were retired. Moreover, 50.7% of participants were single, 48% were either in a domestic relationship or married, and 1.3% were separated or divorced. Finally, 88.7% of participants stated that they already had been familiar with Ben & Jerry's brand before filling out the survey.

*Table 4.1.1: Sample characteristics (n=150)*

Characteristics	Frequency in sample	Percentage of sample
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	34.7
Female	94	62.7
Non-binary/third gender	1	0.7
Prefer not to say	3	2
<b>Age</b>		
18-30	121	80.6
31-45	25	16.6
46-60	4	2.6
<b>Education</b>		
Secondary school	2	1.3

Vocational degree after high school	4	2.7
Bachelor Degree	53	35.3
Master Degree	79	52.7
PhD, MBA, or equivalent	12	8
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employed	52	34.6
Unemployed	10	6.7
Student	87	58
Retired	1	0.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	76	50.7
Married/ in a domestic relationship	72	48
Divorced/separated	2	1.3

#### 4.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations

To estimate the relationship between the variables, the Pearson correlations test was conducted. Table 4.2.1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations of each variable. The independent variable, cause type, had a very weak insignificant association with all other variables. However, there is a significant weak association between perceived cause immediacy and social responsibility ( $r = .20$ ), and empathetic concern ( $r = .16$ ) with  $p < .05$ , and cause-affinity ( $r = .21$ ) with  $p < .01$ .

The first dependent variable, attitude towards cause branding, had a positive weak association with public self-consciousness ( $r = .24$ ) and cause-affinity ( $r = .27$ ), and a positive moderate association with empathetic concern ( $r = .45$ ) and cause/brand fit ( $r = .34$ ) with  $p < 0.01$  in all cases. There is a significant, weak association between the second dependent variable, brand reputation and public self-consciousness ( $r = .28$ ) with  $p < 0.01$  and cause-affinity ( $r = .20$ ) with  $p < .05$ , and a positive moderate association with empathetic concern ( $r = .31$ ) and cause/brand fit ( $r = .44$ ) with  $p < 0.01$  in both cases. Of note is that a significant positive moderate correlation can also be seen between the two dependent variables, attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation ( $r = .33$ ) with  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 4.2.1: Descriptive statistics and correlations (n = 150)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD
1. Cause type***	-								.51	.50
2. Public self-consciousness	.06	-							3.47	.71
3. Social responsibility	.06	-.17*	-						3.17	.76
4. Empathetic concern	.03	.19*	.04	-					3.91	.64
5. Percieved cause immediacy	-.00	-.11	.20*	.16*	-				4.69	1.76
6. Brand reputation	.08	.28**	.01	.31**	-.02	-			3.66	.70
7. Attitude towards cause branding	-.03	.24**	-.03	.45**	-.00	.33**	-		3.64	.88
8. Cause/brand fit	-.09	.23**	-.03	.29**	-.04	.44**	.34**	-	4.68	1.58
9. Cause-affinity	-.05	.02	.19*	.28**	.21**	.20*	.27**	.23**	5.60	1.34

\* $p \leq .05$ , (2-tailed).

\*\* $p \leq .01$ , (2-tailed).

\*\*\* Coded 0 = Climate change problem and 1 = refugee problem

### 4.3 Factor analysis

With the number of cases larger than 150, factor analysis was conducted to investigate the usefulness of scales in measuring the variables. To reach this aim, Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation was conducted on all scales consisting of at least three items measured on a continuous level. Of note is that since the scale for cause-affinity consisted of just one item, factor analysis could not be conducted on it.

First of all, the five items measuring public self-consciousness were entered into the factor analysis based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .77$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 150, 10) = 160.82$ ,  $p < .001$ . The analysis showed that all five items belonged to one factor. Six items of social responsibility were then put into the factor analysis based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .71$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 150, 15) = 133.31$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results indicated that the three items, “with the pressure of grades and widespread cheating in school nowadays, the individual who cheats occasionally is not really as much at fault”, “if I broke a machine

*through mishandling, I would feel less guilty if it was already damaged before I use it*”, and *“I would feel less bothered about leaving litter in a dirty park than in a clean one”* were assigned to two components at the same time. As for the first two, their loadings on the first component were much stronger than their loadings on the second, hence, they were assigned to the first component. Regarding the last item, its loading on the second component was considerably stronger, showing that it was measuring a concept rather than social responsibility, thus it was excluded for further analyses. Finally, the results of PCA based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .85$ ,  $\chi^2 (N= 150, 21) = 349.07$ ,  $p < .001$  on seven items of empathetic concern showed that they all belong to one factor. All in all, public self-consciousness, social responsibility, and public self-consciousness explained 50.1%, 45.2%, and 51.1% of the variance, respectively.

As for the dependent variables, a PCA was conducted based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .79$ ,  $\chi^2 (N= 150, 6) = 242.32$ ,  $p < .001$  on the four items of attitude towards cause branding and showed that they indeed loaded on one factor and explained 67.0% of the variance. The results of the same analysis on five items of brand reputation, on the other hand, showed that they were assigned to the same component as well,  $KMO = .80$ ,  $\chi^2 (N= 150, 10) = 347.02$ ,  $p < .001$ . Of note is that the resultant model indicated that brand reputation explained 64.9% of the variance.

Regarding the three items of cause/brand fit the PCA based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .76$ ,  $\chi^2 (N= 150, 3) = 371.80$ ,  $p < .001$  showed that all items belonged to one component and explained 88.3% of the variance. The three items of perceived immediacy were the last items on which PCA was conducted, and the results,  $KMO = .53$ ,  $\chi^2 (N= 150, 3) = 182.22$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicated that the items belonged to the same component and 64.9% of the variance was explained by them. Although the desired  $KMO$  value is above .60, the  $KMO$  between .50 and .60, usually referred to as miserable, can be accepted as well (Kaiser, 1974).

Finally, each factor analysis was followed by a reliability analysis to be assured that the scales were also internally consistent. The results showed that Cronbach’s alpha values for all scales met or exceeded the 0.70 threshold. However, deleting the first item of the perceived immediacy scale, *“In my perception, climate change/refugee problem addressed by Ben & Jerry’s is not urgent/ urgent”*, would change an acceptable alpha ( $\alpha = .72$ ) to a preferable alpha ( $\alpha = .90$ ), thus it was excluded for further analyses (see Appendix B for the result of the factor analysis and reliability test).

#### 4.4 Hypothesis testing

Although the Pearson correlation test indicated that the manipulation did not work as cause type has almost no effect on attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation, an independent samples T-test was conducted to gain more detailed insights. The T-test was chosen as the independent variable consisted of two levels. As for attitude towards cause branding, there was no significant effect for it,  $t(148) = .41, p = .678$ , despite climate change group ( $M = 3.67, SD = .89$ ) attaining higher scores than the refugee group ( $M = 3.61, SD = .88$ ). Regarding the brand reputation, a significant effect could not be found either,  $t(148) = -.99, p = .320$ , although the refugee group ( $M = 3.72, SD = .56$ ) had higher scores than the climate change group ( $M = 3.61, SD = .83$ ).

To test hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5, Hayes's PROCESS method (2012) was used in SPSS. Five thousand bootstrap samples were employed on a 95% confidence interval. To test the moderation effect of the three psychographic characteristics, model one of PROCESS was employed (see Figure 1). Before running the required analysis, all the variables, except cause type, which was a dummy variable, were standardized to make the process of comparing scores easier and more accurate.

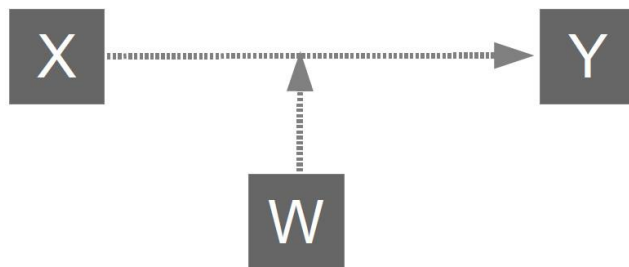


Figure 1. Conceptual diagram of PROCESS model 1

The overall results are provided in more detail in Table 4.4.1. In H1 a positive relationship between the cause type, the independent variable, and attitude towards cause branding, the dependent variable, was expected. The results indicate that cause type is not a significant predictor for attitude towards cause branding ( $B = -.00, Bse = .07, t = -.03, p = .974$ ). Thus, H1 is rejected.

To test the moderation effect of the three psychographic characteristics, Hayes was run three times. Each time one of the psychographic characteristics was put in the moderator variable plot, and other variables, the two control variables, along with the other two psychographic characteristics, were

put in the covariates block to control for their possible influences. The results indicate that, public self-consciousness ( $B = -.06$ ,  $Bse = .14$ ,  $t = -.43$ ,  $p = .660$ ), social responsibility ( $B = -.14$ ,  $Bse = .14$ ,  $t = -.98$ ,  $p = .323$ ), and empathetic concern ( $B = .03$ ,  $Bse = .14$ ,  $t = .22$ ,  $p = .821$ ) did not significantly moderate the relationship between cause type and attitude towards cause branding. Hence H3, H4, and H5 are not accepted.

As for H2, a positive association between cause type and brand reputation was expected. Since H2 did not have any moderators, Hayes could not be useful. Having several independent variables and one dependent variable and looking for model improvement by adding control variables, hierarchical regression analysis was the most suitable method. Moreover, 150 participants were included, which met the criteria of having 15 participants per independent variable. Thus, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with the brand reputation score as a criterium and cause type as the predictor. To control for possible influences of the control variables, cause/brand fit and cause-affinity were put in the first model, and cause type was put in the second model. The results indicate that when cause/brand fit ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and cause-affinity ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p = .142$ ) were used as predictors, the model was significant,  $R^2 = .20$ ,  $F(2, 14) = 19.19$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, adding cause type ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p = .081$ ) reduced the predictive value of the model significantly  $R^2 = .22$ ,  $F(1, 14) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .081$ . Thus, H2 has to be rejected.

*Table 4.4.1: Results of hierarchical regression analysis and Hayes with cause type as predictor*

	Brand reputation		Attitude towards cause branding		
	Model		Model <sup>2</sup>		
	1	2	1	2	3
<i>Control variables</i>					
Cause/brand fit	.41**	.42**	.17*	.17*	.18*
Cause affinity	.11	.11	.14	.12	.13
<i>Main effects</i>					
Constant	2.46**	2.33**	.00	.00	.00
Cause Type (CT)		.12	-.00	-.00	-.00
Public self-consciousness (PSC)			.15	.13	.12
Social Responsibility (SR)			-.04	.02	-.04
Empathetic concern (EC)			.33**	.34**	.32**
<i>Moderating effects</i>					
PSC x CT			-.06		
SR x CT				-.14	
EC x CT					.03

<sup>2</sup> Models one, two, and three are the models in which public self-consciousness, social responsibility and empathetic concern were the moderators, respectively.

$R^2$	.20	.22	.28	.29	.28
$F$ -statistic	19.19**	3.08	8.24**	8.40**	8.21**

\*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \* $p \leq .05$

All in all, the results showed no significant relationship between the variables except for one of the control variables, cause/brand fit. Table 4.4.2 provides an overview of the hypotheses.

Table 4.4.2: Overview of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
H1: Immediacy of the cause is positively associated with attitude towards cause branding,		X
H2: The immediacy of the cause is positively associated with brand reputation.		X
H3: As the value of the public self-consciousness increases, the relationship between the immediacy of the cause and attitude towards cause branding also increases.		X
H4: As the value of social responsibility increases, the relationship between the immediacy of the cause and attitude towards cause branding also increases.		X
H5: As the value of empathetic concern increases, the relationship between the immediacy of the cause and attitude towards cause branding also increases.		X

#### 4.5 Additional results

Not having an attention check question was one of the weaknesses of the survey used for the present study. Although the consequences of it could not be fully tackled, the researcher could partially solve it by watching the time spent on each questionnaire using the option in Qualtrics. As mentioned before, answering the questions in less than one minute was impossible; hence, initially, all the questionnaires that were filled out in less than one minute were excluded for further analyses. Of note is that, although filling out the survey in under three minutes was possible, most probably, it was filled out without the needed attention. To see whether not accurate enough answers played a role in coming up with the insignificant results, all the analyses were conducted again, this time with questionnaires that were filled out in more than three minutes ( $n=134$ ).

Although the relationships between the independent, dependent, and moderator variables were still insignificant, a difference could be seen in the results. Cause/brand fit, which used to have a significant positive effect on both attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation, had only a significant positive effect on brand reputation when those 16 suspicious questionnaires were deleted.



Instead, cause-affinity seemed to have a significant positive effect on attitude towards cause branding, something that used to be insignificant when investigating all 150 questionnaires (see Appendix D for the results of Pearson correlation test, hierarchical regression analysis and Hayes).

Moreover, the moderation effect of psychographic characteristics on the relationship between cause type and attitude towards cause branding was tested in this chapter, and as mentioned before, it failed to be significant. To test whether these characteristics have a significant moderation effect on the relationship between cause type and brand reputation, model one of Hayes's PROCESS was used. The results showed that public self-consciousness ( $B = -.14$ ,  $Bse = .15$ ,  $t = -.90$ ,  $p = .368$ ), social responsibility ( $B = .15$ ,  $Bse = .15$ ,  $t = .95$ ,  $p = .340$ ), and empathetic concern ( $B = -.19$ ,  $Bse = .15$ ,  $t = -1.25$ ,  $p = .210$ ) were not significant moderators for the relationship between cause type and brand reputation.

Table 4.5.1: Hayes results with cause type as the predictor ( $n = 134$ )

	Brand Reputation		
	1	2	3
		Model <sup>3</sup>	
<i>Control variables</i>			
Cause/brand fit	.35**	.36**	.34**
Cause affinity	.09	.10	.10
<i>Main effects</i>			
Constant	-.10	-.12	-.11
Cause type (CT)	.22	.22	.22
Public self-consciousness (PSC)	.23*	.17*	.18*
Social Responsibility (SR)	.01	-.06	.00
Empathetic concern (EC)	.13	.13	.22*
<i>Moderating effects</i>			
PSC x CT	-.14		
SR x CT		.15	
EC x CT			-.19
$R^2$	.25	.25	.26
$F$ -statistic	6.23**	6.25**	6.38**

\*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*  $p \leq .05$

Finally, in the present study, the type of cause the participants were provided with was considered to be the predictor, hence it was a more objective approach. However, since data was also collected on the

<sup>3</sup> Models one, two, and three are the models in which public self-consciousness, social responsibility and empathetic concern were the moderators, respectively.

perceived immediacy of the two causes, the same analyses were conducted, this time with the perceived immediacy of the cause as a predictor to see whether it could be a significant predictor for the two dependent variables. Once again, a significant correlation was found in neither the relationship between perceived immediacy and attitude towards cause branding nor perceived immediacy and brand reputation. Hence, no matter how the independent variable was measured, it failed to be a significant predictor for attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation. A point worthy of note is that, once again, cause/brand fit did have a significant effect on both dependent variables (see Appendix C for the result of the analyses).

## 5. Discussion

The present study aimed to offer insights by examining the role of cause immediacy on consumers' attitudes towards cause branding and the brand that employs it. Moreover, the role of customers' psychographic characteristics was taken into consideration as a moderator on the relationship between cause immediacy and customers' attitudes towards cause branding.

A quantitative study was conducted on 150 participants residing in the Netherlands, and an online survey was used as a tool for data collection. The participants were divided into two groups, each provided with a different cause with a different level of immediacy. According to Cui et al. (2003), people tend to respond more positively to a disaster cause as opposed to an ongoing cause since the former arouses the immediate emotions and the latter triggers the previous ones. In the present study, the climate change problem was representative of an ongoing cause, while the refugee problem was considered to be a disaster cause considering the fact that the process of conducting this research was undergone while Russia and Ukraine were at war and European countries threw open borders to Ukrainian refugees. The results showed no significant causal effect between cause immediacy and costumers' attitude towards cause branding and the brand's reputation. Moreover, the moderation effect of the psychographic characteristics was found to be insignificant as well. As with the control variables, cause/brand fit had a significant positive relationship with attitude towards cause branding and brand reputation, while cause-affinity failed to be a significant predictor for them.

### 5.1 Theoretical implications

This study has the following theoretical implications. First, highlighting the importance of choosing causes that elicit immediate emotions by considering the cultural context when opting for cause branding. As mentioned before, the pretest showed that the participants perceived the refugee problem to be significantly more immediate than the climate change problem, however, the results of the main study showed a significant association in neither the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding nor cause immediacy and brand reputation.

One potential explanation for this insignificant result is the fact that probably neither of the causes had given rise to immediate emotions, if any. Emotional arousal is a key factor in cause branding as it acts as a call to action forming behavioral responses (Huber et al., 2010). According to van Boven et al. (2009), immediate emotions are directly experienced and known by people, hence, being more salient, they act as a strong stimulus forming one's attitudes and behaviors. While, coming from indirect previous emotional experience, previous emotions are more of a pallid stimulus unable to form attitudes. As for the

present study, the level of participants' involvement with these causes probably has not been to the extent that immediate emotions are felt by them, and all they had was solely indirect previous emotional experience which is not enough for attitude formation. However, one question remains unanswered: why has the pretest showed a significant difference between the two groups in terms of immediacy of the causes while the main study failed to do so?

Cultural difference can be one of the root causes breeding this difference in the results. Although residing in the Netherlands, participants in the pretest were mainly Iranians who immigrated to the Netherlands less than five years ago, while the ones who attended the main study were mostly Europeans based in the Netherlands. As van Kleef et al. (2016) claim, emotions are cultural phenomena reflecting cultural values and priorities. Simply put, culture determines "what emotions we have" and "when we have them" (Gross et al., 2011, as cited in Mesquita & Albert, 2009, p. 288). Consequently, when confronted with similar situations, people within different cultures experience different emotions, especially when it comes to moral emotions (Kim & Johnson, 2012). Hence, it can be predicted that although the refugee problem failed to trigger immediate emotions in European people, having lived experiences relevant to this phenomenon, Iranians experienced these feelings and thus perceived this problem to be significantly more immediate.

Moreover, the present study contributes to the existing literature by showing that the three psychographic characteristics, public self-consciousness, social responsibility, and empathetic concern, do not have a strong moderation effect on the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding. Although existing literature (Berenguer, 2007; Onwezen et al., 2013; Rapert et al., 2021; Sharma & Christopoulos, 2021; Wells et al., 2011; Youn & Kim, 2008) has investigated the direct effect of psychographic characteristics on the customers' attitudes towards cause branding, the potential moderation effect of these characteristics on the relationship between cause immediacy and attitude towards cause branding have never been examined before. Eventhough, their moderation role failed to be significant, their considerable low interaction value shows that even if they were significant, their moderation role was almost negligible. This finding is in line with what Revella (2022) claims regarding the role of these characteristics. She believes that although psychographic characteristics play a role in forming customers' attitudes and buying behavior, they are never enough for understanding why customers act and think in certain ways; customers' lifestyles, values, and interests are other important factors that should be taken into consideration.

Finally, as for the control variables, the result of the present study is partially in line with the existing literature. According to the results, cause/brand fit has a significant relationship with brand reputation and attitude towards cause branding (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012; Gupta & Pirsch, 2006; Zhang et al., 2020; Hamiln & Wilson, 2004; Chéron et al., 2012; Melero & Montaner, 2016). Hence, the

participants who believed the cause was congruent with Ben and Jerry's identity showed a more positive attitude towards this brand and cause branding in general. On the other hand, although previous studies (Beise-Zee, 2013; Sheikh & Beise-Zee, 2011; Huertas-García et al., 2017); show that cause-affinity has a positive impact on brand reputation and attitude towards cause branding, in the present study, it failed to have a significant positive effect on them. This may be due to the failure in manipulation as well. Simply put, affinity refers to the emotional connection someone has for a cause (Jordan, 2010), not being able to elicit the desired emotions, the provided causes have probably failed to trigger the sense of affinity in a significant way.

## 5.2 Practical implications

The findings of this study can be beneficial for the brands that opt to employ cause branding in the Netherlands. As mentioned earlier, the findings indicate that cause/brand fit is positively associated with brand reputation and attitude towards cause branding. Thus, when employing cause branding, it is important for businesses to focus on social and environmental issues that are aligned with their identity, values, and missions to be more successful (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2020; Hamiln & Wilson, 2004). For instance, Dutch brands such as Jackalo, MUD jeans, Unrecorded can opt for environmental causes as they are sustainable brands using eco-friendly materials. Simply put, this cause goes with their identity, and it is hard to accuse them of woke washing. On the other hand, supporting health-related causes is not the best option for brands such as KFC or McDonald's, as they are notorious for serving unhealthy foods.

Moreover, as mentioned before, causes and brands should not just have a natural fit, and brands should try to communicate the fit to the customers to make them emotionally connected to that cause (Zdravkovic et al. 2010). Social media campaigns provide a great opportunity for the required communication. Body shop is one of the successful brands in communicating the cause. In 2020, they decided to start "Time To Care" campaign as a way to appreciate health care workers. Not only did they donate soaps to deprived people, but they engaged the public by posting valuable content about self-care with the #TimeToCare hashtag.

## 5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study had some limitations which future studies may overcome to gain more insightful results. First of all, as mentioned before, the two videos used as stimuli may not have been able to provide

powerful enough emotional arousals for attitude formation. Hence, it is suggested that future research employ more efficient stimuli. To understand whether the stimulus is suitable, a pretest, including diverse participants within the target population, in the case of the present study, it could be participants from different nationalities, is recommended.

Moreover, the low correlation between the independent and dependent variables shows that the dependent variables of this study are probably under the influence of some factors other than cause immediacy. Social influence and advertisement evaluation can be two factors shaping customer's attitude, which were not taken into consideration in this study. According to Kropp et al. (1999), customers' attitudes towards cause branding can be affected by social influence. Social influence refers to the extent to which an individual is influenced by the people around him/her. Simply put, one's attitude towards cause branding or cause marketing can be directly and indirectly affected by his/her susceptibility to interpersonal or reference group influence and the perceived acceptance or rejection generated (Galan Ladero et al., 2014). Another factor that can influence customers' attitudes is the evaluation of the advertisement. When customers have a positive evaluation of an advertisement, they are more likely to show a positive attitude toward cause branding and the company employing it (Hyllegard et al., 2010). Thus, it is important for future research to consider the role of social influence and advertisement evaluation as well.

In addition, although using survey exchange sites such as SurvyCircle and SurveySwap made the process of collecting data easier, it had several drawbacks which should be taken into account. First of all, there were a considerable number of surveys that were filled in without reading the questions. The researcher found this by watching the time spent on each survey, using the option in Qualtrics; although filling the survey should have taken at least 3 minutes, there were a number of surveys which were filled in less than one minute. Even though these surveys were deleted in the data cleaning process, it did not fully minimize the risk of including invalid answers. This problem could have been solved by including an attention check question in the survey. Moreover, since the majority of these sites' users are master students, relying on these sites reduced the sample diversity and may have led to biased results. Although these sites offered the possibility of putting some filters such as age and education level, using them was almost impossible due to the lack of diversity in the sites' users. Hence, not relying too much on these sites is recommended. Researchers can instead use Amazon Mechanical Turk which is a website for human intelligence tasks. Although getting participants through this website costs money, it can provide a more diverse sample.

Furthermore, the brand used for this study, Ben and Jerry's, was a well-known brand, consequently, the judgments participants had about the brand may have made their answers biased. It is

suggested that future research use a fictitious brand to avoid the possible biases. This can be through making advertisements in video or picture format depending on the available resources.

Finally, the present study used a quantitative method which is beneficial for answering to “how” questions but unable to justify the reason behind the occurrence and even the absence of certain effects. For instance, future qualitative research can be conducted on the potential reasons that made the participants perceive climate change and refugee problems as equally urgent, although one is a disaster cause and the other is an ongoing one. Conducting exploratory interviews before a quantitative study can be beneficial as well. For instance, some interviews can be conducted to investigate individuals’ opinions about different social/environmental issues, whether they perceive them immediate or they have an affinity for them, and then carry out a quantitative study to examine them on a larger scale.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

Dear participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this research. This research consists of a survey conducted for a master's thesis at Erasmus University Rotterdam, and completing it takes approximately 5 minutes. The aim of this research is to investigate your perception of a video that will be shown to you.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can quit at any time during your participation. In addition, your information will be kept confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

If you accept to take part in this survey, you will be asked to:

1. Watch a one-minute-long advertisement.
2. Fill out a survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send an email to:

[aghaei.fatemeh94@gmail.com](mailto:aghaei.fatemeh94@gmail.com)

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your social attitudes?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I work at trying to maintain a youthful appearance.					
The clothes I wear reflect who I am as a person.					
I want to look a little different from others.					
Dressing well is an important part of my life.					
I have more stylish clothes than most of my friends.					
I would feel less bothered about leaving litter in a dirty park than in a clean one.					
Depending on what a person has done, there may be an excuse for taking advantage of them.					
With the pressure of grades and widespread cheating in school nowadays, the individual who cheats occasionally is not really as much at fault.					
It doesn't make much sense to be very concerned about how we act when we are sick and feeling miserable.					



Refugee problem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqVShejhjEk>



3. Please select the answer that best represents your perception of Ben & Jerry's brand.

I think that the combination of Ben & Jerry's brand and the act of having environmental concerns/supporting refugees is...

Not congruent - - - - - Congruent

Not compatible - - - - - Compatible

Doesn't go together - - - - - Goes together

4. In my perception, climate change/refugee problem, addressed by Ben & Jerry's, is...

Not urgent - - - - - Urgent

Is currently relevant to the Netherlands - - - - - Will become relevant to the Netherlands in the distant future

Is currently essential to the Netherlands - - - - - Will become essential to the Netherlands in the distant future

5. How important is the environmental/social issue addressed by Ben & Jerry's for you?

Not important - - - - - Extremely important

6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about Ben & Jerry's brand?

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
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Ben & Jerry's is trustworthy.  
 Ben & Jerry's is reputable.  
 Ben & Jerry's makes honest claims.  
 I believe that Ben & Jerry's is a product of high quality.  
 It seems like Ben & Jerry's has a good leadership.


7. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your shopping attitude?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I like the idea to buy products which donate part of their profits to a social cause or non-profit organization.					
I am willing to pay more for a product if the manufacturer is donating part of the profits to charity or social cause.					
If a company is donating part of its profit to a charity or social cause, then I am more likely to buy its products.					
Companies that advertise that they are donating part of their profits to charity or social cause are good corporate citizens.					

8. What is your age?

9. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Non-binary / third gender

Prefer not to say

10. What is the highest educational level that you have followed?

Primary school

Secondary school

Vocational degree after high school

Bachelor degree

Master degree

PhD, MBA, or other equivalent

Other

11. What is your current employment status?

Employed/ self-employed

Unemployed

Student

Retired

12. What is your marital status?

Single

Married/ in a domestic relationship

Widowed

Divorced/separated

13. Were you already familiar with Ben & Jerry's brand before filling out this survey?

Yes

No

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

## Appendix B: Factor analysis and Reliability test

*Appendix B1. Factor and reliability analyses for public self-consciousness (PSC), social responsibility (SR), empathetic concern (EC), perceived immediacy (PI), cause/ brand fit (CBF), attitude towards branding (ATB), and brand reputation (BR)*

Items	PSC	SR	EC	PI	CBF	ATB	BR
I work at trying to maintain a youthful appearance	.57						
The clothes I wear reflect who I am as a person	.74						
I want to look a little different from others	.70						
Dressing well is an important part of my life	.80						
I have more stylish clothes than most of my friends	.70						
Depending on what a person has done, there may be an excuse for taking advantage of them		.74					
With the pressure of grades and widespread cheating in school nowadays, the individual who cheats occasionally is not really as much at fault		.68					
It doesn't make much sense to be very concerned about how we act when we are sick and feeling miserable		.75					
If I broke a machine through mishandling, I would feel less guilty if it was already damaged before I used it		.47					
When you have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everyone's best interest		.65					
When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them		.64					
Other people's misfortunes usually disturb me a great deal		.70					
When I see someone being treated unfairly, I usually feel pity for them		.68					
I am often quite touched by things that I see happen		.73					
I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me		.78					
I often feel sorry for other people when they are having problems		.75					
I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person		.68					
In my perception, climate change/refugee problem addressed by Ben & Jerry's is... currently relevant to the Netherlands/ will become relevant to the Netherlands in the distant future					.95		

currently essential to the Netherlands/ will become essential to the Netherlands in the distant future							.95
I think the combination of Ben & Jerry's and the act of supporting refugees/having environmental concerns is...							
not congruent/ congruent							.93
compatible/compatible							.94
doesn't go together/ goes together							.94
Ben & Jerry's is trustworthy							.86
Ben & Jerry's is reputable							.83
Ben & Jerry's makes honest claims							.78
I believe that Ben & Jerry's is a product of high quality							.77
It seems like Ben & Jerry's has a good leadership							.77
I like the idea to buy products which donate part of their profits to a social cause or non-profit organization							.85
I am willing to pay more for a product if the manufacturer is donating part of the profits to charity or social cause							.86
If a company is donating part of its profit to a charity or social cause, then I am more likely to buy its products							.86
Companies that advertise that they are donating part of their profits to charity or social cause are good corporate citizens							.68
Cronbach's alpha	.74	.69	.83	.90	.93	.83	.86
Eigenvalue	2.50	2.26	3.58	1.83	2.64	3.24	2.68

## Appendix C: Hypotheses testing with perceived immediacy as the predictor

Model one of PROCESS was used to test hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5. Five thousand bootstrap samples were used on a 95% confidence interval. In H1, a positive relationship between the perceived immediacy, the independent variable, and attitude towards cause branding, the dependent variable, was expected. The output of Hayes shows that perceived cause immediacy does not have any significant effect on attitude towards cause branding ( $B = -.07$ ,  $Bse = .07$ ,  $t = -.98$ ,  $p = .327$ ). Thus, H1 is rejected.

To test H3, perceived immediacy was the predictor variable, attitude towards cause branding was the outcome variable, and finally public self-consciousness was the proposed moderator. To control the possible influences from other variables, the two control variables along with the two other psychographic characteristics were put in the covariates block. Although the overall model was significant  $R^2 = .29$ ;  $F(7,14) = 8.40$ ,  $p = .000$ , the results do not show any significant moderation effect for public self-consciousness, thus H3 is rejected.

In H4, perceived immediacy and attitude towards cause branding were put as a predictor and outcome variable, respectively, and social responsibility was the moderator variable. Once again to control the potential effect of the two control variables and the other two psychographic characteristics, they were all put in the covariates block. A significant moderation effect for social responsibility was not found. However, the result show that the overall model was significant  $R^2 = .30$ ;  $F(7,14) = 8.87$ ,  $p = .000$ . Hence, H4 is rejected.

Finally, empathetic concern was put as a moderator, expected to moderate the relationship between perceived immediacy and attitude towards cause branding. Again. To ensure the potential effect of other variables is taken into consideration, they were put in the covariates block. Empathetic concern was not found to have a significant moderation effect, therefore, H5 is rejected. Of note is that the overall model was significant  $R^2 = .29$ ;  $F(7,14) = 8.39$ ,  $p = .000$ .

As for H2, a positive relationship between the perceived immediacy and brand reputation was perceived. Since this perceived relationship did not contain any moderators, to examine it, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with brand reputation score as criterium and perceived immediacy as the predictor. In order to control the possible influences from the control variables, they were put in the first block, and perceived immediacy was put in the second model. The results show that when

cause/brand fit ( $\beta = .41, p < .001$ ) and cause affinity ( $\beta = .11, p = .142$ ) were employed as predictors, the model reached significance,  $R^2 = .20, F(2, 14) = 19.19, p < .001$ . However, adding the perceived immediacy ( $\beta = -.03, p = .675$ ) reduced the predictive value of the model significantly  $R^2 = .20, F(1, 14) = .17, p = .675$ . Thus, H2 has to be rejected.

*Appendix C1. Results of Hayes and hierarchical regression analysis with the perceived immediacy as the predictor*

	Brand reputation		Attitude towards cause branding		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control variables</i>					
Cause/brand fit	.41**	.41**	.17*	.17*	.17*
Cause affinity	.11	.11	.15*	.15*	.15
<i>Main effects</i>					
Constant	2.46**	2.44**	.00	.02	.00
Perceived immediacy (PI)		-.03	-.07	-.07	-.07
Public self-consciousness (PSC)			.11	.12	.12
Social Responsibility (SR)			-.04	-.03	-.03
Empathetic concern (EC)			.35**	.35**	.35**
<i>Moderating effects</i>					
PSC x PI			.01		
SR x PI				-.10	
EC x PI					-.01
$R^2$	.20	.20	.29	.30	.29
$F$ -statistic	19.19**	.17	8.40**	8.87**	8.39**

\*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*  $p \leq .05$

## Appendix D: Hypotheses testing with 134 participants

### Appendix D1. Descriptive statistics and correlations ( $n = 134$ )

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD
1. Cause type***	-								0.49	0.50
2. Public self-consciousness	0.03	-							3.50	0.69
3. Social responsibility	0.13	-0.10	-						3.19	0.74
4. Empathetic concern	-0.08	0.02	0.16	-					3.97	0.58
5. Perceived cause immediacy	0.00	-.15	0.19*	0.17*	-				4.79	1.77
6. Brand reputation	0.06	0.23**	0.04	0.23**	-0.02	-			3.69	0.69
7. Attitude towards cause branding	-0.04	0.19*	-0.02	0.43**	0.00	0.28**	-		3.67	0.89
8. Cause/brand fit	-0.12	0.17*	-0.01	0.23**	-0.03	0.42**	0.28**	-	4.75	1.59
9. Cause affinity	-0.02	-0.04	0.23**	0.24**	0.23**	0.20*	0.27**	0.22**	5.66	1.33

\* $p \leq .05$ , (2-tailed).

\*\* $p \leq .01$ , (2-tailed).

\*\*\* Coded 0 = Climate change problem and 1 = refugee problem

### Appendix D2. Results of Hayes and hierarchical regression analysis with cause type as predictor ( $n = 134$ )

	Brand reputation		Attitude towards cause branding		
	Model <sup>4</sup>		Model <sup>5</sup>		
	1	2	1	2	3
<i>Control variables</i>					
Cause/brand fit	.40**	.41**	.12	.12	.12
Cause affinity	.11	.10	.18*	.16*	.18*
<i>Main effects</i>					
Constant	2.54**	2.43**	-.01	-.00	-.01

<sup>4</sup> In model one, cause/brand fit and cause affinity were the predictors. In model two, cause/brand fit, cause affinity and cause type were the predictors.

<sup>5</sup> Public self-consciousness, social responsibility, and empathetic concern were moderators in model 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Cause Type (CT)		.11	.03	.02	.03
Public self-consciousness (PSC)			.18	.16*	.16*
Social Responsibility (SR)			-.11	-.01	-.10
Empathetic concern (EC)			.37**	.37**	.36**
<i>Moderating effects</i>					
PSC x CT			-.04		
SR x CT				-.17	
EC x CT					.02
$R^2$	.19	.20	.28	.29	.28
$F$ -statistic	15.72**	2.12	7.11**	7.35**	7.09**

\*\* p $\leq$ .01, \*p $\leq$ .05

*Appendix D3. Results of Hayes and hierarchical regression analysis with the perceived immediacy as the predictor (n = 134)*

	Brand reputation		Attitude towards cause branding		
	Model		Model		
	1	2	1	2	3
<i>Control variables</i>					
Cause/brand fit	.40**	.39**	.11	.12	.12
Cause affinity	.11	.11	.19*	.19*	.18*
<i>Main effects</i>					
Constant	2.54**	2.52**	-.00	.02	.00
Perceived immediacy (PI)		-.03	-.05	-.06	-.05
Public self-consciousness (PSC)			.15*	.16*	.16*
Social Responsibility (SR)			-.10	-.09	-.09
Empathetic concern (EC)			.38**	.38**	.38**
<i>Moderating effects</i>					
PSC x PI			-.02		
SR x PI				-.11	
EC x PI					-.04
$R^2$	.19	.19	.28	.30	.28
$F$ -statistic	15.72**	.15	7.19**	7.72**	7.26**

\*\* p $\leq$ .01, \*p $\leq$ .05



