# From donations to devotion: how cause-related marketing frames drive brand evangelism through cognitive and social pathways in hospitality

**From Donations to Devotion: How Cause-Related Marketing Frames Drive Brand Evangelism Through Cognitive and Social Pathways in Hospitality**


## Abstract

**Purpose:** Customers increasingly engage in prosocial behavior when purchasing products tied to social causes, but how message framing influences these responses remain unclear. This study investigates the differential impact of gain vs. loss-framed purchase-triggered donation (PTD) messages on brand evangelism (BE). It explores the mediating roles of perceived brand social responsibility (PBSR) and altruistic value (PAV) and the moderating effects of cognitive preoccupation (CP) and memory efficacy (ME).

**Method:** Data were collected from 660 restaurant customers via MTurk using a between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to either a gain-framed or a loss-framed PTD message condition. Data were analyzed using ANOVA for mean comparisons, ANCOVA to control for potential confounds, and PROCESS Model 8 and Model 4 to test the hypotheses to examine moderation and mediation effects.

**Findings:** $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ framed messages exhibited differential effects on customers' BE, PBSR, and PAV. PBSR and PAV played significant mediating roles, shaping customers' BE. Intriguingly, CP amplified the framing effects on PBSR and PAV, while ME strengthened the link between gain-framed messages and BE.

**Originality/Value:** Drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this research provides fresh theoretical perspectives on consumer-brand relationships by positioning BE as an outcome variable, a construct rarely explored in cause-related marketing. Furthermore, it advances the understanding of framing effects in CRM by identifying critical mediating (PBSR and PAV) and moderating (CP and ME) mechanisms, expanding their application beyond psychology into hospitality marketing.

**Practical Implications:** Marketers should prioritize gain-framed messages to harness the benefits of BE, especially for customers with high ME. Strengthening PBSR and PAV through

CP can also turn promoters into evangelists, offering a practical framework for impactful CRM strategies aligned with consumer values.

**Keywords:** Purchase-Triggered Donations; Cause Related Marketing; Brand Evangelism; Perceived Brand Social Responsibility; Altruistic Value; Cognitive Preoccupation.

## Introduction

In today's socially conscious marketplace, brands increasingly leverage cause-related marketing (CRM) as one of the most effective strategies for achieving competitive differentiation (Deng et al., 2023). CRM refers to a strategic marketing approach where brands align themselves with designated (e.g., social, environmental, ethical, etc.) causes to generate mutual benefit (Lii et al., 2022). A prevalent strategy within CRM is purchase-triggered donation (PTD), wherein a company commits to donating a specified amount to a charity for every consumer purchase (Hamby, 2016). This approach is notably evident in the restaurant industry (Piao et al., 2024). For instance, McDonald's donates a portion of proceeds from every Happy Meal sold to Ronald McDonald House Charities, which provides housing and support for families with hospitalized children. Panda Express donates a portion of each purchase of a designated menu item to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, helping fund pediatric healthcare services. Despite these well-established restaurant initiatives (Mahasuweerachai & Suttikun, 2024), the research on the effectiveness of PTD campaigns in terms of customer behaviors is in its nascent stages (Kuo et al., 2022; Piao et al., 2024).

Consumers are increasingly inclined to purchase products associated with social causes (Deng et al., 2023; Seyfi et al., 2024). This trend highlights the need not only to develop effective CRM campaigns but also to maximize their impact (Lin et al., 2024; Xu & Jeong, 2024). Besides, consumers increasingly favor socially responsible dining choices (Kwok & Lin, 2024), yet research on their effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior remains limited (Piao et

al., 2024). Hence, studying PTD campaigns in restaurant settings is crucial. As consumer preferences evolve, message framing emerges as a powerful tool within CRM, significantly influencing perceptions and behaviors (He et al., 2024). However, a critical gap exists in understanding how framing a message as a gain or a loss shapes consumer response (Schamp et al., 2023). The gain-framed messages emphasize the benefits consumers will gain by performing an action (e.g., If you order now, you will have the chance to build a brighter future). In contrast, loss-framed messages highlight the consequences of non-adoption (If you decline to order now, you'll miss the chance to build a brighter future).

Researchers have argued that framed messages in CRM campaigns significantly influence consumer perceptions (Choi & Seo, 2019; Lee et al., 2025). However, empirical investigations into the effects of message framing on brand-related outcomes have yielded inconclusive and, at times, contradictory results. Some studies have questioned the effectiveness of positive (gain) framing in persuading consumers (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024; Tanford et al., 2020), while other research indicates that negative (loss) framing may generate more favorable consumer responses (Gong et al., 2022; Grazzini et al., 2018). Moreover, some investigations have reported no statistically significant differences between these framing approaches on consumer behavior (Bester & Jere, 2012; Chaudhary et al., 2025). This divergence in findings underscores the need to explore the underlying mechanisms and catalysts shaping consumer responses to socially responsible brand messages.

One such effective behavioral response to message framing messages can be brand evangelism (BE). BE is a proactive form of consumer advocacy characterized by passionate endorsement and enthusiastic support (Mansoor et al., 2025). Unlike mere brand loyalty, brand evangelists actively persuade others to adopt the brand, defend it against criticism, and maintain a profound personal connection with it (Khashan et al., 2024). Past studies have examined several antecedents of BE, such as the positive brand perceptions, mass prestige of a brand,

consumer willingness to pay a premium, customer brand engagement, value co-creation, and brand love (Harrigan et al., 2021; Mansoor & Paul, 2022; Purohit et al., 2023). Despite significant efforts to understand these indicators, there is limited knowledge about how, why, and under what conditions PTD framing influences customers' BE.

To address this gap, our study is built on integrating the Elaboration Likelihood Model and Social Cognitive Theory. The initial investigation focused on the direct and differential impact of PTD framing (gain vs. loss) on BE when consumers process information heuristically. However, research suggests that consumers, particularly those highly attuned to ethical considerations, tend to evaluate a company's CRM efforts based on perceived authenticity and underlying motives (Ilicic et al., 2019). Given this sensitivity, it is projected that consumers will likely assess the extent to which a company's CRM efforts align with social responsibility and altruistic values. Perceived brand social responsibility (PBSR) refers to consumers' assessment of the degree to which a company's actions align with societal values and contribute to the public good (Delannoy et al., 2024). In parallel, perceived altruistic value (PAV) denotes the subjective evaluation of the selfless or charitable dimensions of a brand's initiatives (Lopes et al., 2024). In this study, we posit that both PBSR and PAV act as mediators between PTD framing and BE, the associations that, to the best of our knowledge, remain unaddressed in existing literature.

Additionally, the positive and negative consequences of cognitive preoccupation (CP) have been studied in psychology, primarily in the context of breaking news, compulsive social media use (Coduto & Anderson, 2021), and generalized problematic Internet use (Caplan, 2010), but remain notably absent in the branding literature. CP, characterized by persistent and recurrent engagement with specific content, fundamentally shapes how individuals process and evaluate information (Eberle & Maercker, 2022). Based on unexplored dynamics of CP on message framing processing, we introduced it as a potential moderator between PTD framing,

PBSR, and PAV. Furthermore, memory efficacy (ME), defined as an individual's capacity to effectively retain and recall information (Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki, 2021), has been studied in various consumer behavior contexts, including charitable giving and volunteering (Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki, 2021) food-saving behaviors (Dai & Gong, 2024), and evaluation of consumption experiences (Si & Dai, 2022). However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the moderating role of ME in the relationship between PTD message framing and BE, which we addressed in this study.

We integrated the concept of purchase-triggered donation framing as an effective CRM strategy, PBSR and PAV as moral obligations, CP and ME as personality traits, and BE as an affective behavioral response into the ELM and SCT to develop a theoretical framework for this study. The aim was to answer three interconnected yet unanswered questions: (1) Does PTD framing (gain vs. loss) have a significant and differential impact on BE? (2) If so, do PBSR and PAV mediate this relationship? (3) Do customer CP and ME moderate the impact of PTD framing on PBSR, PAV, and BE? This paper makes four significant contributions to CRM literature in the hospitality sector. First, it addresses the imperative need for further exploration of consumer behavior in response to CRM (Piao et al., 2024; Schamp et al., 2023). Despite the recent increase in attention to examining the antecedents of BE (Khashan et al., 2024; Mansoor et al., 2025), the effects of PTD framing (gain vs. loss) as a key antecedent of BE have been neglected. This study marks one of the first attempts to investigate this relationship. Second, based on an in-depth literature review, this paper introduces PBSR and PAV as potential mechanisms underlying the differential impacts of PTD framing on BE. Third, this study contributes to branding literature by being the first to examine CP as a moderating factor in the differential impact of PTD framing on PBSR and PAV. Fourth, understanding the moderating role of ME in strengthening the effect of PTD framing on BE can provide new insights to craft effective and resonant CRM campaigns.

## Theoretical Foundation and Hypothesis Development

While prior studies on message framing in marketing contexts have predominantly employed Prospect Theory and Regulatory Focus Theory to explain gain–loss framing based on self-benefit appeals (Saha et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2025), our study adopts a different approach. Specifically, we focus on purchase-triggered donation (PTD) framing in CRM, which emphasizes altruistic motives rather than personal gains. Therefore, the proposed framework of the current study (see Figure 1) is grounded in the integration of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986). The ELM posits that individuals process information through either central (systematic) or peripheral (heuristic) routes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Systematic processing involves careful message content analysis, where individuals evaluate all available information before forming an attitude or making a decision (Kumar et al., 2023). In contrast, heuristic processing relies on surface-level cues such as message valence, source credibility, or emotional appeal (Liu et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that message framing is usually used as a peripheral cue (Kuo et al., 2022), where consumers encode information based on its valence without significant cognitive effort. However, when consumers are highly motivated or cognitively engaged, they may process messages systematically and scrutinize the underlying motives of CRM activities (Lopes et al., 2024). In this context, we posit that PTD framing (positive/negative donation message framing) interacts with consumers' cognitive engagement to shape their brand evaluations. Specifically, we propose that PTD framing influences BE both directly via heuristic processing and indirectly via systematic processing through perceived brand social responsibility (PBSR) and perceived altruistic value (PAV). Prior research suggests that consumers assess CRM motives as either intrinsic (altruistic) or extrinsic (self-serving) (Deng et al., 2023; Piao et al., 2024). Evaluations of PBSR and PAV hinge on whether consumers perceive the company's actions as genuinely socially responsible

or as marketing tactics (Xu & Jeong, 2024). While some studies show that positive framing boosts brand engagement (Deng et al., 2023; Kuo et al., 2022), others report that excessive promotion can raise skepticism, weakening engagement (Xu & Jeong, 2024). Our model reconciles these mixed findings by incorporating consumer cognitive factors.

While ELM explains the dual routes of message processing, SCT expands this perspective by emphasizing how cognitive factors shape information interpretation and recall. SCT suggests that individuals actively interpret and recall information based on their prior experiences, cognitive capacity, and motivational states (Bandura, 1986). Two key cognitive variables relevant to our framework are CP and ME. CP refers to the degree to which an individual is mentally engaged with a particular thought or concept (Coduto & Anderson, 2021). It is projected that when CP is high, consumers are more likely to engage in systematic processing, evaluating PTD framing campaigns based on their authenticity and ethical implications. For example, a consumer who actively follows brand social responsibility trends may critically assess whether a restaurant's PTD framing initiative genuinely supports social causes or merely serves as a marketing tactic. This leads to stronger perceptions of PBSR and higher PAV when the donation framing appears genuine. ME refers to an individual's ability to encode, retain, and recall information effectively (Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki, 2021). SCT highlights that memory shapes consumer attitudes and behaviors as individuals retrieve stored brand information during evaluations (Mansoor et al., 2025). It is projected that when ME is high, consumers are more likely to retain and recall a brand's past CSR efforts, reinforcing positive brand associations over time. If a restaurant has a history of authentic, well-executed PTD framing campaigns, high ME consumers are more likely to internalize these positive perceptions, leading to greater BE. Taken together, by integrating ELM and SCT, our framework advances prior research by explaining how PBSR and PAV arise as cognitive-

emotional responses when consumers engage in systematic processing (via ELM) and are influenced by cognitive factors like CP and ME (via SCT).

**PTD Framing and BE, PBSR, and PAV**

Message framing, when used as a peripheral cue, allows consumers to process the valence of messages rather than their content directly (Dai & Gong, 2024). Positive information often triggers heuristic processing as it adheres to pre-existing beliefs and minimizes perceived risks (Bester & Jere, 2012). In contrast, negative information induces cognitive dissonance, prompting systematic processing as individuals seek additional information to resolve discrepancies between expectations and experiences (Mahasuweerachai & Suttikun, 2024). Thus, consumers encode information based on its valence, with positive framing leading to more favorable associations than negative framing (Kuo et al., 2022). Drawing from the ELM, positive framing, particularly gain-framed messages, operates as a peripheral cue, fostering trust and alignment between brand values and consumer beliefs, resulting in favorable brand behaviors. Studies also underscore the importance of positive framing in CRM campaigns, demonstrating its effectiveness in enhancing brand trust and driving donation intentions (Liu et al., 2024). Research also depicts that positively framed information consistently generates favorable outcomes, such as reviews and consumer recommendations (Piao et al., 2024). Thus, gain-framed messages are expected to significantly predict BE in donation-triggered CRM campaigns compared to loss-framed messages. Moreover, the current study also linked the message framing to key psychological constructs like PBSR and PAV, which have not been sufficiently explored in previous CRM research (Bester & Jere, 2012). Drawing on the ELM, which suggests that consumers are more likely to engage deeply with messages emphasizing gains (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), our study highlights the central processing route's role in fostering positive brand perceptions. Furthermore, through the lens of SCT, we propose that

gain-framed messages may strengthen consumer identification with the brand's social values (Bandura, 1986). Hence, it is hypothesized that,

***H1.*** *Customers' exposure to gain-framed PTD messages will lead to a higher BE than loss-framed messages.*

***H2.*** *Customers' exposure to gain-framed PTD messages will lead to a higher PBSR than loss-framed messages.*

***H3.*** *Consumers' exposure to gain-framed PTD messages will lead to a higher PAV than loss-framed messages.*

**PBSR, PAV, and BE**

PBSR refers to consumers' perception of a brand's commitment to ethical practices, social causes, and environmental sustainability (Delannoy et al., 2024). PBSR shapes consumers' attitudes by fostering trust and emotional connection with the brand (Mansoor et al., 2025). Prior research highlighted the impact of PBSR on customers' brand loyalty in restaurant settings (Reich et al., 2010). Besides, altruism is defined as the practice of enhancing others' well-being and providing positive outcomes (Romani et al., 2013). Previous studies have shown that the attributions consumers make when exposed to a brand's proactive initiatives (e.g., CRM) are important in explaining the effects of this activity on them (Su et al., 2020). Perceived altruism has been demonstrated to influence knowledge sharing within virtual communities (Hung et al., 2011), consumers' intention to recommend and trust (Lopes et al., 2024), and purchase intention (Legendre & Coderre, 2018). The current study proposes that;

***H4.*** *Customers' perceptions of brand social responsibility positively impact their BE.*

***H5.*** *Customers' perceptions of brand altruistic value positively impact their BE.*

**PBSR and PAV as Mediators**

In addition to the direct impact, the current study also proposes PBSR and PAV as mediatory mechanisms to transmit the positive influence of PTD framing on BE. Prior research examined PBSR's role in CRM, showing its mediating effect on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions (Su et al., 2020). Research also indicates that PBSR enhances consumer-brand alignment, as individuals perceive the brand as authentically contributing to societal well-being and brand loyalty (Reich et al., 2010). Positive framing in donation messages, as a peripheral cue, leads consumers to perceive the brand's actions as altruistic and focused on societal benefits (Piao et al., 2024). Gain-framed messages minimize cognitive effort, encouraging consumers to attribute CRM to selfless motives, thereby enhancing PAV (Deng et al., 2023). However, loss-framed messages necessitate systematic processing, leading to greater scrutiny of the brand's intentions (Ilicic et al., 2019). At the same time, research reports various outcomes of PBSR, like brand loyalty (Reich et al., 2010) and PAV, like consumers' intention to recommend and trust, knowledge sharing, and purchase intention (Hung et al., 2011; Legendre & Coderre, 2018; Lopes et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2023). However, limited research has examined how PBSR and PAV operates as a mediating construct linking persuasive message framing to BE. This study aims to clarify how and why specific message types (gain vs. loss) make consumers evangelists of a brand. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

***H6.*** *PBSR mediates the effects of PTD framing (gain vs. loss) on BE.*

***H7.*** *PAV mediates the effects of PTD framing (gain vs. loss) on BE.*

**Moderating Role of Cognitive Preoccupation (CP)**

CP is the extent of mental focus and engagement on specific information (Coduto & Anderson, 2021). Prior research highlighted the contingent role of consumption value as a motivation to adopt CRM and behave pro-socially (Seo & Song, 2021). At the same time,

existing studies in psychology have highlighted the importance of CP in memory retention and behavior formation, working memory, and cognitive effort in task completion (Eberle & Maercker, 2022). However, its application to CRM remains limited. By integrating the ELM and SCT, this study suggests that when CP is high, consumers are more likely to systematically process gain-framed messages, amplifying their impact on PBSR and PAV. Gain-framed messages that emphasize benefits appeal to heuristic processing but encourage consumers to focus on positive outcomes (Bester & Jere, 2012) when CP is heightened. Considering the theoretical foundation, it is projected that high CP allows individuals to link the brand's cause-related initiatives with their cognitive schemas of social responsibility and altruism, thereby deepening these perceptions. Conversely, a low CP limits the mental effort allocated to message evaluation (Caplan, 2010), hence reducing the encoding of socially responsible or altruistic cues, which diminishes the message's effectiveness. Thus, it is proposed that;

*H8: The positive effect of a gain-framed PTD message on a) PBSR and b) PAV is moderated by customers' CP, with high levels of CP strengthening these relationships.*

**Moderating Role of Memory Efficacy (ME)**

ME refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to recall and use information effectively (Touré-Tillery & Kouchaki, 2021). Scholars reported ME as a predictor of positive customer experiences (Dai & Gong, 2024), behaviors (Si & Dai, 2022), and preferences (Stafford & Grimes, 2012). We extend its already existing effective role in CRM because consumers with high ME can better retain and process persuasive messages, influencing their attitudes and behaviors toward a brand (Si & Dai, 2022). According to SCT, individuals actively process and internalize information through self-regulation and reinforcement (Bandura, 1986). SCT also suggests that repeated positive recall increases self-efficacy and behavioral reinforcement, making these consumers more vocal advocates of the brand (Coduto

& Anderson, 2021). Hence, it is projected that high ME consumers are more likely to align the brand with their identity, reinforcing their willingness to evangelize the brand. The ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) further supports this argument by suggesting that consumers with high ME are more capable of processing information through the central route. Gain-framed PTD messages provide logical and outcome-based reasoning (Schamp et al., 2023) (e.g., Your purchase helps provide nutritious meals for children in need), which resonates more strongly with individuals who can recall and reflect on the benefits over time. As a result, high ME consumers not only perceive the brand's social impact more clearly but also develop stronger attitudes toward evangelism. Hence, it is proposed that;

***H9:*** *The positive effect of a gain-framed PTD message on BE is moderated by customers' ME, with high levels of ME strengthening this relationship.*

**Insert Figure 1 Here**

## Research Methodology

This study employed a one-factorial experimental design to investigate the effects of donation framing on consumer behavior, specifically comparing gain-framed and loss-framed purchase-triggered donation scenarios. A between-subjects approach was utilized to test the hypotheses. A total of 660 participants were recruited through non-probability convenience sampling using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), with 327 participants assigned to the loss-framed scenario and 333 to the gain-framed scenario. Data were collected between July and September 2024. Convenience sampling is a widely accepted method in experimental research (Butcher & Yodsuwan, 2024; Noor, Mansoor, & Shamim, 2022). Despite potential drawbacks, such as participant inattention and self-selection bias (Aguinis et al., 2021), previous research

has shown that MTurk samples are reliable and cost-effective, producing high-quality data compared to traditional approaches (Bilgihan et al., 2025). The study adhered to ethical research standards. Ethical approval for the survey was obtained from the authors' institution before data collection. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights before providing consent. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous, with data securely stored and used exclusively for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions. Those who agreed to participate were then asked to imagine a scenario where a new restaurant, “Spice and Bites,” had recently opened in their local area. In this context, participants were shown a simulated Instagram post about the restaurant encountered through their Instagram feed. Although the coffee shop context has been commonly employed in framing studies (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024), a restaurant context was chosen for this study to explore its contextual relevance in consumer decision-making. The framing manipulation (gain vs. loss-framed donation triggers) was presented using a realistic Instagram post layout (see Figure 2). To ensure participants were familiar with the social media platform and actively engaged with the simulated content, a control question was included: “Do you have an Instagram account?” This check helped validate the authenticity of their engagement with the Instagram post.

The guidelines outlined by Chang and Lee (2010) were followed to maintain consistency and comparability across experimental conditions. Specifically, the amount of information presented in both the gain and loss-framed posts was kept consistent. Additionally, the study adhered to the methodological recommendations of Tanford et al. (2020) by using identical themes, including colors, images, brand names, and font types, in both versions of the Instagram posts. These measures were implemented to enhance the internal validity of the study and ensure that any observed differences could be attributed solely to the framing manipulation.

The experimental scenarios used in the study, as illustrated in Figure 2, were carefully designed to align with established practices in the field. By incorporating these methodological considerations, the study aimed to contribute robust and reliable findings to the literature on PTD framing and consumer behavior. After their exposure to the manipulated scenarios, the participants were asked to respond to several scales that measured the constructs of the study, including BE, PBSR, PAV, CP, and EM. To assess the effectiveness of the purchase-triggered donation framing manipulations, we followed the procedure outlined by past studies on the framing effect (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024; Tanford et al., 2020). The participants were asked to rate the extent to which they believed the statement, "The Instagram post I just saw included information that primarily focused on gains or losses." They scored their responses on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (potential loss) to 7 (potential gain).

**Insert Figure 2 Here**

**Measures of the Study Constructs**

To capture the study constructs, we adapted existing scales (see Appendix A). To measure brand evangelism, we used five items (Cronbach's Alpha (CA) = 0.765) adapted from Matzler et al. (2007). Customers' perceptions of brand social responsibility were measured with four items (CA = 0.723) adapted from Delannoy et al. (2024). Whereas, perceived altruistic value was measured with five items (CA = 0.745) adapted from Romani et al. (2013). To measure customers' cognitive preoccupations, three items (CA = 0.707) were adopted from Caplan (2010). All items for the above measures were measured using a seven-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Finally, customers' memory efficacy was measured with four questions (CA = 0.728) adapted from Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021). The scales used (1 = very inaccurate, 7 =very accurate; 1= very unreliable; 7 = very reliable; 1=definitely forget; 7=definitely remember; 1= very bad, 7=very good). In

addition, two covariates were included in the revised analysis to control for individual differences that might confound the framing effects. These were: (1) customers' attitudes toward corporate social responsibility (CSR), and (2) sustainability consciousness. Customers' attitudes toward CSR were assessed with three items (CA= 0.812) adapted from Rathore et al. (2023). Sustainability consciousness was measured using five items (CA= 0.784) adapted from Kautish et al. (2020). The scales used for both constructs were 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree.

## Analysis and Results

### Demographic profile

The demographic profile of the respondents across the gain-framed (N = 327) and loss-framed (N = 333) groups show a balanced distribution with no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$) as presented in Table 1. Both groups exhibited a near-equal gender split and similar age compositions, with the majority of participants falling in the 26–35 age bracket. Educational attainment was comparable across groups, with bachelor's degree holders representing the largest segment. Patterns of Instagram usage were also broadly aligned, with daily users comprising the majority in both conditions. These balanced demographic characteristics suggest that any observed differences in experimental outcomes are unlikely to be attributable to demographic variability between the groups.

**Insert Table 1 Here**

### Manipulation check

To assess the effectiveness and realism of the purchase-triggered donation (PTD) message framing, a manipulation check was conducted using a one-way ANOVA. Participants rated the extent to which they perceived the message as gain or loss-framed, on a seven-point scale (1 = potential loss, 7 = potential gain). The results confirmed that the manipulation was

successful, as participants in the gain-framed condition perceived the message as more positively framed compared to those in the loss-framed condition ($M_{gain}$ = 5.49, SD = 1.09; $M_{loss}$ = 4.88, SD = 1.59, F [658,1] = 5.817, p <0.05). These findings validate that the framing was interpreted as intended, thereby providing support for the internal validity of the experimental manipulation.

**Direct Hypothesis Results**

To evaluate the direct effects of PTD framing on PBSR, PAV, and BE, we conducted both one-way ANOVAs and ANCOVAs, the latter of which included two covariates: (1) participants' attitudes toward CSR, and (2) their sustainability consciousness. This inclusion was aimed at controlling pre-existing individual differences that could confound the framing effects. The ANOVA results indicated that participants who viewed the gain-framed scenario exhibited greater levels of brand evangelism than those who viewed the loss-framed scenario ($M_{gain}$ = 5.87, SD = 0.84; $M_{loss}$ = 5.30, SD = 1.22; F [658, 1] =6.021, p < 0.01). Similarly, participants exposed to the gain-framed scenario perceived the restaurant as having a higher social responsibility ($M_{gain}$ = 5.91, SD = 0.78; $M_{loss}$ = 5.23, SD = 1.15; F [658, 1] = 6.245, p < 0.01) and PAV (Mgain = 5.43, SD = 1.12; $M_{loss}$ = 4.92, SD = 1.65; F [658, 1] = 5.319, p < 0.05) than those exposed to the loss-framed scenario. The ANCOVA results further confirmed the robustness of the framing effects on consumer responses after controlling for individual differences in CSR attitudes and sustainability consciousness. Specifically, BE remained significantly higher in the gain-framed condition, F (1, 656) = 5.894, $p < .05$, even when accounting for covariates (CSR attitude: F = 4.112, $p < .05$; sustainability consciousness: F = 3.917, $p < .05$). Similarly, PBSR was significantly influenced by message framing, F (1, 656) = 6.198, $p < .01$, with CSR attitude also showing a significant covariate effect (F = 3.821, $p < .05$). In the case of PAV, the framing effect remained significant, F (1, 656) = 4.983, $p < .05$, with sustainability consciousness as a meaningful covariate (F = 4.379, $p < .05$). These results

reinforce the findings that gain-framed PTD messages are more effective in driving favorable consumer perceptions and behaviors, specifically in enhancing brand evangelism, perceived brand social responsibility, and altruistic value, even when pre-existing attitudes toward CSR and sustainability are statistically controlled. The direct effects of PTD framing on the PBSR, PAV, and BE were also analyzed by testing the proposed model in Figure 1 with PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2017; Noor, Mansoor, & Rabbani, 2022). The PTD was coded as 1 for gain framing and 0 for loss framing. Consistent with the ANOVA results, gain framing demonstrated a higher positive impact on PBSR ($\beta = 0.342$, CI 95% [0.297, 0.411], $p < 0.01$) and PAV ($\beta = 0.267$, CI 95% [0.225, 0.356], $p < 0.05$) and BE ($\beta = 0.326$, CI 95% [0.288, 0.398], $p < 0.01$) as compared to loss framing (see in Table 2 values in parenthesis are for loss framing). Thus, H1-H3 was supported. Moreover, the results also revealed the significant impact of PBSR ($\beta = 0.216$, CI 95% [0.145, 0.298], $p < 0.05$) and PAV ($\beta = 0.168$, CI 95% [0.093, 0.202], $p < 0.05$) on BE. Hence, supporting the H4 and H5 of the study.

**Mediation Hypothesis Results**

Indirect effects were tested using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2017), with attitudes toward CSR and sustainability consciousness included as covariates. The indirect effect of PTD framing on the dependent variables through PBSR ($\beta= 0.145$, CI 95% [0.089, 0.197], $p < 0.05$) and PAV ($\beta= 0.167$, CI 95% [0.092, 0.206], $p < 0.05$) was found to be positive and significant. This confirms the robustness of the mediation paths (H6 and H7) after accounting for individual differences in CSR attitudes and sustainability consciousness.

**Moderation Hypothesis Results**

The moderation effects proposed in H8 a and b and H9 were assessed using PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2017). Customers CP was found to moderate the relationship between PTD framing and PBSR ($\beta = 0.129$, CI 95% [0.068, 0.175], $p < 0.05$), and PAV ($\beta = 0.141$, CI 95%

[0.079, 0.204], $p < 0.05$), with differential impacts for gain vs. loss framing messages, providing support for H8 a and b. Similar findings were observed for the moderating role of ME between PTD framing and BE ($\beta = 0.198$, CI 95% [0.113, 0.277], $p < 0.05$) with differential impacts for gain vs. loss framing messages (see Table 2 values in parentheses are for loss framing). Thus, H9 was also supported. These results remained significant even when controlling for CSR attitudes and sustainability consciousness. To gain a deeper understanding of the moderation effects, we analyzed the conditional effects based on the recommendations of Preacher et al. (2007). The moderator was set to its mean value ± standard deviation. Plotted graphs are presented in Figures 3a and b and Figure 4.

**Insert Table 2 Here**

**Insert Figure 3a and b Here**

Regarding the interactive effect of CP with PTD framing on PBSR and PAV, the graphs (Figures 3a and b) illustrate that the solid blue line (High CP) has a steeper slope compared to the dashed red line with a flatter slope (Low CP). It reflects that the customers who are more cognitively preoccupied perceive the brand as more socially responsible and are more likely to view the donation as truly altruistic when exposed to gain framing in purchase-triggered donations, compared to those with lower CP.

**Insert Figure 4 Here**

Regarding the interactive effect of ME with PTD framing on BE, the graph (Figure 4) depicts that the solid blue line (High ME) has a steeper slope compared to the dashed red line (Low ME), which has a flatter slope. This reflects that customers with high ME respond more strongly to gain framing.

# Discussion and Implications

## Conclusion

Despite the increasing attention in recent years toward understanding the antecedents of BE, there remains a significant need to further explore consumer behavior responses within the context of CRM (Piao et al., 2024; Purohit et al., 2023). Grounded in the ELM and SCT, this study aimed to empirically examine how PTD framing (gain vs. loss) influences BE. Additionally, we investigated the mediating roles of PBSR and PAV, as well as the moderating effects of CP and ME, to offer a thorough understanding of the underlying mechanisms.

## Theoretical Contributions

The current study offers a meaningful contribution to the branding and CRM literature by providing empirical evidence on the differential impact of gain vs. loss-framed PTD messages on brand evangelism in the hospitality sector. Our findings demonstrate that framing PTD messages, whether gain or loss-framed, has a significant and distinct influence on brand evangelism (customers' passionate advocacy for a brand). This result adds a new dimension to existing research that has primarily focused on the effects of message framing on consumer attitudes and behaviors, such as brand engagement (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024). The differential impact of gain vs. loss-framed messages on BE is particularly insightful, as it aligns with ELM and SCT, suggesting that message framing influences both the depth of cognitive processing (as explained by ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the social and emotional dynamics that drive consumer advocacy (as outlined by SCT) (Bandura, 1986), ultimately shaping consumers' passionate advocacy for a brand. Furthermore, our results challenge prior research that suggested framing has minimal influence on purchase intention (Bester & Jere, 2012), reinforcing the idea that message framing might be more impactful in fostering deeper forms of consumer commitment, such as BE. While factors like consumer involvement with

the cause have been shown to moderate CRM effectiveness (Aggarwal & Singh, 2019), our study highlights that the framing of PTD messages plays a key role in shaping the emotional and cognitive processes that underpin consumers' BE.

Moreover, this study identifies PBSR and PAV as critical mediating mechanisms through which PTD message framing influences brand evangelism. While prior research has underscored the role of altruism in CRM (Legendre & Coderre, 2018; Lopes et al., 2024; Romani et al., 2013), our findings extend this body of work by providing empirical evidence that consumers exposed to gain-framed PTD messages are more likely to perceive the brand as socially responsible and altruistic. These heightened perceptions, in turn, serve as powerful psychological drivers of BE, reinforcing the notion that CRM effectiveness depends not only on consumers' general prosocial motivations but also on how brands communicate their philanthropic efforts. Additionally, integrating ELM and SCT, this study demonstrates that gain-framed PTD messages enhance PBSR and PAV through central message processing, which not only strengthens consumers' cognitive evaluations of the brand's social impact but also reinforces their social identity and moral involvement, ultimately driving BE as a long-term passionate advocacy behavior.

This study makes another significant contribution by introducing CP and ME as key moderating mechanisms in harnessing the effectiveness of PTD message framing in CRM literature. Our findings regarding the significant moderating role of CP for the impact of PTD framing on PBSR and PAV suggest that consumers who process the message more deeply are better able to recognize and internalize the brand's altruistic and socially responsible intent. This insight extends previous work on persuasion and message elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), demonstrating that message-framing effects in CRM depend not only on the content of the message but also on the cognitive state of the consumer at the time of exposure. Additionally, this study identifies ME as a crucial moderator in the direct relationship between

PTD framing and BE, offering a novel perspective on how recall and retention of CSR messages influence consumer passionate advocacy behaviors. Prior studies have emphasized the role of memory in advertising and mere exposure effectiveness (Si & Dai, 2022; Stafford & Grimes, 2012) but have not examined its impact within the CRM domain, particularly in shaping long-term BE. Our findings reinforce that message retention is pivotal in sustaining consumer behaviors beyond the initial exposure. By integrating CP and ME into the CRM framework, this study bridges a critical gap in understanding how consumers process, retain, and act upon CSR messaging, offering a more inclusive model that explains why certain customers become passionate advocates for brands engaged in CRM while others do not.

**Managerial/Practical Contributions**

This study provides actionable insights for marketers and decision-makers in the hospitality industry, particularly in CRM campaigns, for maximum customer advocacy (BE). First, our findings highlight the strategic advantage of gain-framed PTD messages in fostering brand evangelism, emphasizing the need for clear, benefit-oriented messaging that reinforces the positive impact of consumer participation. Restaurants should craft donation campaigns that explicitly communicate how customer contributions lead to tangible social benefits, using emotionally compelling narratives, vivid visuals, and direct messaging to enhance engagement. For example, campaigns should highlight real-life beneficiary stories or showcase measurable community impact (e.g., “Your meal provides a meal for a child in need”), reinforcing the brand’s altruistic mission. Second, the mediating roles of PBSR and PAV underscore the importance of authenticity and transparency in CRM messaging. Simply attaching a cause to a campaign is insufficient. Restaurants must demonstrate a genuine commitment to social responsibility through consistent, credible communication. To strengthen PBSR and PAV, brands should provide detailed breakdowns of donation allocations, partnerships with reputable

charities, and ongoing impact reports via social media updates, in-store displays, and interactive digital content.

Third, the moderating effects of CP and ME offer a new segmentation strategy for CRM initiatives. Since high CP consumers engage more deeply with message content, marketers should employ interactive storytelling techniques such as personalized digital experiences, immersive campaign videos, or interactive donation-tracking features to enhance engagement. Conversely, low CP consumers may require simplified messaging, heuristic cues (e.g., endorsements from trusted figures, eye-catching visuals), or emotionally resonant appeals to generate similar levels of impact. Similarly, ME significantly influences brand evangelism, with high ME consumers more likely to retain and act on CRM messages. To maximize long-term advocacy, restaurants should reinforce gain-framed messages with signature slogans, mnemonic devices, or emotional storytelling that enhances recall. For low ME consumers, brands should implement message repetition strategies, visual reinforcements (e.g., logos, taglines, reminder notifications), and simplified narratives to increase retention and engagement in donation-based campaigns. Memory-based segmentation can further refine CRM strategies, ensuring that gain-framing efforts are optimized for consumers who are most likely to internalize and advocate for the brand. Finally, by integrating ELM and SCT, this study provides a dual-process approach to campaign design, suggesting that systematic processing (for high CP consumers) should emphasize detailed cause-related information, while heuristic cues (for low CP consumers) should rely on trust signals, influencer endorsements, and emotionally compelling visuals. This novel, cognitive-driven approach enables marketers to tailor CRM strategies to different consumer segments, ultimately enhancing BE.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

While this study offers significant theoretical and managerial contributions, it also has limitations that open avenues for future research. First, the research was conducted in the context of a hypothetical restaurant, “Spice and Bites.” Although this context was chosen for its relevance and customers' familiarity, the findings may not generalize to other industries or real-world settings. Future studies could replicate this research in diverse contexts, such as retail, healthcare, or environmental sustainability, to enhance its applicability. Second, while our experimental design ensured control and internal validity, the scenarios presented to participants were hypothetical and based on simulated Instagram posts. Future research could examine the effects of PTD framing using real-world marketing campaigns and actual consumer data to validate and extend the findings. Also, Instagram was selected as the experimental platform due to its high user engagement, strong visual orientation conducive to message framing effects (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024). However, we acknowledge that user responses may differ across social media platforms, and we recommend future research to explore platform-specific effects to enhance the generalizability of findings. Third, this study did not account for individual differences in the propensity to donate or prior engagement with social causes. Future research could explore how these factors influence the relationships between message framing, mediators, and brand evangelism. Fourth, while this study offers valuable insights into the effects of PTD message framing in the restaurant context, it does not account for variations across different restaurant types (e.g., fine dining vs. fast food). Due to resource constraints, we were unable to incorporate product type as an experimental condition. Future research could address this limitation by designing multi-scenario experiments to examine how framing effects may differ across various hospitality settings. Lastly, while this study examined CP and ME as moderators, other psychological constructs, such as emotional involvement or skepticism, could be explored in future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of framing effects.

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## Figures

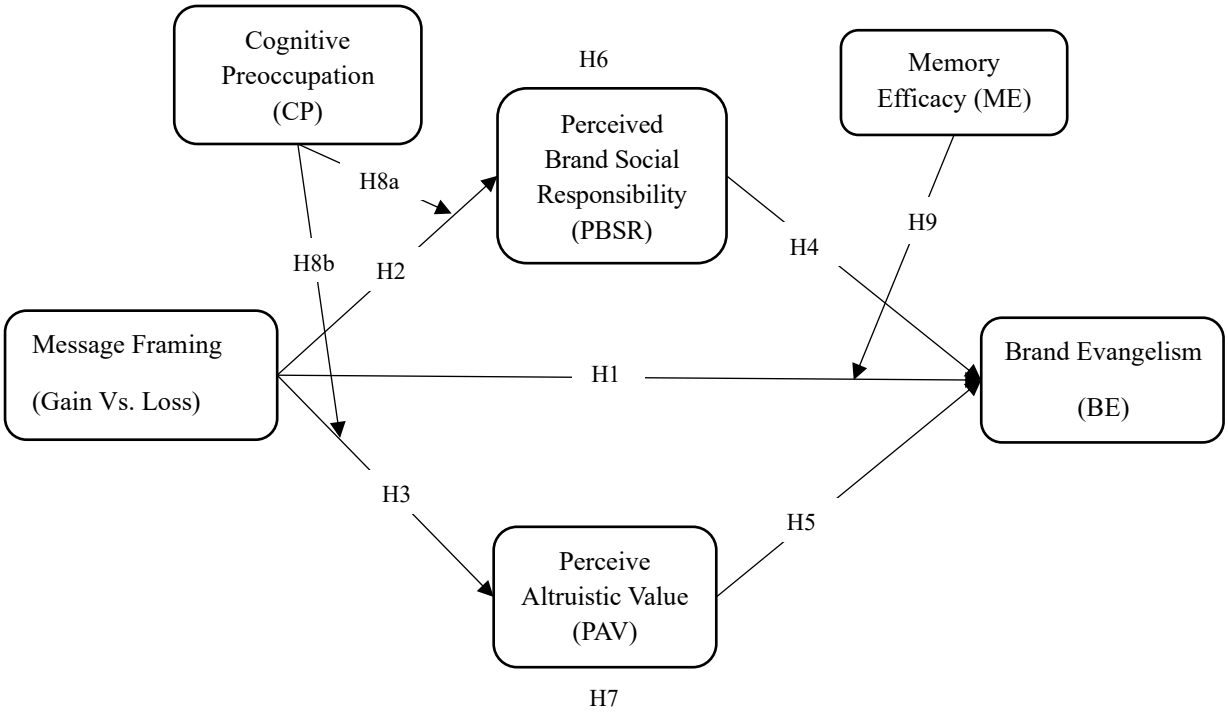


***Figure 1:*** *Proposed framework of the study****; Source:*** *Authors own work*


***Figure 2:*** *Gain-framed vs. loss-framed scenarios;* ***Source:*** *Authors own work*

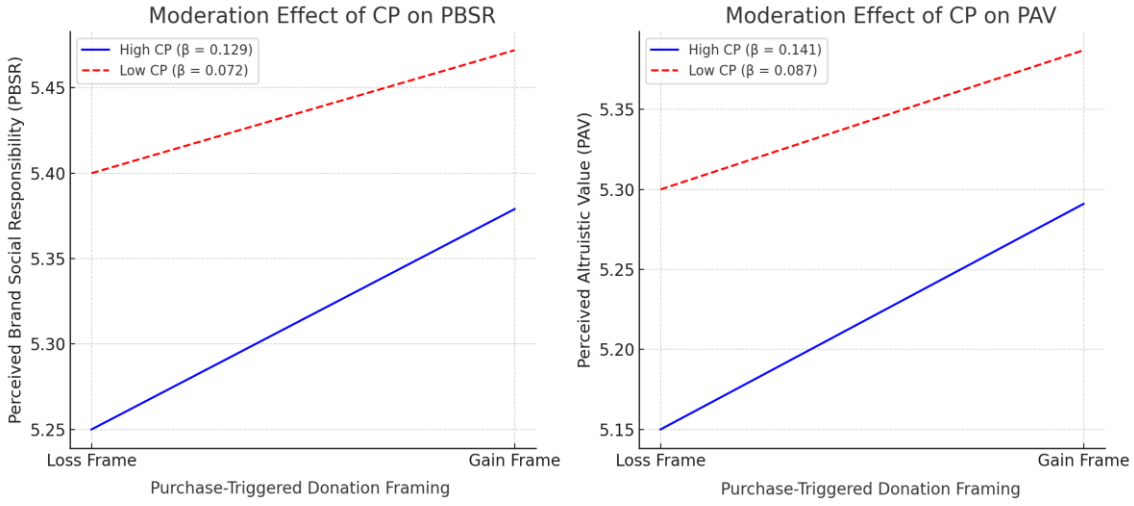


***Figure 3a and b:*** *Conditional effects of CP for the impact of PTD framing on PBSR and PAV.*
***Source:*** *Authors own work*

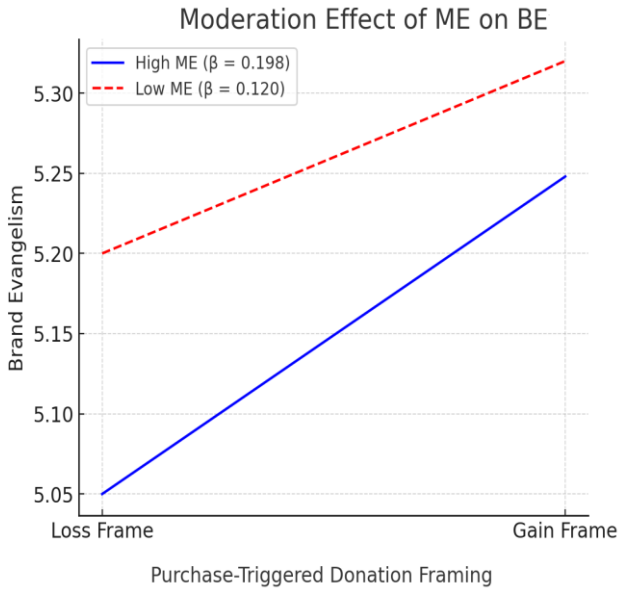


***Figure 4:*** *Conditional effects of ME for the impact of PTD framing on BE.* ***Source:*** *Authors own work*

## Tables

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Experimental Condition**

| Variable | Category | Gain Frame (N = 327) | Loss Frame (N = 333) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 170 (52.0%) | 168 (50.5%) |
| | Female | 157 (48.0%) | 165 (49.5%) |
| **Age** | 18–25 years | 81 (24.7%) | 87 (26.1%) |
| | 26–35 years | 121 (37.1%) | 120 (36.0%) |
| | 36–45 years | 66 (20.2%) | 71 (21.3%) |
| | Over 45 years | 59 (18.0%) | 55 (16.5%) |
| **Education** | High school | 77 (23.5%) | 87 (26.1%) |
| | Bachelor's degree | 143 (43.6%) | 142 (42.6%) |
| | Postgraduate degree | 48 (14.7%) | 44 (13.2%) |
| | Other | 59 (18.2%) | 60 (18.0%) |
| **Instagram Usage** | Daily | 227 (69.3%) | 227 (68.2%) |
| | Several times/weeks | 87 (26.6%) | 95 (28.5%) |
| | Monthly | 13 (4.1%) | 11 (3.3%) |

***Source:*** *Authors own work*

**Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Results**

| Hypothesis | | Effect Size (β) | CI 95% [LB, UB] | p-value | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Direct Effects** | | | | | |
| H1 | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing à PBSR | 0.342 [0.226] | [0.197, 0.411] | < 0.01 | Significant |
| H2 | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing à PAV | 0.267 [0.190] | [0.187, 0.356] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| H3 | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing à BE | 0.326 [0.223] | [0.218, 0.398] | < 0.01 | Significant |
| H4 | PBSR à BE | 0.168 | [0.133, 0.250] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| H5 | PAVà BE | 0.211 | [0.0.129, 0.277] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| **Mediation Effects** | | | | | |
| H6 | PTD Framing à PBSR à BE | 0.145 | [0.089, 0.197] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| H7 | PTD Framing à PAV à BE | 0.167 | [0.092, 0.206] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| **Moderation Effects** | | | | | |
| H8a | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing × CP à PBSR | 0.129 [0.72] | [0.068, 0.175] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| H8b | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing × CP à PAV | 0.141 [0.87] | [0.079, 0.204] | < 0.05 | Significant |
| H9 | $PTD_{gain\ vs.\ loss}$ Framing × ME à BE | 0.198 [0.120] | [0.113, 0.277] | < 0.05 | Significant |

**Where:** Purchase-Triggered Donation Framing =PTD Framing; PBSR=Perceived Brand Social Responsibility; PAV=Perceived Altruistic Value; BE= Brand Evangelism; CP= Cognitive Preoccupation; ME= Memory Efficacy; CI=Confidence Interval; **Note:** All analyses control for general attitudes toward CSR and sustainability consciousness as covariates; ***Source:*** *Authors own work*