ABSTRACT

Across three experiments, I demonstrate that when for-profit organizations focus on the emotional aspects of fund-raising appeals, the evaluations of their appeal decline and they are unsuccessful in generating positive donation intentions; however, this is not the case for nonprofit organizations. In particular, experiment 1 reveals that affective, emotional appeals are viewed more favorably by consumers when they are connected with nonprofit organizations; in contrast, rational, unemotional appeals have greater favorability when they are associated with for-profit organizations. This interaction effect is mediated by the processing fluency, in which the nonprofit organization concepts (vs. for-profit concepts) are congruent with the emotional dimensions of the fund-raising content, causing an ease of processing and positive appeal evaluations. In experiment 2, I find converging evidence that people tend to place little weight on their actual emotional responses in making donation decisions when a for-profit organization is involved. Consumers tend to exhibit a donation flatline, displaying equivalent donation behavior regardless of the actual emotional experiences involved. In experiment 3, I further demonstrate that people's memory performance actually becomes impaired when a high-intensity negative emotional appeal is presented by a for-profit organization but not when it is presented by a nonprofit organization, which again reveals that for-profit organizations’ use of emotional appeals to connect with consumers' affective feelings may backfire. I argue that this is because the activation of for-profit concepts (vs. nonprofit concepts) gives rise to the cognitive system (vs. the affective system), leading people to regulate their emotions via suppression in order to conduct a careful assessment of the appeal content; this results in a donation flatline.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .................................................................................................................................. i
ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................................. iii
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................................ vi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................................. 5
  2.1 Organization Schema in Appeal Evaluations ........................................................................ 7
  2.2 Emotional vs. Rational Fund-Raising Appeal ......................................................................... 9
  2.3 Emotion Regulation and Donation Intention .......................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEW OF HYPOTHESES ............................................................................ 18

CHAPTER 4: EXPERIMENTS ........................................................................................................ 21
  4.1 Experiment 1 ........................................................................................................................... 21
    4.1.1 Method .............................................................................................................................. 21
    4.1.2 Results .............................................................................................................................. 23
    4.1.3 Discussion ........................................................................................................................ 26
  4.2 Experiment 2 ........................................................................................................................... 28
    4.2.1 Method .............................................................................................................................. 29
    4.2.2 Results .............................................................................................................................. 31
    4.2.3 Other Analyses ................................................................................................................ 33
    4.2.4 Discussion ........................................................................................................................ 34
  4.3 Experiment 3 ........................................................................................................................... 35
    4.3.1 Method .............................................................................................................................. 37
    4.3.2 Results .............................................................................................................................. 39
    4.3.3 Other Analyses ................................................................................................................ 42
    4.3.4 Discussion ........................................................................................................................ 44

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION ........................................................................................ 47
  5.1 Theoretical Contributions ....................................................................................................... 48
  5.2 Managerial Implications ......................................................................................................... 51

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 52
  6.1 Limitations and Future Research ......................................................................................... 53