

UNVEILING THE ROLE OF HOPE IN GUIDING BEHAVIOR.

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Unveiling the role of hope in guiding behavior

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Annik Dubied

La doyenne
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LEARN

From yesterday

LIVE

For today

HOPE

For tomorrow

-Albert Einstein-

ABSTRACT

Emotions have always played a central role in individuals' lives, and many researchers conceptualized theories to identify and describe humans' feelings. However, only recently the literature in consumer psychology has started to investigate the effect of discrete emotions on decision-making, of particular interest for this dissertation on prosocial behaviors. Contributing to this line of research, in the first chapter of this thesis, we investigate how various emotions differentially motivate prosocial behaviors, seen here as actions toward long-term goals of societal and environmental well-being. We base our theoretical background on appraisal theories of emotions. These theories identify dimensions that on the one hand help to distinguish emotions; on the other hand, they shed light on the action-tendency emotions guide. In particular, we are interested in the role of the temporal focus of emotions in influencing behaviors. In light of this appraisal, hope is defined as a future-oriented emotion, as the situation eliciting this emotion is in the future. Hence, hope is distinct from, for example, pride and amusement that each refer to the past and the present respectively. Appraisal theories of emotions further predict that emotions guide behaviors in line with their appraisals. With three online surveys, we observe that future-oriented emotions, for men especially *hope*, help individuals to think about the future and guide pro-environmental behaviors. These actions serve the long-term goal of environmental well-being. Moreover, in chapter 1, we offer evidence that the effect of emotions overcomes individuals' dispositional temporal orientation. On the basis of these findings and the lack in the literature of studies investigating the process by which hope guides prosocial behaviors, we investigate deeper in the second chapter how hope works. The literature defines hope as a virtue that instills a strength that helps individuals to persist in their goals. We hypothesize that hope empowers individuals by making them feel to have higher control over the situation compared to individuals who do not experience hope. The results of two experiments suggest, indeed, that hope increases individuals' psychological empowerment, which in turn predicts higher engagement in pro-environmental behaviors. In chapter 2, we further explore how regulatory focus moderates the suggested effect. Unexpectedly we have found that in the environmental domain, hope is particularly beneficial for prevention-oriented individuals. With the first two chapters, we offer empirical evidence of the positive effect of hope for those who experience this emotion. In the third chapter, we go a step forward in unveiling the role of hope in guiding behaviors by looking at how individuals perceive and react to others' hopes. Hope is often used in language from everyday conversations to political speeches and also commercials. However not much is known if individuals, when hearing about others' hopes, hold supportive behaviors or not. Specifically, we investigate how consumers perceive a company that hopes to make a difference

for society. We have hypothesized and found that consumers perceive a message using *hope* as sincere, as it lets transpire the honest uncertainty regarding the effect of the company's efforts. Message sincerity, in turn, decreases the doubts consumers may hold regarding the motivations of the companies to engage in philanthropic actions as a form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Therefore, a message using *hope* increases individuals' support to the company by persuading them that the company is truly committed to helping society. However, the strength of the identified effect depends on the perceived fit between the firm's activity and the supported cause.

Overall, this dissertation contributes to the literature on discrete emotions by investigating different facets of how hope affects individuals and their behaviors. Moreover, our findings enrich the literature on goal attainment, self-regulation, consumer psychology, prosocial behaviors, and CSR promotion. Finally, unveiling the effect of hope offers also practical implications that can help marketers and policymakers to increase the efficacy of their campaigns and interventions.

Keywords:

Hope, Emotions, Temporal appraisal, Psychological empowerment, Societal and environmental well-being, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

RÉSUMÉ

Les émotions ont toujours joué un rôle central dans la vie des individus, et de nombreux chercheurs ont conceptualisé des théories pour identifier et décrire les sentiments humains. Cependant, ce n'est que récemment que la littérature en psychologie des consommateurs a commencé à étudier l'effet des émotions sur la prise de décision, et d'un intérêt particulier pour cette thèse sur les comportements pro-sociaux. Pour contribuer à cet axe de recherche, dans le premier chapitre de cette thèse, nous avons étudié comment diverses émotions motivent de façon différenciée les comportements pro-sociaux, considérés ici comme des actions visant des objectifs à long terme de bien-être social et environnemental. Nous avons basé notre recherche sur les théories de l'évaluation cognitive (*appraisals*) des émotions. Ces théories identifient des dimensions qui, d'une part, aident à distinguer les émotions et, d'autre part, mettent en lumière la tendance à l'action qu'elles guident. En particulier, nous nous sommes intéressées au rôle de la focalisation temporelle des émotions dans l'influence des comportements. À la lumière de cette évaluation cognitive (*appraisal*), l'espoir est défini comme une émotion tournée vers l'avenir puisque la situation qui suscite cette émotion est dans l' avenir. Par conséquent, l'espoir se distingue, par exemple, de l' orgueil et de l' amusement qui se réfèrent respectivement au passé et au présent. Les théories de l'évaluation cognitive (*appraisals*) des émotions prédisent en outre que les émotions guident les comportements conformément à leurs évaluations. Avec trois sondages en ligne, nous avons observé que les émotions tournées vers l'avenir, et l' espoir en particulier chez les hommes, aident les individus à penser à l' avenir et guident les comportements respectueux de l' environnement. Ces mesures servent l'objectif à long terme du bien-être environnemental. De plus, nous apportons la preuve que l' effet des émotions l' emporte sur l' orientation temporelle à laquelle les individus sont enclins.

Sur la base de ces résultats et de l' absence dans la littérature d'études sur le processus par lequel l' espoir guide les comportements pro-sociaux, dans le deuxième chapitre, nous avons étudié plus en profondeur comment l' espoir fonctionne. La littérature définit l' espoir comme une vertu qui inculque une force qui aide les individus à persévérer dans leurs objectifs. Nous avons suggéré que l' espoir responsabilise les individus en leur donnant le sentiment d' avoir un plus grand contrôle sur la situation par rapport aux individus qui n' éprouvent pas d'espoir. Les résultats de deux expériences suggèrent que l' espoir augmente le pouvoir sur la situation ressentie par les individus, ce qui à son tour prédit un plus grand engagement dans des comportements respectueux de l' environnement. Dans le chapitre 2, nous avons aussi examiné plus en détail comment l' orientation réglementaire (*regulatory focus*) atténue l'effet suggéré. De façon inattendue, nous avons constaté que dans le

domaine de l'environnement, l' espoir est particulièrement bénéfique pour les personnes axées sur la prévention.

Dans les deux premiers chapitres, nous présentons des preuves empiriques de l' effet positif de l' espoir pour ceux qui vivent cette émotion. Dans le troisième chapitre, nous avons fait un autre pas en avant en examinant comment les individus perçoivent et réagissent aux espoirs des autres. L' espoir est souvent utilisée dans le langage courant, des conversations quotidiennes aux discours politiques en passant par les publicités. Cependant, on ne sait pas vraiment si les individus, lorsqu' ils entendent parler des espoirs des autres, ont des comportements de soutien ou non. Plus précisément, nous avons examiné comment les consommateurs perçoivent une entreprise qui espère faire une différence pour la société. Nous avons émis l' hypothèse et constaté que les consommateurs perçoivent un message utilisant l' espoir comme sincère puisqu' il laisse transparaître l' honnête incertitude quant à l' effet des efforts de l' entreprise. La sincérité du message, à son tour, diminue les doutes que les consommateurs peuvent avoir quant aux motivations des entreprises à s' engager dans des actions philanthropiques en tant que forme de Responsabilité Sociale des Entreprises (RSE). Par conséquent, un message utilisant l' espoir augmente le soutien des individus à l' entreprise en les persuadant que l' entreprise est vraiment engagée à aider la société. Toutefois, l' ampleur de l' effet identifié dépend de l' adéquation perçue entre l' activité de l' entreprise et la cause soutenue.

Dans l' ensemble, cette thèse contribue à la littérature sur les émotions en étudiant différentes facettes de la façon dont l' espoir affecte les individus et leurs comportements. De plus, nos résultats enrichissent la littérature sur l' atteinte des objectifs, l' autorégulation, la psychologie du consommateur, les comportements pro-sociaux et la promotion de la RSE. Enfin, la compréhension de l' effet de l' espoir offre également des implications pratiques qui peuvent aider les spécialistes du marketing et les décideurs politiques à accroître l' efficacité de leurs campagnes et interventions.

Mots-clés :

Espoir, Émotions, Évaluation temporelle, Perception de pouvoir, Bien-être sociétal et environnemental, Responsabilité Sociale des Entreprises (RSE)

RIASSUNTO

Le emozioni hanno da sempre giocato un ruolo centrale nella vita delle persone e molti ricercatori hanno perciò ideato teorie per identificare e descriverle. Tuttavia, solo di recente, la letteratura sulla psicologia del consumatore ha iniziato a indagare l'effetto delle singole emozioni sul processo decisionale e, di particolare interesse per questa tesi, sulle azioni a beneficio della società. Per contribuire a questa linea di ricerca, nel primo capitolo della tesi, abbiamo indagato come varie emozioni possano motivare o meno queste azioni. Nel capitolo descriviamo queste gesti come attività che mirano ad ottenere obiettivi di benessere sociale e ambientale a lungo termine. Per studiare il fenomeno ci siamo riferiti alle teorie sulle emozioni che, da un lato, identificano le dimensioni (*appraisals*) utili a distinguere le emozioni stesse, dall'altro, evidenziano come tali dimensioni possano indicare come le emozioni guidano le azioni. In particolare, ci siamo interessati alla connotazione temporale delle emozioni. Alla luce di questa dimensione (*appraisal*), la speranza è definita come un'emozione orientata al futuro, poiché l'oggetto della speranza è nel futuro. Quindi, la speranza è distinta, ad esempio, dall'orgoglio e dal divertimento che sono suscitate da eventi accaduti rispettivamente nel passato e nel presente. Queste teorie sottolineano inoltre come le emozioni influenzino le azioni quando ne condividono la stessa dimensione. Con tre sondaggi online, abbiamo osservato che le emozioni orientate al futuro, e, per gli uomini, in particolare la speranza, aiutano gli individui a pensare al futuro e incoraggiano azioni a beneficio dell'ambiente. Il rispetto dell'ambiente è, infatti, un obiettivo a lungo termine. Inoltre, ogni individuo è predisposto a prendere le decisioni basandosi o sulle conseguenze dirette delle sue azioni o sulle quelle future. Noi mostriamo che l'effetto delle emozioni supera l'orientamento temporale a cui gli individui sono predisposti. Sulla base di questi risultati e della mancanza in letteratura di ricerche che si interessano al processo per il quale la speranza guida azioni a beneficio della società e dell'ambiente, nel secondo capitolo abbiamo indagato più a fondo come funziona la speranza. La letteratura definisce la speranza come una virtù che infonde una forza che aiuta gli individui a persistere nei propri obiettivi. Sugeriamo, quindi, che la speranza dia potere alle persone e che le faccia sentire con un maggiore controllo sulla situazione rispetto agli individui che non la provano. I risultati di due esperimenti mostrano che la speranza aumenta il senso di controllo percepito dagli individui, che a sua volta predice un maggiore impegno nei comportamenti a favore dell'ambiente. In questo capitolo, abbiamo ulteriormente esplorato come l'attenzione normativa (*regulatory focus*) moderi l'effetto ipotizzato. Inaspettatamente abbiamo scoperto che nel contesto di protezione dell'ambiente, la speranza è particolarmente benefica per gli individui orientati alla prevenzione.

Nei primi due capitoli forniamo prove empiriche dell'effetto positivo della speranza per chi prova questa emozione. Nel terzo capitolo, invece, osserviamo come gli individui percepiscono e reagiscono alle speranze altrui. La speranza è spesso usata nel linguaggio comune: dalle conversazioni quotidiane, ai discorsi politici e anche negli spot pubblicitari. Tuttavia, non si sa se gli individui sostengano o meno le speranze altrui con le proprie azioni. In particolare, abbiamo indagato come i consumatori percepiscono un'azienda che spera di fare la differenza per la società. Abbiamo ipotizzato e osservato che i consumatori percepiscono un messaggio che utilizza la speranza come sincero in quanto lascia trasparire l'onesta incertezza circa l'effetto degli sforzi dell'azienda. La sincerità del messaggio, a sua volta, diminuisce i dubbi che i consumatori possono nutrire riguardo alle motivazioni delle aziende a intraprendere azioni filantropiche come forma di Responsabilità Sociale d'Impresa (RSI). Pertanto, un messaggio che utilizza la speranza aumenta il sostegno delle persone all'azienda persuadendole che essa è veramente impegnata ad aiutare la società. Tuttavia, la forza dell'effetto identificato dipende da quanto la causa sostenuta sia percepita in linea con l'attività dell'azienda e i suoi valori.

Nel complesso, questa tesi contribuisce alla letteratura sulle emozioni indagando diversi aspetti di come la speranza influenza gli individui e i loro comportamenti. Inoltre, i nostri risultati arricchiscono la letteratura riguardo al raggiungimento degli obiettivi, all'autoregolamentazione, alla psicologia dei consumatori, ai comportamenti a beneficio della società e alla promozione della RSI. Infine, svelare l'effetto della speranza offre anche implicazioni pratiche che possono aiutare i manager e i politici ad aumentare l'efficacia delle loro campagne e dei loro interventi.

Parole chiave: Speranza, Emozioni, Focus temporale, Empowerment psicologico, Benessere sociale e ambientale, Responsabilità Sociale d'Impresa (RSI)

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INTRODUCTION

What may I hope for?

Immanuel Kant, 1781

For Greta Thunberg, one of the youngest and most influent environmental activists on the Earth in 2019, society has stolen any hope to future generations. Her testimony, however, is telling another story. This girl has inspired hope in millions of individuals, and her presence at the most important conventions and political meetings is a promising step of change. Her speeches and her example motivate each day not only more and more individuals but also more and more politicians to take action and fight for a better future of the planet. She is planting seeds of hope that encourage a growing movement serving environmental and societal well-being. With her, hope gives another proof of being a powerful instrument for encouraging action. Surprisingly, however, in the consumer behavior literature, hope's role has only rarely been investigated, and further research is needed (e.g., Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce, 2015; Peter & Honea, 2012; Tong, Fredrickson, Chang, & Lim, 2010).

The literature has been concerned for a long time by the relationship between cognition and emotions given that, contrary to the expectations about humans' rationality, emotional reactions often seem to overcome cognitive reasoning (Loewenstein, 2000; Schwarz, 2000). Historically, the behavioral implications of emotional states have only been observed by contrasting negatively and positively valenced emotions (e.g., Andrade, 2005; Cohen & Andrade, 2004; Forgas & Ciarrochi, 2001). A growing body of literature is instead studying the motivational impact of discrete emotions in various domains (see Nabi, 2010; So, Achar, Han, Agrawal, Duhachek, & Maheswaran, 2015 for reviews). We aim to contribute to this line of research, investigating the role of discrete emotions, and specifically hope, in affecting prosocial behaviors.

We define prosocial behaviors as “the broad range of actions intended to benefit one or more people other than oneself— behaviors such as helping, comforting, sharing, and cooperating” (Batson & Powell, 2003, p. 463). In other words, these actions aim to achieve societal and environmental well-being. Compared to self-oriented goals, societal goals usually are longer-term, and individuals have greater uncertainty about the possibility of achieving these goals (Steg & Vleck, 2009; Verdugo, 2012). The pursuit of such goals often requires individuals to value and prioritize the future implications of their actions over immediate benefits.

Previous research offers first results on the role that emotions may play in the adoption of such behaviors (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015; Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017). For example, Cavanaugh, Bettman, and Luce (2015) compared the effect of various positive emotions on charitable giving. The authors found that different positive emotions enhance prosocial behaviors and that love “is unique among positive emotions in promoting

prosocial behaviors toward distant others” (p.658). Love promotes a high sense of social connection, and by bonding people with others promotes charity giving for causes benefiting both close and distant others. To give another example, across five studies, awe increased prosocial behavior by helping situate respondents within broader social contexts and diminishing personal concerns to the benefit of collective interests (Piff et al., 2015). This thesis aims to enrich the literature by unveiling the role of hope in guiding such behaviors.

The first step in this direction has been to highlight a dimension of emotions that may explain their influence on prosocial behavior, namely their capacity to drive the attention on the future. More specifically, we explored theories of emotions to evidence which dimensions are relevant in understanding the role of emotions in guiding behaviors toward environmental well-being. Appraisal theories of emotions propose that one dimension along which emotions can be differentiated is their temporal focus. Certain emotions (e.g., hope, anxiety) are termed future-focused emotions (Bagozzi & Pieters, 1998; Baumgartner, Pieters, & Bagozzi, 2008), as they reference future outcomes that have not yet occurred. Because the future is uncertain, such emotions can reflect uncertainty about how such goals will be resolved. Other emotions reference outcomes that have already occurred or that are happening in the present, they are termed respectively past- and present-focused (e.g., pride, anger, happiness; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Lazarus, 1991; So et al., 2015).

These theories predict further that feeling a specific emotion can guide individuals’ choices in a way that matches its emotion appraisal dimension (appraisal tendencies; Lerner & Keltner, 2000) — in this case, the temporal focus. Present-oriented emotions, including sadness and happiness, induce immediate actions, whereas future-oriented emotions, such as hope and fear, increase self-control, decrease impulsive behaviors and therefore help to pursue long-term goals. For example, studies show that feeling sad (a present-oriented emotion) makes individuals focus on a present loss, and it induces immediate actions, such as compensatory consumption (Salerno, Laran, & Janiszewski, 2014) or charitable behavior (Small & Verrochi, 2009). In contrast, hope (a future-oriented emotion) increases individuals’ self-control and, for example, reduces unhealthy behaviors (Winterich & Haws, 2011).

With our research, we aim to strengthen the findings of the effect of the temporal focus of emotions on behaviors achieving self-interested goals (e.g. Salerno, et al., 2014; Small & Verrochi, 2009; Winterich & Haws, 2011) by investigating their effect on behaviors that are beneficial to the societal well-being. Specifically, we tested our hypotheses in the environmental context, since the protection of our planet is a long-term goal. We found that future-focused emotions, and specifically fear and hope, are more effective at inducing pro-environmental behaviors than present-focused emotions or no emotions. When we considered also gender and emotions valence, we found that the

overall positive effect of hope on pro-environmental behaviors was particularly strong for men. Additionally, we observed that the effect of the temporal focus of emotions overcomes individuals' predispositions in terms of temporal orientation. This is particularly interesting because the literature highlights that individuals with a dispositional present orientation —i.e., those who think about the immediate consequences of their actions— are most likely to engage in anti-environmental behaviors (Arnocky, Milfont, & Nicol, 2014; Milfont & Demarque 2015). So helping them to think about the future and thus prioritize long-term goals, compared to short-term benefits, is extremely valuable to the promotion of the environmental well-being. In chapter 1 of this thesis, we are then able to identify what existing theories of emotions can say about hope in relation to other emotions when it comes to motivating prosocial behavior theorized as actions achieving future-oriented goals.

The second step has been to investigate how hope works by further unpacking the mechanism behind its motivational power. According to Bruininks and Malle (2005), “if a person has deemed an uncertain but important outcome as worth hoping for, the person will continue to remain engaged with that outcome and take any action that is possible to reach it” (p. 352). Hope instills a sense of strength and determination that goes beyond rational calculations about the probability for a hoped-for outcome to happen (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010). Hence, we theorized that hope and the inner strength that it instills make individuals perceive that they can always do something to move closer to the goal they are hoping for, and thus gives them a sense of psychological empowerment. The literature on psychological empowerment offers evidence that individuals who feel they have power over the situation are more active and perform better than who feel powerless, no matter what their actual capacities are to make a difference (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Guinote, 2007; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Maner, Kaschak, & Jones, 2010).

To test this hypothesis, we selected again the environmental context as the characteristics of pro-environmental behaviors make it a perfect field of study. Media coverage creates a high degree of uncertainty about the real possibility of mitigating climate change, and the results of the different behaviors that people may adopt will only be visible in the medium- and long-term (IPCC, 2014; Loewenstein & Schwartz 2010). Indeed, most of the time it is difficult to identify and quantify the impact of a single action. Therefore, the majority of individuals may feel powerless in the face of the environmental situation (Lorenzoni & Pidgeon, 2006). Moreover, the literature shows that not perceiving that one's behavior can make a difference is one of the strongest barriers that individuals face to engage in pro-environmental and more generally prosocial behaviors (e.g., Gifford, 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010).

We found that individuals hoping for a better future of the environment perceive higher psychological empowerment over the environmental situation, which in turn predicts higher pro-

environmental behaviors. We further investigated the moderation role of regulatory focus, as individuals' characteristics may affect emotional experiences. As we hypothesized, regulatory focus moderated the effect of hope on psychological empowerment, but unexpectedly the effect was particularly strong for highly prevention-oriented individuals, and it disappeared for highly promotion-oriented individuals. Overall, in chapter 2, we have then been able to shed light on the psychological mechanism behind the motivational power of hope. In two studies, we observe, indeed, that psychological empowerment mediates its effect.

For the third and last step, we change the perspective and we look at how hope can be used by practitioners and is interpreted by consumers. Hope is commonly depicted as a strength, virtue and good guide (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990; Shade, 2001). In line with existing research, in the first two chapters, we underline how hope may serve social and environmental well-being by motivating individuals who experience this emotion to override self-interests and behave pro-socially. In chapter 3, we further question the reaction of individuals who are exposed to others' hopes. The general understanding of the nature of hope suggests that this construct is the result of the joint effect of yearnings and expectancy for the hoped-for outcome to happen (McGeer, 2004; MacInnis & Chun, 2007; Pettit, 2004; Tong, et al., 2010). Indeed, hope "is defined by the dimensions of yearning for a goal congruent outcome and uncertainty/possibility regarding the future" (MacInnis & Chun, 2007, p. 68). Individuals who hope are moved by the possibility to achieve what they are hoping for, and their attention is focused on their desire. Yet, one who is exposed to someone else's hope may not necessarily experience the same eagerness of who hopes, and he can instead focus on the uncertainty of achieving the hope-related goal. We are, then, interested in looking at how hope is interpreted by external eyes and how being exposed to others' hopes affects individuals' actions. More precisely, we investigate whether reading about others' hopes encourages supportive behaviors or not.

We maintain our focus of interest on societal and environmental well-being and related hopes. Yet, we shift from individuals' to companies' hopes. We investigated indeed how consumers react to the promotion of companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Nowadays, companies are increasingly engaging in philanthropic actions as a form of CSR (Cone communications, 2017). Like individuals, the companies too wish to contribute to helping the society. We thus look at how consumers perceive a firm who hopes to make a difference.

The big challenge for companies engaging in CSR is to prove that they are sincerely committed to helping, and not just trying to deceive the consumers in order to improve their image and increase their sales (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011; Hillenbrand, Money, & Ghobadian, 2013; Vlachos, Tsamakos,

Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009). Based on two-sided persuasion literature (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Kelley, 1973; McGuire, 1961), we hypothesize that consumers, who are used to companies guaranteeing excellent performance of their products, would perceive a message using hope as unexpected, yet honest. When individuals have low trust regarding the firm's intentions, they are suspicious about the sincerity of the companies' messages. However, perceiving that the company is speaking frankly often decreases consumers' defensive mechanisms and increases message persuasiveness (Bohner, Einwiller, Erb, & Siebler, 2003; Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Ein-Gar, Shiv, & Rucker, Petty, & Briñol, 2011). We suggest that a company admitting to having low control on the outcome by saying that it hopes to make a difference, is then beneficial in these circumstances.

In our studies, we observed that the way in which companies communicate their CSR activities affects individuals' willingness to support such actions. More specifically, we compared two different ways to frame company's philanthropy, and we found that a company that advertises its CSR activities as hoping to make a significant contribution to the society was perceived as more sincere than a company that advertises that it can make a difference for the society. Message sincerity, in turn, increased consumers' attribution of an altruistic motivation for a company to engage in philanthropic actions. This, in line with previous findings, increased consumers' willingness to support the company (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Ellen et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Walker, Heere, Parent, & Drane, 2010). Furthermore, we tested the moderation effect of the fit between the company and the cause supported. As hypothesized, the 'hope' framing was particularly effective in cases of low fit. In sum, in chapter 3, we have observed that the beneficial effect of hope transcends the subject who hopes, encouraging prosocial behaviors also in one who is exposed to other's hope.

To end this introduction, we provide below a short overview of this thesis and its findings. Table 1 summarizes the purpose and includes constructs, sample sizes, variables measured, and key findings of each chapter. Although the chapters composing this thesis are intended to be stand-alone articles that can be read independently, we have tried to highlight, in this introduction, the common thread that weaves through this thesis and explains the complementarity of each of these chapters. This common thread and the chapters' complementarity will be discussed again in the conclusion.

Table 1. Overview of the thesis.

	Chapter 1: The temporal focus of emotions	Chapter 2: The power of hope	Chapter 3: Hope in the marketplace
Purpose	Testing whether the temporal focus of emotions predicts actions toward the future, such as actions helping the environment Exploring the interaction of gender and emotions temporal focus and valence	Shedding light on the motivational power of hope on engaging in pro-environmental behaviors Exploring the mediation role of psychological empowerment in the process and the moderating role of individuals' regulatory focus	Investigating how consumers perceive hope messages by companies Exploring the mediation role of message's sincerity and altruistic motives attribution and the moderating role of perceived firm/cause fit
Included concepts	The temporal focus of emotions Emotions' valence Moderator: Gender	Self-reported hope Mediator: Psychological empowerment Moderator: Individuals' regulatory focus	Verbal framing: 'Hope' versus 'can' Mediator: Perceived sincerity, altruistic motives Moderator: Fit between the company and the cause
#Respondents & Manipulation	Study 1* = 200 (Emotions measured) Study 2* = 319 (Writing task → recall and write 2-3 things or situations that make them feel an emotion) Study 3** = 199 (Emotions eliciting videos: future-, present-focused emotions, and control)	Study 1* = 197 (Emotions eliciting videos: hope versus control) Study 2* = 191 (Same from study 1; Regulatory focus measured)	Study 1* = 80 (Verbal framing: opening sentence "we (<i>can</i>) hope to make a difference") Study 2* = 112 (Same of study 1) Study 3* = 251 (Verbal framing: same of study 1 & 2; firm/cause fit: high versus low fit)
Dependent variables	Study 1 = Self-reported 43 eco-friendly behaviors Study 2 & 3 = Actual behavior: donations to an environmental association	Study 1 = Tips read on how to live an eco-friendly life Study 2 = Chosen type of testimony	Study 1 = Intention to donate to the company's reforestation program Study 2 & 3 = Intention to buy the cause-related product (pen, tea)
Key findings	Future-focused emotions (fear and hope) are more effective at inducing pro-environmental behaviors than present-focused or no emotions. For men, hope has the strongest effect. For women, fear has the strongest effect.	Hope for a better environmental future predicts action toward ecological well-being, and this effect is mediated by psychological empowerment. This is particularly true for prevention-oriented individuals	The 'hope' framing enhances the support to the CSR activity more than the 'can' framing. The effect is mediated by message sincerity and firm's altruistic motives. It has the strongest effect in cases of low fit between the cause and the company
Control variable/s	Individuals' temporal orientation Environmental concern	Environmental concern Video appreciation	Company's familiarity and appreciation Type of organization (for-profit, non-profit) Study 3: Importance of the cause
Sample recruitment: * Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), US-based online subject pool ** Prolific Academic Ltd, England-based online subject pool Research approved by the Commission d'éthique de la recherche (CER) of the University of Neuchâtel. Ref. n.: 20/2018, and by USC University Park Institutional Review Board (UPIRB). Study ID: UP-18-00254			

CHAPTER 1: THE TEMPORAL FOCUS OF EMOTIONS

Title:

Promoting sustainable consumption with the temporal focus of emotions.

ABSTRACT

The protection of the environment and the sustainability of human life require a drastic change in global consumption patterns. Whereas individuals behave and consume to fulfill their needs, their actions have implications not only for themselves but also for societal and environmental well-being. In ecological terms, individuals' actions may seem to have a negligible impact in the short-term, but they can have severe implications in the long-term. Thus the concept of sustainability embodies a concern about the future. Consequently, to consume in a sustainable manner, people need to consider and value the future implications of their actions on the environment. But, how can people be encouraged to think about the future environmental consequences of their actions? We investigate whether arousing future-focused emotions can motivate pro-environmental behaviors. With three surveys, we reveal that emotions can convey a specific temporal focus and that this temporal focus influences individuals' decision-making.

Keywords

Emotions, Temporal focus, Valence, Individuals' temporal orientation, Pro-environmental behavior

INTRODUCTION

Chloe was invited by a colleague to watch a documentary on climate change. The film showed evidence of humans' harmful impact on the Earth, and it described the possible terrible consequences of climate change if individuals do not choose to live more sustainable lifestyles. Chloe *felt bad and scared*, and she also felt it was worth contributing to help save the planet. She committed to recycling every day, and since viewing the film, she had been trying to spread the word to family and friends about the importance of taking action. Chloe also joined an initiative to plant trees, where she met an environmentalist, Joe, who asked her how she got involved in protecting the environment. She mentioned having watched the documentary. Joe, in response, spoke enthusiastically about a great film he had watched on the same topic. All the positive stories collected in the documentary about individuals fighting for the environment evoked a *positive feeling of hope* in Joe. In effect, he realized that climate mitigation is possible and that he has the power to do something, and he decided to change his lifestyle to be more sustainable. Chloe and Joe watched two different documentaries that elicited different emotions (fear and hope). Both emotions motivated Chloe and Joe to take action to protect the environment. This article aims to answer the following questions. What is the mechanism that links emotions with pro-environmental behaviors? Would anything have changed had Chloe and Joe watched the other documentary instead?

Previous research shows that emotions play an important role in behaviors including actions that aim to achieve societal and environmental goals. Compared to self-oriented goals, societal and especially environmental goals usually are longer-term, and individuals have greater uncertainty about the possibility of achieving these goals (Steg & Vleck, 2009; Verdugo, 2012). A number of studies have clarified that discrete emotions can motivate pro-environmental behaviors (Chang, 2012; Hart & Feldman, 2014; O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009; Hartmann, Apaolaza, D'Souza, Barrutia, & Echebarria, 2014, 2016; Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017). Despite these promising results, more needs to be done to elucidate the process behind the beneficial effect of discrete emotions on societal and environmental goals (Andrade & Cohen, 2007).

In this paper, we suggest that two aspects of emotions: their temporal focus and valence influence actions designed to fulfill environmental goals. Actions related to environmental protection pose a temporal dilemma for consumers. "Current generations are called upon to make sacrifices today for the well-being of future generations" (Sachs, 2014, p. 248). In everyday life, short-term interests, such as using a car versus public transport, are in opposition to long-term environmental benefits, such as preserving a clean and healthy environment (Milfont, Wilson, & Diniz, 2012; White,

Macdonnell, & Dahl, 2011). To promote pro-environmental behaviors it is important for individuals to consider the future consequences of their actions (Milfont et al., 2012; White et al., 2011).

The literature suggests that emotions drive attention toward the past, present, or future, and individuals seem to act according to the specific temporal focus of their emotions (Baumgartner, Pieters, & Bagozzi, 2008; Winterich & Haws, 2011). Thus, the emotions that drive the attention toward the future seem to be particularly functional to encourage long-term environmental goals. In other words, we expect that eliciting future-focused emotions, such as hope and fear we mentioned in the example above, is more effective at inducing pro-environmental behaviors than eliciting present-focused emotions or no emotions. Additionally, situational primes with the temporal focus can overcome enduring predispositions in temporal orientation (e.g., Van Lange & Joireman, 2008). Thus, we further hypothesize that the effect of the temporal focus primed by emotions on behaviors overcomes that of individuals' dispositional temporal orientations. Finally, we suggest that emotion's valence is another appraisal dimension to take in consideration when investigating the influence of emotion on pro-environmental behaviors. Men and women seem to experience and react differently to emotions stimuli (Fessler, Pillsworth, & Flamson, 2004; Fisher & Dubé, 2005; Kemp, Kennett-Hensel, & Kees, 2013; Thory, 2013; Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). We expect men to be more responsive to positive emotions than negative emotions and the other way around for women. Previous literature on emotional intelligence and gender-identity roles (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007; Fisher & Dubé, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Thory, 2013), guides our predictions.

In three experiments, we observe that future-focused emotions motivate ecological choices by making people think about the future. In the following sections, we build the theoretical foundations of our research. Next, we present our studies, which feature both correlational and experimental designs. Finally, we discuss our findings and suggest theoretical and practical implications of our work. We contribute to the literature in two major ways. First, we offer additional evidence about the important but understudied characteristic of emotions — i.e., temporal focus— in guiding behavior by looking at its effect on the environmental context. Second, we enrich the literature about the influence of integral emotions on decision-making, namely emotions elicited about the decision itself (Pham, 2007). This literature is much less developed than the one on incidental emotions, arisen from unrelated sources (Achar, So, Agrawal, & Duhachek, 2016; Pham & Lee, 2019; Wyer Jr, Dong, Huang, Huang, & Wan, 2019).

Theoretical background

The literature regarding the influence of emotions on decision-making has classified emotions into two broad categories: *incidental* and *integral*. The majority of studies have investigated *incidental* emotions, which arise “from sources that are unrelated to a particular decision, yet their influence carries over to that subsequent decision” (Achar et al., 2016, p.166). The characteristics of incidental emotions make them very interesting to understand what drives individuals’ behaviors, but less as a tool that marketers and policymakers can use in their campaigns. First, the literature shows that random external primes may elicit incidental emotions, and these emotions influence decisions. However, most of the time, these decisions are unrelated to the situation eliciting the emotion (Han Lerner & Keltner, 2007; Wyer Jr et al., 2019). This condition means that individuals are often unaware of the effect that an incidental emotion may have on unrelated actions. As most of individuals do not like to feel they have no control over their actions, they perceive the possible effect of incidental emotions as undesirable and tend to deny they were emotional in respect to a decision (Han et al., 2007; Wilson & Brekke, 1994). Moreover, the nature of incidental emotions may undermine their potential positive influence on decision-making, particularly over the long term. Once the situation no longer evokes an incidental emotion, its effect vanishes, and the ensuing behavior often stops (Frijda, 1988; Han et al., 2007).

In this research, we investigate, instead, *integral* emotions, namely emotions elicited about the decision itself (Pham, 2007). Integral emotions pertain to the goal itself; for example, here the future of the environment and the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors. This condition means that individuals consciously perceive integral emotions and they know that their feelings about the situation guide their actions. Additionally, an integral emotion only ceases to produce an effect when the goal is reached. To illustrate further the difference in the effect of incidental and integral emotions by an example, let us think that a person is sad because he/she has had a difficult day at work (incidental emotion). His/her emotional state may determine many of his/her decisions; however, as soon as the job environment gets better, his/her sadness should disappear as well as its effect on behaviors. Instead, if an individual is sad for the pollution of the oceans (integral emotion), his/her sadness should persist until the oceans are cleaned. Thus, it seems particularly interesting to study integral emotions, which can be elicited explicitly by environmental campaigns and communication efforts.

To investigate the effect of specific integral emotions on pro-environmental behaviors, we draw upon appraisal theories of emotions (e.g., Smith & Ellsworth, 1985) and the appraisal-tendency framework (Han et al., 2007; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; So, Achar, Han, Agrawal, Duhachek, &

Maheśwaran, 2015). Appraisal theories of emotions suggest that each specific emotion is uniquely characterized by a variety of latent dimensions, i.e., appraisals. Emotions may share one or more appraisals, but they are distinct from one another by the unique composition of these core dimensions (Lazarus, 1991; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Along with the most known appraisals in the literature, such as pleasantness, arousal, and responsibility, many new appraisals have been recently introduced to explore a broader set of emotions, such as global versus local, temporal focus, and self versus others similarity appraisals (see So et al., 2015 for a review). For example, pleasantness distinguishes positive and negative emotions, whereas arousal refers to level of excitement associated with the emotions, so, among others, calm and boredom are respectively a positive and negative emotion with a low level of arousal. Responsibility appraisal, instead, defines how individuals perceive that the event eliciting the emotion is in their or others' control. Based on this appraisal, shame and guilt are distinguished by attributions of self-responsibility, whereas surprise differs in its attributions of other-responsibility (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Self versus other similarity appraisal refers instead "to the extent of perceived similarity or identified congruity between one's self and another" elicited by emotions (So et al. 2015, p. 363). Pride and compassion are at the opposite extremes of this appraisal. Compassion is associated with high perceived similarity with weak others, whereas pride with strong others (Oveis, Horberg, & Keltner, 2010).

The appraisals are not only useful to understand the differences among emotions but also to predict their influence on decisions and actions. The appraisals characterizing each distinct emotion activate a cognitive predisposition — i.e., appraisal tendency— which influences the way individuals perceive and react to the situation (Han et al., 2007; Lerner & Keltner, 2000). According to Lerner and Keltner (2000), any appraisal dimension of emotions may influence subsequent judgments and behaviors that are congruent with an emotion's constituent appraisal. More specifically, emotions affect the "spheres of judgment related to the emotion's appraisals. That is, carryover is constrained by a match between the core appraisal dimensions or appraisal themes of the emotion and the salient cognitive dimensions of the judgment and choice at hand" (Han et al., 2007, p.161).

Among the appraisals highlighted in the literature, the temporal focus of emotions seems particularly relevant for our research. Emotions are current affective responses to the situation and the temporal dimension distinguishes emotions according to whether the event eliciting the emotion is located in the past, the present, or the future. Past-focused emotions are affective responses to the recollection of past events, present-focused emotions are elicited by events happening in the present moment, and people experience future-focused emotions when they imagine future events. Uncertainty is a constitutional component of future-focused emotions. Compared to other emotions elicited by situations that are certain, such as pride and guilt, future-focused emotions are

characterized by the high uncertainty about future developments (Roseman, 1996; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Based on this distinction, pride, gratitude, guilt, and regret among others, reflect emotions that refer to past events (Aspinwall & Leaf, 2002; Baumgartner et al., 2008; Benzein & Saveman, 1998; Godfrey, 2012). Joy and sadness are present-focused, in contrast to hope and fear, which are future-focused emotions (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Lazarus, 1991). For example, joy is a positive emotion in response to a pleasurable present moment, whereas hope displays pleasure about the prospect of a desired future outcome. It is necessary at this point to mention that the literature suggests that individuals may anticipate emotions that usually are experienced regarding past and present situations (e.g., Baumgartner et al., 2008). For example, individuals may anticipate a sense of pride for the purchase of an electric vehicle they plan for the following year. However, research regarding anticipated emotional states is outside the scope of this paper.

Moreover, the temporal focus appraisal differentiates emotions in terms of their future- versus past- or present-oriented action tendencies (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Lazarus 1991; So et al. 2015). Specifically, the temporal focus appraisal of emotions seems to predict behaviors aiming to achieve goals that fit with the specific temporal orientation of the emotion (MacInnis & Patrick, 2006; Wilcox, Kramer, & Sen, 2010). For example, Winterich and Haws (2011) manipulated emotions through writing and reading tasks to compare the effect of past-, present-, and future-focused positive emotions on unhealthy consumption. In several studies with samples of dieting respondents, individuals in the future-focused emotion conditions showed higher self-control —i.e., long-term losing weight goal— than past- and present-focused emotion conditions where individuals indulged in unhealthy consumption —i.e., short-term pleasure goals—. Thus, we hypothesize that the temporal focus of emotions is a salient dimension to understand the role of emotions in guiding actions and specifically to motivate pro-environmental behaviors, viewed as future-oriented actions (Weber, 2010).

The importance of the temporal focus of emotions is further supported by the literature on Construal Level Theory (CTL; Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010). According to the CTL, individuals can only experience the present moment, and in order to experience the future, they form abstract construal of distal objects, i.e., future events. Thus, “psychological distance is a subjective experience that something is close or far away from the self, here, and now” (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 440). Psychological distance influences the representation and judgment of the situation, switching between proximal and distal perspectives on objects. A proximal focus is characterized by a focus on lower-order details of the situation and the prioritization of immediate and concrete goals. A distant focus is characterized instead by a focus on higher-order abstract representations of the situation and the adoption of abstract, future goals. For

example, in one of their studies, Liberman and Trope (1998) asked participants to describe some activities that they will do in either a near (tomorrow) or a distant (next year) future. “Participants described "moving into a new apartment" as "starting a new life" in the distant future condition, but as "packing and carrying boxes" in the near future condition” (Liberman & Trope, 1998, p.8). Moreover, when considering a distal future situation, individuals base their decision on relatively abstract considerations. In contrast, when considering a near-future situation, they base their decisions on more concrete considerations (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Trope et al., 2007).

The literature has also found that priming high versus low construal leads to the prioritization of higher-order versus lower-order goals (Liberman, Trope, McCrea, & Sherman, 2007; Trope et al., 2007). Interestingly, individuals perceive emotions at different construal levels, meaning that priming them can lead individuals to prioritize goals at the corresponding high- versus low-order. Specifically, individuals perceive future-focused emotions as more abstract than present-focused emotions (Winterich & Haws, 2011). Consequentially, priming future-focused emotions should help individuals envisage the future and act accordingly. Given that environmental protection refers to a distant future, hence high-order abstract information, such as experiencing future-focused emotions, should be more influential than low-order concrete information, such as experiencing present-focused emotions, to promote pro-environmental behaviors. Therefore, CTL offers additional support for our hypothesis that future-focused emotions are more effective than present-focused emotions in promoting pro-environmental behaviors.

In this research, we propose that inducing future-focused emotions (e.g., hope and fear) can help individuals envision the future of the planet and therefore increase their pro-environmental behaviors. Supporting this proposition, in the context of climate change, research demonstrates the positive effect of hope and fear in comparison to other emotions (Ojala, 2012; Hartmann et al., 2014; 2016; Stevenson & Peterson, 2015). For example, Smith and Leiserowitz (2014), although they did not take the temporal focus of emotions into account, measured a list of emotions regarding global warming and assessed their relationship with respondents' intention to support governmental policies regarding climate change. Hope and fear were more strongly associated with the support of such initiatives than were present-focused emotions, such as sadness and anger. Therefore, the first objective of this study is to verify whether future-focused emotions regarding the environment have a greater positive influence on pro-environmental behaviors than present-focused emotions or no emotion. The second objective is to reveal the mechanism behind their effect, which means to test the capacity of future-focused emotions to drive individuals' attention on the future.

H1: Eliciting future-focused emotions increases significantly more pro-environmental behaviors than eliciting present-focused emotions or no emotion.

H1a: The effect of emotions on behavior is mediated by individuals' temporal focus. Eliciting future-focused emotions makes individuals think more about the future than eliciting present-focused emotions or no emotion, which in turn increases engagement in pro-environmental behaviors.

Our third objective is to investigate whether the effect of the temporal focus primed by emotions on behaviors overcomes that of individuals' dispositional temporal orientations. Time perspective theory highlights that individuals are predisposed to base their decisions either on the immediate or on the delayed consequences of their actions and behave consequently (Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2015). In the environmental context, future-oriented individuals — i.e., those who think about the delayed consequences of their actions — have been found to care more about climate change than present-oriented individuals. For instance, in a survey involving US citizens, Ebreo and Vining (2001) found that individuals who focus more on the future consequences of their actions self-reported higher engagement in recycling and regarded the future consequences of their actions as more important than present-oriented concerns like money and time. Other studies confirm that future-oriented compared to present-oriented individuals are more likely to engage in certain pro-environmental behaviors, such as conserving natural resources (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2006), and commuting by public transportation versus car (Joireman, Van Lange, & Van Vugt, 2004). Additionally, the literature observes as well that present-oriented individuals — i.e., those who think about the immediate consequences of their actions — are most likely to engage in anti-environmental behaviors (Arnocky, Milfont, & Nicol, 2014; Milfont & Demarque, 2015). They have difficulties prioritizing long-term interests and accepting current evidence regarding the existence of the ecological crisis, and therefore to adopt pro-environmental behaviors (Gifford, 2011; Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). That is why it is particularly important to find effective instruments that drive individuals' attention toward the future regardless of personal predispositions.

The literature suggests that situational primes with the temporal focus can overcome enduring predispositions in temporal orientation (e.g., Van Lange & Joireman, 2008). Whereas each person has a predisposition toward a temporal orientation, a situation or a specific prime can activate another temporal orientation (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2015). For example, Pahl and Bauer (2013) successfully manipulated temporal orientation in the context of environmental protection and observed its effect on individuals' actions toward the environment. The authors used videos to prime temporal orientation. Specifically, in one of the videos, a young girl from the future vividly described how

climate change has transformed the world over the years. The results show that the respondents exposed to this video (vs. those who were not exposed to any video) foresaw more the future and gave more importance to it. They also collected more information and took more brochures regarding environmental protection than did the respondents in the neutral condition. We want to test whether the temporal focus primed by emotions successfully overcome individuals' dispositional temporal orientation; specifically, we delineate the following hypothesis.

H2: The effect of emotions overcomes dispositional temporal orientation, which means that the temporal focus elicited by emotions has a stronger effect on behaviors than individuals' dispositional temporal orientations.

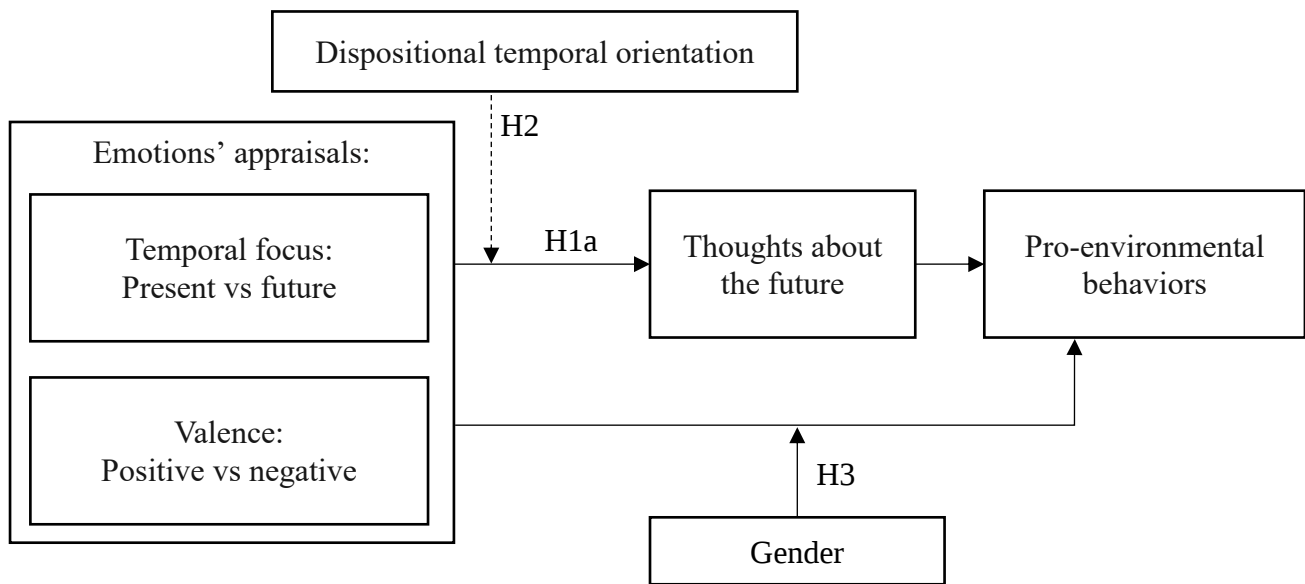
Finally, in this paper, we also investigate the role of gender in the identified effect of the temporal focus of emotions on pro-environmental behaviors. Research suggests that men and women perceive and react differently to emotional appeals and that this difference is especially true when taking into consideration the valence of emotions (Fessler et al., 2004; Fisher & Dubé, 2005; Kemp et al., 2013; Winterich et al., 2009). In the literature about charity giving, for example, women have been shown to respond more favorably to sad appeals than men (Wang, 2008), and men have been shown to respond more favorably to pride appeals than women do (Kemp et al., 2013). Psychology literature explains this difference through socially constructed gender-identity roles (Eisenberg et al., 2007; Fisher & Dubé, 2005). The male role is often associated with achievement, control, and heroism, so positive emotions seem to be more congruent with the male than with the female role. The female role is often associated with caring, protection of the family, and risk-aversion, so negative emotions that signal danger seem to be more congruent with the female stereotype than with the male one. Therefore, it is important to control for gender and emotions valence when investigating the effect of emotions.

H3: Gender moderates the effect of emotions' temporal appraisal on pro-environmental behaviors. Specifically, a) for men, eliciting future-focused positive emotions increase their pro-environmental behaviors more than eliciting other emotions. b) For women, instead, eliciting future-focused negative emotions have a greater positive effect on pro-environmental behaviors than other emotions.

Study 1 investigates how individuals' dispositional temporal orientations and emotions felt toward the environment influence engagement in pro-environmental behaviors. Study 2 instead tests

whether eliciting specific emotions drives the attention toward the present or the future, and thus whether it influences engagement in pro-environmental behaviors by successfully overcoming individuals' temporal disposition. Study 3 adopts a different a) manipulation technique and b) pair of positive emotions to strengthen the generalizability of the hypothesized effect of the temporal focus of emotions. The whole model is depicted in figure 1.1.

Fig. 1.1. The theoretical framework of the effect of emotions' temporal focus on pro-environmental behaviors.



STUDY 1

Study 1 has been developed to verify that temporal orientation affects individuals' engagements in pro-environmental behaviors and to investigate whether the emotions experienced regarding the environment can partially account for this effect. Specifically, our objective is to distinguish the effect of future- and present-focused emotions.

The study included a sample of 200 respondents (49.5 % women; $M_{age} = 36.5$, $SD = 11.12$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). We selected only respondents over 21-years-old and who were US residents. First, we measured individuals' temporal orientations —i.e., tendencies to focus on the future or immediate consequences of their actions—, with the Consideration of Future Consequences (CFC) Scale (7 items, Future subscales $\alpha = .89$; 7 items, Present subscales $\alpha = .87$, Strathman et al., 1994) as adapted by Joireman and colleagues (2012).

Second, we measured emotions that are distinct in terms of temporal appraisal, but similar under other appraisals. According to the literature discusses above, temporal appraisal distinguishes emotions according to their focal goal. Future-focused emotions are experienced regarding a desirable

or undesirable event that may happen in the future. Instead, present-focused emotions are elicited by a desirable or undesirable present situation. Given the expected effect of the valence of emotions (H3), we selected both a positive and negative emotion, opposite in terms of valence appraisal (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Russell, 1980; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), for future and present temporal focus. Specifically, we measured the extent to which individuals felt hope and fear (future-focused), happy and sad (present-focused) toward the environment. Hope and fear have been presented as the prototypical positive and negative future-focused emotions (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Bee & Madrigal, 2013; Winterich & Haws, 2011) and sad and happy as their natural counterpart in the present (Labroo & Rucker, 2010; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

Finally, respondents indicated how frequently they performed each of the 43 pro-environmental behaviors presented to them. The 43 behaviors come from the revised general ecological behavior (GEB) measure ($\alpha = .83$, Kaiser, Doka, Hofstetter, & Ranney, 2003; Kaiser & Wilson, 2004). The scale was composed of six different domains of pro-environmental behaviors: energy conservation (e.g., “I wait until I have a full load before doing my laundry”); mobility and transportation; waste avoidance (e.g., “I reuse my shopping bags”); consumerism (e.g., “I buy seasonal produce”); recycling; and vicarious social behaviors towards environmental conservation (e.g., “I read about environmental issues”).

RESULTS

We ran correlation and regressions analyses to test our hypotheses regarding the positive association between individuals’ temporal orientations, future- versus present-focused emotions and pro-environmental behaviors. To highlight the role of emotions’ temporal focus, we grouped hope and fear to obtain a score for future-focused emotions, and happy and sad to obtain a score for present-focused emotions. We found that individuals’ temporal orientations, emotions’ temporal focus, and pro-environmental behaviors were significantly correlated as hypothesized. Dispositional future orientation was positively correlated with pro-environmental behaviors ($r = .21$, $p = .003$), whereas present orientation was negatively correlated with them ($r = -.20$, $p = .005$). Both future- and present-focused emotions were positively correlated with pro-environmental behaviors ($r_{\text{future-focused}} = .33$, $p = .000$; $r_{\text{present-focused}} = .21$, $p = .002$), but the correlation was higher for future-focused emotions than for present-focused emotions (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Descriptive statistic and correlation matrix of study 1.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Future orientation ^a	1.00				
2. Present orientation ^a	-.64**	1.00			
3. Future-focused emotions ^b	.23**	-.12	1.00		
4. Present-focused emotions ^c	-.11	-.14*	.28**	1.00	
5. Pro-environmental behaviors ^d	.21**	-.20**	.33**	.21**	1.00
Mean	6.37	3.93	5.98	4.63	3.06
Standard deviation	1.49	1.59	1.30	1.09	.43

^a Consideration of Future Consequences (CFC) Scale (Strathman, et al. 1994; Joireman, et al. 2012)
^b Future-focused emotions' score by averaging hope and fear scores
^c Present-focused emotions' score by averaging happy and sad scores
^d Revised GEB measure (Kaiser et al., 2003; Kaiser & Wilson, 2004)
* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.01.

Moreover, the results of several regression analyses show that future-dispositional orientation significantly increased pro-environmental behavior ($\beta = .06$, $SE = .02$, $p = .003$; $F(1, 198) = 9.07$, $p = .003$), and present dispositional orientation significantly decreased pro-environmental behaviors ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .005$; $F(1, 198) = 8.15$, $p = .005$). Additionally, respondents who were more present-oriented expressed also more present-focused emotions ($\beta = .09$, $SE = .05$, $p = .05$; $F(1, 198) = 3.81$, $p = .05$) but not future-focused emotions ($\beta = -.10$, $SE = .06$, $p = .09$; $F(1, 198) = 2.96$, $p = .09$). Conversely respondents who were more future-oriented expressed more future-focused emotions ($\beta = .20$, $SE = .06$, $p = .001$; $F(1, 198) = 11.05$, $p = .001$), but not present-focused emotions ($\beta = -.08$, $SE = .05$, $p = .11$; $F(1, 198) = 2.61$, $p = .11$). In turn, future-focused emotions significantly increased actual pro-environmental behaviors, but not present-focused emotions ($\beta_{\text{future}} = .10$, $SE = .02$, $p = .000$; $\beta_{\text{present}} = .05$, $SE = .03$, $p = .06$; $F(2, 198) = 14.32$, $p = .000$).

In this study, we were also interested in looking at the moderation effect of gender on emotions and their effect on behaviors, particularly with regard to the valence of emotions. First, we found that women felt more strongly negative emotions than men ($M_{\text{women}} = 6.74$ vs $M_{\text{men}} = 5.68$; $t(198) = 3.55$, $p = .000$, two-tailed) and less strongly positive emotions than men ($M_{\text{women}} = 4.17$ vs $M_{\text{men}} = 4.63$; $t(198) = -1.95$, $p = .05$, two-tailed). Second, an independent t-test shows that there was no significant difference in pro-environmental behaviors between women and men ($M_{\text{women}} = 3.06$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 3.07$; $t(198) = -.23$, $p = .82$, two-tailed). Third, we looked at the interaction of the temporal focus of emotions, emotions' valence, and gender with an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). We calculated the scale the temporal focus of emotions by subtracting the present focus score from the future focus score so that a high score corresponds to a more important experience of future-focused emotions than present-focused emotions and vice versa. In line with what reported above, the result shows that the overall effect of the temporal focus of emotions on donation intention was significant, $F(1, 195)$

= 9.97, $p = .002$, and the effect of gender was not significant, $F(1, 195) = .326$, $p = .57$. However, the 3-way interaction of emotions temporal focus and valence, and gender was significant, $F(2,195) = 17.50$, $p = .000$.

We ran several linear regressions to detail the significant effects found in the ANCOVA for the temporal focus of emotions. First, about the main effect of the temporal focus of emotions, the more the respondents experienced future-focused emotions the more they behaved pro-environmentally, $\beta_{\text{temporal focus of emotions}} = .08$, $p = .05$; $F(1, 198) = 3.95$, $p = .05$. Moreover, about the significant 3-way interaction, we found that the results followed the same trend for men and women, but with some differences in the intensities of the effect of temporal focus for positive and negative emotions. For women, the more they experienced future-focused positive emotions the more they behaved pro-environmentally, and the effect of future-focused negative emotions was not significant ($\beta_{\text{positive future focused}} = .08$, $p = .05$; $\beta_{\text{negative future focused}} = -.12$, $p = .10$; $F(2, 96) = 3.05$, $p = .05$). For men, the more they experienced positive future-focused emotions the more they behaved pro-environmentally, but not for negative future-focused emotions ($\beta_{\text{positive future focused}} = .09$, $p = .01$; $\beta_{\text{negative future focused}} = -.02$, $p = .67$; $F(2, 98) = 3.35$, $p = .04$).

Finally, we performed Harman's single factor score test to control for common method bias. The instruments and measurements adopted in behavioral research may introduce a bias, so it is important to control that the variations in responses are attributable to the variables of interest rather than to the methodology adopted. We ran an unrotated, single-factor constraint factor analysis. With all items, the 20% variance explained by a single factor shows that the common method bias is not a major concern here (less than 50% cut-off point). Excluding the items of our dependent variable (DV), the variance explained by a single factor is 32.5%.

DISCUSSION

Study 1 confirms the importance of thinking about the future to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. Our results are in line with the literature about the relationship between individuals' dispositional temporal orientations and pro-environmental behaviors (Ebreo & Vining 2001; Kortenkamp & Moore, 2006; Joireman et al., 2004). Future orientation was positively related to the adoption of pro-environmental behaviors, whereas present orientation was negatively related. We offer new results observing that dispositional temporal orientation predisposes individuals to experiencing emotions with the same temporal focus. Future orientation was correlated significantly and positively with future-focused emotions, but negatively with present-focused emotions. The opposite was true for present orientation. Moreover, future-focused emotions significantly increase

pro-environmental behaviors and present emotions just marginally so. We also evidenced that men and women experience emotions differently, and more specifically that women expressed a higher level of negative emotions and a lower level of positive emotions than men.

In the next studies, we elicit specific emotions, to assess causality and to test our hypotheses. We expect that respondents exposed to future-focused emotions will think more about the future, and consequently will be more willing to adopt pro-environmental behaviors than respondents exposed to present-focused emotions or no emotion. We also test whether eliciting temporally focused emotions can overcome individuals' dispositional temporal orientations. Present orientation is among the strongest barriers to behave pro-environmentally (Milfont & Demarque 2015; Arnocky et al., 2014). If emotions can switch individuals' temporal orientations and help individuals to think about the future of the environment, they are an extremely valid instrument to promote pro-environmental behaviors.

Finally, in the direction suggested by our second hypothesis, men and women experience different emotions regarding the environment. Women expressed more negative emotions than men, and men expressed more positive emotions than women. These results increase the interest of our third hypothesis regarding the interaction between gender and emotions' valence. In study 2, we test whether positive (negative) future-focused emotions are more effective on men (women) than women (men).

STUDY 2

Study 2 included a sample of 319 respondents (55.5 % women; $M_{age} = 38$, $SD = 13.33$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). The study adopted a 2 (Emotions' temporal focus: future, present) X 2 (Emotion valence: positive, negative) factorial design with an additional control condition. In the introduction of the study, participants were informed that five people will be randomly drawn into a lottery and will have a chance to win an additional 30 US\$ bonus (5 bonuses available). As in the previous study, only participants over 21 of years and resident in the US were eligible to participate in the survey.

First, we measured dispositional temporal orientation (Future subscales $\alpha = .84$; Present subscales $\alpha = .89$, CFC, same of study 1) and environmental concern (the revised New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale, 15 items, $\alpha = .88$, Amatulli, De Angelis, Peluso, Soscia, & Guido, 2017; Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Jones, 2000, Lockwood & Kunda 1997; Nash, McGregor, & Prentice, 2011). Next, five QI distraction questions (e.g., Which one of the five choices makes the best comparison? PEACH is to HCAEP as 46251 is to...) were administrated before respondents were

randomly assigned to one of the four emotions or the control conditions; more details on the manipulation follow. Then, to ensure that the emotion evoked by the emotion induction task arouses the congruent temporal orientation, respondents also indicated the degree to which they were currently thinking about the future (Monroe, Ainsworth, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2017). Finally, we asked their gender and at the end of the survey, to measure actual behavior respondents indicated how much of the 30 US\$ they would intend to donate to an environmental organization if they win the lottery described in the introduction (Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017).

Emotion induction. We manipulated present- and future-focused emotions with a well-known writing task. We asked respondents to remember and write about a particularly emotional event (Coleman, Williams, Morales, & White, 2017; Han, Duhachek, & Agrawal, 2014; Passyn & Sujon, 2006; Winterich & Haws, 2011). Specifically, respondents were asked to recall and write 2-3 things or situations that give or have given them a feeling of hope, fear, sadness, or happiness about the global climate situation (randomly distributed). Among the things or situations recalled, they were then asked to select the situation that most vividly aroused the emotion, and to describe it in greater detail (see appendix for an example of the text of the emotion manipulation). Respondents assigned to the control condition were asked to remember 2-3 things they did the previous week. For the analyses, to test the effect of emotion's temporal focus, we grouped positive and negative future conditions together, as well as positive and negative present conditions. To test the effect of emotions' valence, we grouped future and present positive conditions together, as well as future and present negative conditions.

RESULTS

Temporal orientation. We conducted an ANOVA with our conditions as the independent variable and situational temporal orientation as the dependent variable to verify that emotions successfully primed the aligned temporal orientation. The result shows that emotion manipulation significantly impacted individuals' temporal orientation (Thinking about the future: $F(2, 316) = 6.68$; $p = .001$). Respondents in the future-focused emotion conditions ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 5.91$) had significantly greater thoughts about the future than respondents in the present-focused emotion and control conditions had ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 5.48$; $p = .005$; $M_{\text{control}} = 5.45$; $p = .01$) (H1a). Additionally, with a regression we show that higher thinking about the future significantly increased intention to donate to an environmental association, $\beta = .15$, $p = .04$; $F(1, 318) = 4.4$, $p = .04$.

Pro-environmental behavior. We, first, conducted an ANOVA to examine the effect of the temporal focus of emotions on individuals' intention to donate to an environmental association (H1). The result shows that the overall effect of the temporal focus of emotions on donation intention was non-significant, $F(2, 316) = 2.11, p = .12$. However, and in line with our hypothesis, simple contrasts show that, compared to the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 2.03$), respondents in the future-focused emotions conditions showed greater intentions to donate ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 2.44; p = .04$), but not respondents in the present-focused emotion conditions ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 2.22; p = .34$).

Additionally, we wanted to control for the direct effect of emotions' valence and gender before testing our second hypothesis about their interaction. We ran an ANOVA to examine the effect of the valence of emotions on individuals' intentions to donate to an environmental association. The result shows that the overall effect of emotional valence on donation intention was non-significant, $F(2, 316) = 1.522, p = .22$. Moreover, the result of an independent t-test shows that there was no significant difference in donation intention between women and men ($M_{\text{women}} = 2.36$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 2.12; t(317) = -1.51, p = .13$, two-tailed).

Second, we ran an ANOVA to look at the interaction of the temporal focus of emotions, emotions' valence and gender (H3). As reported above, no main effect on donation intention was significant (Temporal focus, $F(1, 318) = 1.33, p = .25$; Valence, $F(1, 318) = .009, p = .92$; Gender, $F(1, 318) = 2.29, p = .13$). However, the 2-way interaction between valence and gender was significant, $F(1, 318) = 5.94, p = .01$. We found as well a significant 3-way interaction of emotions' temporal focus, valence, and gender, $F(1, 318) = 4.67, p = .03$.

To further examine the significant interactions, we ran some other analyses. Regarding the 2-way interaction between valence and gender, we looked at the difference in the intention to make a donation to an environmental association for men versus women in each condition of emotional valence (positive, negative, and control). We ran an independent t-test with gender as the independent variable and pro-environmental behavior as the dependent variable. In the control condition, women had marginally higher intention to donate than men $M_{\text{women}} = 2.25$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 1.74; t(76) = 1.79, p = .08$. In the positive emotion conditions, the difference was not significant ($M_{\text{women}} = 2.16$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 2.41; t(113) = -.97, p = .33$). In the negative emotion conditions, women have higher intentions to donate than men ($M_{\text{women}} = 2.61$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 2.09, t(124) = 2.05, p = .04$).

Regarding the 3-way interaction, we looked at the most effective emotion condition for men and women separately. We ran an ANOVA with the single emotion conditions as the independent variable and pro-environmental behavior as the dependent variable. The main effect of the manipulation was significant for men, $F(4, 141) = 2.70, p = .03$, but not for women, $F(4, 176) = 1.63, p = .17$. Post hoc tests also indicate that, for men, intention to donate was significantly higher in the

positive future-focused emotion condition ($M_{\text{positive future focused}} = 2.82$) than in the other conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 2.12$; $p = .01$). For women, intention to donate was significantly higher in the negative future-focused condition ($M_{\text{negative future focused}} = 2.83$) than in the other emotions' conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 2.36$; $p = .02$).

Moreover, we controlled for other possible moderators of the effect, specifically dispositional temporal orientation (H2) and environmental concern. No interaction effect was found between the manipulation and, separately, individuals' future and present dispositional orientations, and environmental concerns (NS). Finally, as in study 1, we performed Harman's single factor score test to control for common method errors; we ran an unrotated, single-factor constraint factor analysis. With all items, the 23.33% variance explained by a single factor shows that the common method bias is not a major concern here (less than 50% cut-off point). Excluding the items of our DV, the variance explained by a single factor is 23.74%.

DISCUSSION

Study 2 strengthens the results of study 1 by supporting that experiencing specific emotions affects engagement in pro-environmental behavior. Specifically, we found that eliciting emotions toward the environment increased actual donations to a pro-environmental organization. This result was particularly true for future-focused emotions (H1), which made individuals think more about the future and consequentially engage more in behaviors that benefit the environment (H1a). Moreover, dispositional temporal orientation did not significantly moderate the investigated effect on donation intention. This outcome shows that arousing future- or present-focused emotions successfully overcomes individuals' dispositional temporal mindsets, and guides them to think about the future or the present, respectively (H2). Furthermore, gender interacted with the effectiveness of future-focused emotions on encouraging pro-environmental behaviors (H3). For men, arousing a positive future-focused emotion (hope for the environment) was the strongest predictor of donation intention to an environmental association. For women, instead, arousing a negative future-focused emotion (fear for the environment) had the strongest effect.

Building on study 2 findings, study 3 is designed to strengthen our results regarding positive emotions. The decision to focus on positive emotions is based on two main reasons, practical and theoretical. First, in the environmental domain, the majority of the existing campaigns aim to elicit negative emotions (e.g., guilt, fear, shame). Investigating how and which positive emotions can be used for such campaigns may offer new and effective instruments to practitioners. Second, the research on negative emotions is well established, and a lot has been done (Brennan & Binney, 2010;

Ruiter, Kessels, Peters, & Kok, 2014). However, much less is known about positive emotions (Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce, 2015; Peter & Honea, 2012). Thus, we believe that to enrich the literature regarding the effect of positive emotions has even a broader interest than focusing on negative emotions. Finally, this literature being less developed, more evidence is needed to validate our results.

With Study 3, our goal is also to discard the hypothesis that a positive mood may have driven our results, instead of the specific temporal orientation primed by positive emotions. In studies 1 and 2, we measured and manipulated happiness as a positive present-focused emotion. However, this emotion is often experienced as a general positive state in the present moment (Ellsworth & Smith 1988; Fredrickson, 2001). Consequently, in study 3, we want to test the effect of another emotion characterized by the same valence (positive) and the dimension of interest (present temporal focus) as happiness, but which is easily perceived as a distinct emotion. We selected amusement which is a positive emotion felt in response to humorous stimuli (Kreibig, Samson, & Gross, 2013; McGraw & Warren, 2010; Tong & Jia, 2017). Appraisal research on amusement is very limited, but Tong (2015) used the appraisal dimensions of Smith and Ellsworth (1985) to map a broader spectrum of emotions and, among others, the author integrated amusement. According to this author, amusement and happiness are both high in pleasantness and certainty. Instead, hope is characterized by high uncertainty. These emotions are thus at the extreme opposites along the “certainty” appraisal dimension that also characterized the temporal focus of emotions. Future-focused emotions are evoked in response to an uncertain future outcome, whereas present-focused emotions are evoked in response to a high level of certainty about the situation (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

Moreover, humor is particularly interesting for climate change-related advertisement. The literature offers insights that humor can function as a buffer to threatened subjects. “A humorous ad can communicate the same threat information through a positive and playful lens, allowing the viewer to perceive the message as less threatening and more approachable” (Yoon & Tinkham, 2013, p. 31). First research shows the positive effect of humor in advertising (Eisend, 2009; Hatzithomas, Zotos, & Bousouki, 2011; Mukherjee & Dubé, 2012), and specifically on pro-environmental behaviors (Velde, Hudders, Cauberghe, & Claerebout, 2018).

An additional goal of study 3 is to test whether the effect holds with a different manipulation technique. Instead of replicating the writing task used in Study 2, we pre-tested and selected videos eliciting emotions for the future of our planet. Finally, we control for gender, given that study 1 and study 2 indicate that men are more responsive to positive emotions than women. This study strengthens our results about positive emotions and increases the generalizability of our results

regarding the relevance of considering emotions' temporal focus when promoting pro-environmental behaviors.

STUDY 3

Study 3 included a sample of 199 respondents (49.8 % women; $M_{age} = 33$, $SD = 11.43$) recruited from a UK-based online pool (Prolific Academic). As a cover story, participants were invited to review a video that the authors of the survey wanted to release soon. The same sample restrictions and measures of dispositional temporal orientation (Future subscale $\alpha = .87$; Present subscale $\alpha = .90$) and environmental concern ($\alpha = .86$) of the previous two studies were used. After the distraction questions (same as study 2), participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (future-focused emotion eliciting, present-focused emotion eliciting, or control video). More details are offered in the section below and the videos' links can be found in the appendix.

Then, we measured our dependent variable, which was the same as study 2. Again, in the introduction, they read about the possibility to win the lottery. However, a few small changes were made. Instead, to offer fixed options for donation (0-\$5-\$10-\$15-\$20-\$25-\$30; as Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017), we used a continuum variable where respondents could choose to donate from \$0 to \$10. We also changed the receiving association. The donations went to One Planted Tree, an actual US-based NGO supporting various reforestation programs around the world.

Next, as a manipulation check, hopefulness and amusement in watching the video were measured; their order was randomized. To ensure that the emotion evoked by the emotion-eliciting videos arouses the congruent temporal orientation in individuals, respondents also indicated the extent to which the video made them think about the past or the future (1 item adapted by Winterich et al., 2011). Finally, we asked their gender, to indicate what they thought was the aim of the survey was, and we thanked them for participating.

Emotion-eliciting videos. For unrelated studies, the authors had a selection of pre-tested emotion-eliciting videos. They all comply with some pre-defined characteristics, such as topic and argument treated, length, and overall similarity. Among this selection, one hope (future-focused emotion) and one humor (present-focused emotion) video were selected, and a new pre-test was run to verify that these two videos successfully and exclusively elicit the target emotion compared to a neutral video. Both hope and humor videos speak about modern society and the need to change the way we live to protect the environment, and end with black and white writing "help the environment." The control video describes how artists portrayed nature and animals before photography was

invented. This means that also in the control group, respondents were made to think about nature, but the stimulus was emotionally neutral. The three videos were all roughly 1m30sec long.

We conducted an ANOVA to verify that the videos elicited the expected emotions (N=90). The result shows that self-reported emotions differed significantly among conditions (Future-focused emotion: $F(2, 87) = 34.06$, $p = .000$; Present-focused emotion: $F(2, 87) = 17.45$, $p = .000$). The results of the *post hoc* tests indicate that self-reported hope in the future-focused (hope) condition ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 5.83$) was significantly higher than in the other conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 4.23$; $p = .000$). Self-reported amusement in the present-focused (humor) condition ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 5.17$) was significantly higher than in the other conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 3.81$; $p = .000$). Additionally, we found that hope- and amusement-eliciting videos equally drove a positive mood, and they did not differ in terms of fear and anger elicited (NS).

RESULTS

Manipulation checks. We, first, conducted an ANOVA to examine the effect of our manipulation on self-reported emotions. The result shows that self-reported emotions differed significantly among conditions (Future-focused emotion: $F(2, 196) = 22.62$, $p = .000$; Present-focused emotion: $F(2, 196) = 53.88$, $p = .000$). The results of the *post hoc* tests indicate that self-reported hope in the future-focused (hope) condition ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 5.35$) was significantly higher than in the other conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 4.65$; $p = .000$). Self-reported amusement in the present-focused (humor) condition ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 5.79$) was significantly higher than in the other conditions ($M_{\text{whole sample}} = 4.16$; $p = .000$).

Temporal orientation. We conducted an ANOVA with our conditions as independent variable and situational temporal orientation as dependent variable. The result shows that emotion manipulation significantly impacted individuals' temporal orientations (Thinking about the future: $F(2, 196) = 247.73$, $p = .000$). Respondents in the future-focused emotion condition ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 6.42$) had significantly more thoughts about the future than respondents in the present-focused emotion and control conditions had ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 5.88$; $p = .02$; $M_{\text{control}} = 2.27$; $p = .000$) (H1a). Additionally, we ran a regression and the result shows that thinking about the future significantly increases intention to donate to an environmental association, $\beta = .30$, $p = .005$; $F(1, 197) = 8.14$, $p = .01$.

Pro-environmental behavior. We then conducted an ANOVA to examine the effect of the temporal focus of the emotions on individuals' intentions to donate to an environmental association.

Based on our previous results from studies 1 and 2, we controlled for gender (H3). The result shows that the overall effect on donation intention was non-significant, $F(1, 196) = 2.16, p = .12$.

However, and in line with our hypothesis, simple contrasts showed that, compared to the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 2.88$), respondents in the future-focused condition showed greater intentions to donate ($M_{\text{future focused}} = 3.98; p = .05$), but not respondents in the present-focused emotion condition ($M_{\text{present focused}} = 3.82; p = .11$). Additionally, gender had a main effect on the intention to donate. Women ($M_{\text{women}} = 4.21$) were more willing to donate than men ($M_{\text{men}} = 2.91; p = .01$). If gender was not considered in the model, the results hold. The main effect of the temporal focus of emotions was not significant but respondents in the future-focused emotion condition, and not in the present-focused emotion condition, showed significant greater intention to donate than respondents in the control condition.

Moreover, we controlled for other possible moderators of the effect as we did in study 2, specifically dispositional temporal orientation (H2) and environmental concern. No interaction effect was found between the manipulation and, separately, individuals' future and present orientations, and environmental concerns, so we did not include the details here (NS). Additionally, the multiple linear regression on donation intention with present and future orientation, environmental concern, gender, and emotions was significant, $F(6, 192) = 3.87, p = .001$. Only gender, coded as 1= women and 0= men, ($\beta = .94, p = .05$) and the future-focused emotion ($\beta = .33, p = .01$) were statistically significant.

Finally, we performed Harman's single factor score test to control for common method bias; we ran an unrotated, single-factor constraint factor analysis. With all items, the 22.73% variance explained by a single factor shows that the common method bias is not a major concern here (less than 50% cut-off point). Excluding the items of our DV, the variance explained by a single factor is 23.30%.

DISCUSSION

Building on the results of study 2, study 3 offers additional support to our conceptual model. Eliciting future-focused emotions increases donation intention to an environmental association, thereby helping individuals to think about the future of our planet. In study 3, we used videos that elicit future-and present-focused emotions, and as in study 2, we found that only eliciting a future-focused emotion increased significantly respondents' donations compared to the control condition.

In this study, we focused exclusively on positive emotions. Less research has been done on the effect of specific positive emotions compared to the research that has been done on the effect of negative emotions and thus more evidence is needed and solicited (Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Peter & Honea, 2012). Although, in study 2, we observed that the positive future-focused emotions were particularly effective on men; study 3 reinforces the result that positive future-focused emotions have a positive impact on both men and women. These findings on positive emotions offer new practical instruments that can be used in campaigns and communication efforts to promote pro-environmental behaviors.

Moreover, using amusement as present-focused emotion let us verify that the temporal focus of emotions is actually driving our results and that our effect cannot be explained by a general positive mood. Happiness concerns the certainty of the pleasantness of the present moment and is often associated to a general positive mood (Ellsworth & Smith 1988; Fredrickson, 2001); instead, individuals experience amusement exclusively in relation to a specific humorous event happening in the present. Thus, the effect we found on donation intention is driven by the capacity of emotions to prime a specific temporal focus (Winterich & Haws, 2011).

Finally, we verified again that emotions' temporal appraisal overcomes individuals' dispositional temporal orientations. Individuals aligned to the temporal focus primed by the emotions, and act according to it, no matter what their dispositional temporal orientation was. The literature suggests that situational primes may shift and overcome predispositions in temporal orientation (e.g., Van Lange & Joireman, 2008). In studies 2 and 3, we found that emotions situationally prime an aligned temporal orientation, which overcomes individuals' predisposition temporal orientations.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A growing body of literature is interested in understanding the effect that specific emotions have on behaviors (e.g., Huang, Dong, & Wyer Jr, 2017; Patrick, Chun, & MacInnis, 2009; Wilcox et al. 2010; Winterich & Haws, 2011). We enrich this literature by studying the effect of the temporal focus of emotions (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Lazarus, 1991; So et al., 2015), one of the various characteristics that distinguish emotions and make them unique. Emotions convey a specific temporal focus making people think about the past, present, or future. For long-term goals, as the protection of the environment is, thinking about the future is beneficial, as it helps individuals to prioritize pro-environmental long-term objectives (Ebreo & Vining, 2001; Joireman et al., 2004; Kortenkamp & Moore, 2006). Thus, we proposed that future-focused emotions, by priming a future focus, guide actions in line with sustainable goals.

The findings of these three studies lend support to our conceptual model, suggesting that eliciting future-focused emotions is particularly beneficial in fostering pro-environmental behaviors. Study 1 provides a solid foundation for our research. We observed that individuals differ in the experienced emotions regarding the environment and that those who feel future-focused emotions regarding the environment show higher engagement in various pro-environmental behaviors than individuals who feel present-focused emotions (H1). In studies 2 and 3, we manipulated emotions, and we found that emotions prime the aligned temporal focus (H1a). More importantly, eliciting future-focused emotions significantly increases individuals' donations to an environmental association compared to the control condition (H1a), which was not the case with present-focused emotions.

Moreover, our results show that the temporal focus primed by emotions overcomes individuals' dispositional temporal orientations (H2). Additionally, men and women have been found to experience and react differently to emotions (Fessler et al., 2004; Kemp et al., 2013; Winterich et al., 2009). In line with previous research, we found that positive future-focused emotions have the strongest impact on men and negative ones on women (H3).

Finally, in study 3, we manipulated only positive emotions' temporal focus, and we replicated the results of study 2 (H1a & H2). We decided to focus on this subset of emotions, given that not much is known regarding their effect on behaviors and further research is needed. Additionally, in study 3, we ruled out the alternative explanation that a general positive mood could have driven our results and not the temporal focus of emotions. Our results strengthen the validity to investigate emotions' appraisals for positive emotions, as only recent studies highlight (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This article advances the literature through many facets. We contribute to the literature on pro-environmental behavior promotion, which investigates determinants and barriers of such behaviors as well as ways to increase their adoption by individuals. We do so by examining the role that emotions may have in guiding individuals to think about the future of the environment and to act accordingly. We add to this literature by evidencing the temporal focus of emotions as a relevant characteristic to understand whether and how emotions may have a beneficial effect on pro-environmental behaviors. Prior work on environmental protection and temporal orientation analyzed climate issues in term of the trade-off between short-term personal interests and long-term environmental benefits. Individuals, who find it easier to depict the future and value it, have been found to conduct a more eco-friendly life than individuals who tend to have a strong present focus (Milfont & Demarque, 2015; Milfont et al., 2012; White et al., 2011). Based on these findings, this literature, further, suggests that priming a future orientation may help individuals to envisage the future of the planet and the future consequences of their actions, and thus to act pro-environmentally (Pahl & Bauer, 2013; Van Lange & Joireman, 2008). We also contribute to this literature, providing evidence that the temporal focus of emotions characterized emotions as past-, present- or future-focused and that this temporal focus influences individuals' decision-making. In particular, for promoting long-term environmental well-being, future-focused emotions are the most beneficial. They drive individuals' attentions toward the future of the planet and motivate ecological choices. Furthermore, in line with previous research in persuasive communication, our findings support that situational primes can overcome enduring predispositions (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2015), such as dispositional temporal orientation. In our studies, eliciting temporally focused emotions primed the aligned temporal focus in individuals. Its effect on individuals' behaviors was stronger than that of their dispositional temporal orientation.

We further contribute to the growing literature about the role of specific emotions in cognitive processing and decision-making (e.g., Huang et al., 2017; Patrick et al., 2009; Wilcox et al., 2010; Winterich & Haws, 2011) by highlighting the effect of the temporal focus of emotions on behavior. Except for two remarkable exceptions (Ramanathan & Williams, 2007; Winterich & Haws, 2011), emotions' temporal appraisal is an understudied characteristic of emotions. Our findings, however, suggest that this appraisal dimension is particularly relevant to distinguish emotions and to effectively identify their influence on decisions where a trade-off between short-term and long-term goals is involved, such as for climate issues.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS AND PUBLIC POLICY-MAKERS

Martinez and Fieulaine (2015) point out that helping individuals to think about the future is a useful strategy for encouraging pro-environmental decisions. Thinking about the future helps individuals to prioritize long-term goals compared to short-term benefits. In the ecological domain, this trade-off is particularly critical, and many studies have investigated ways to encourage individuals to consider the long-term implications of their consumption and to act accordingly. We propose emotions as a valid instrument to do so. According to our findings, future-focused emotions should be privileged when promoting long-term goals, such as environmental protection. Nowadays, the power of emotion in advertising is well-known. Most of the marketing campaigns and communication efforts aim at eliciting emotions. Yet, the effect of specific emotional appeals is still not well established. Our results enhance the understanding of the effect of specific emotions and may lead to a more informed and appropriate choice when designing communications strategies.

Future-focused emotions not only help individuals to think about the future but when emotions prime a different temporal focus, the effect of the temporal focus of emotions overcomes the effect of individuals' dispositional temporal orientations. On the one hand, this means that situationally priming a future focus may be beneficial, especially for individuals who are present-oriented by predisposition. On the other hand, practitioners should pay attention not to prime a present focus, which makes individuals future-oriented by predisposition think about the present, potentially undermining their engagement in pro-environmental behaviors.

Moreover, our findings, in line with previous literature (Fessler et al., 2004; Fisher & Dubé, 2005; Kemp et al., 2013; Winterich et al., 2009), show differences in the way women and men experience and react to emotions. When targeted communication is possible, marketers should select the proper future-focused emotion to increase message effectiveness. Specifically, men seem to respond better to positive future-focused emotions (e.g., hope) than to negative future-focused emotions (e.g., fear). Negative future-focused emotions, instead, seem to have a stronger effect than positive future-focused emotions on women.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study is subject to some limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, our conceptual framework about the effect of emotions at promoting pro-environmental behaviors is built on the underlying role of the temporal focus of emotions, meaning that the effect is expected to be similar for all emotions that share the same temporal focus. Among the studies, we considered several emotions that support the validity of this assumption. However, to broaden our results, it would be beneficial to test the effect of other specific emotions. Moreover, it would be interesting in further research to include past-focused emotions. First results seem to suggest that past-focused emotions have a similar effect as present-focused emotions (e.g., Wang & Chao, 2019; Winterich & Haws, 2011). For example, nostalgia makes people dwell on the past, which has been found to bring preference to older products (Wang & Chao, 2019). Specifically, the authors investigated the effect of nostalgia in the environmental domain. They selected old or traditional products that were less environmentally friendly than green products and found that nostalgic people selected more these old product than new green items. More in general, both present- and past-focused emotions seem to undermine individuals' self-control, making them indulge in short-term interests (Winterich & Haws, 2011). In a similar direction, another potential avenue would be to investigate the effect of the temporal focus of emotions on decisions where individuals need to prioritize short-term outcomes. In some cases where procrastination is detrimental or one-shot action is satisfactory, future research could test whether present-focused emotions may help to increase the adoption of the behavior aiming at achieving short-term goals.

Second, we varied the techniques to manipulate emotions; indeed, we adopted writing and watching tasks to elicit specific emotions. However, all of our studies were conducted online. It would be extremely valuable to test whether our findings hold in a real situation, for example, an actual marketing campaign where individuals perceive the message in a much more complex and distracting context. Moreover, recent literature about gender differences suggests that it would be more appropriate to measure individuals' gender identities instead of gender, as we did in our study. Gender identity represents how much a person identifies with being masculine or feminine, and it is often strongly correlated to declared gender (Brough, Wilkie, Ma, Isaac, & Gal, 2016). However, future research could investigate possible difference in the results when gender identity is considered.

Third, to address possible concerns regarding maintaining the same dependent variable among studies, study 1 measured a quite broad range of pro-environmental behaviors. However, when we manipulated emotions in studies 2 and 3, we concentrated the attention on a single behavior. Further research should vary the behaviors measured. Moreover, we targeted sustainability and specifically

environmental protection, as pro-environmental behaviors are prototypical of the trade-off individuals may face between short-term benefits and long-term goals. Yet, further research could replicate our results in different domains.

Fourth, another avenue is to examine the effect of emotions on pro-environment behaviors over time. The majority of the studies including emotion-evoking stimuli, to which our research belongs, do not measure any effect over time (e.g., Ferguson & Branscombe, 2010; Hartmann et al. 2016; Leiserowitz, 2004; Matthes, Wonneberger, & Schmuck 2014). A few exceptions exist, but their results are not conclusive (Hart & Leiserowitz, 2009; Lowe, Brown, Dessai, de França Doria, Haynes, & Vincent, 2006; Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017). Thus, additional research is necessary to help to reconcile previous results and to shed light on the effect of discrete emotions on pro-environmental behavior over time.

Finally, our work responds to a call for research on integral emotions (Winterich & Haws, 2011). Most of the studies conducted on emotions are focusing on the effect of incidental emotions on decision-making and consequent behaviors (e.g., Coleman et al., 2017; Han et al., 2014; Winterich & Haws, 2011). However, the literature is divided on whether integral and incidental emotions have the same influence on behavior. Our research is an initial step toward responding to the emerging interest in examining integral emotions. We hope to enhance new efforts to increase the understanding of the effect of specific emotions within all their complexity. This avenue of research will contribute to addressing the pressing societal and environmental issues we all face.

APPENDIX CHAPTER 1

Study 2

Writing task example

What are the 2 or 3 things or situations that make (have made) you **HOPEFUL** for the environment? (Hopefulness often arises when you believe that a desired future outcome will be met and things will work out in a positive way).

Please write one or two sentences about each of the situations when you felt **HOPE** for the environment.

Episode 1:

Episode 2:

Episode 3:

Now we'd like you to take a few minutes to think about each of the situations described above and determine the one situation that makes you (or has made you) most hopeful for the environment. Once you have carefully considered this situation, please continue to the next page.

Thinking about the one situation that makes you (or has made you) the most hopeful for the environment, please begin by writing down what you remember of the hope-inducing situation, and continue by writing as detailed a description of the situation as is possible. If you can, please write your description in a way that someone reading this may also feel the same hope you felt for the environment just from learning about the situation. What is it like to be in this situation? Why does this situation make you so hopeful for the environment?

To leave yourself enough time to think about your personal experience, we are asking you to spend at least 3 minutes on this task. The “next button” will appear automatically after 180 seconds. However, you are free to spend more time on the task if needed or wanted.

Study 3

Videos' links:

Future-focused emotion eliciting video	Present-focused emotion eliciting video	Control video
https://youtu.be/hz0mQiPjs9U	https://youtu.be/-vzVVtUo3C4	https://youtu.be/qmRxmoWJCdo

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CHAPTER 2: THE POWER OF HOPE

Title:

Hope for the greater good: hope increases environmental well-being through psychological empowerment.

ABSTRACT

Consumers' motivation to contribute to the greater good is often limited by the feeling of disempowerment with respect to societal and environmental problems. Nevertheless, many individuals do engage in behaviors beneficial to society and the environment. In this research, we investigate the role that hoping for a better future may have in their motivation to contribute to the greater good. Specifically, two experimental studies provide evidence that hope for a better environmental future predicts action toward environmental well-being and that this effect is mediated by psychological empowerment. In study 1, we tested and verified the hypothesized model. In study 2, we further investigated the moderating role of regulatory focus, as a consumer trait, on the effect of experiencing hope. Experiencing hope was positively correlated with psychological empowerment for everyone, but this was particularly true for prevention-oriented individuals. Finally, our results show that the model holds with different dependent variables (# of tips on how to live an eco-friendly life read and type of contribution to an environmental association). Regarding the practical implications of our research, marketers and policymakers should cultivate hope in their campaigns to promote the greater good. Inspiring hope among consumers and citizens seems a powerful instrument to instill the feeling that individuals can make a difference.

Keywords:

Hope, Emotions, Psychological empowerment, Regulatory focus, Pro-environmental behavior

INTRODUCTION

Hope is the companion of power, and the mother of success; for who so hopes has within him the gift of miracles. Samuel Smiles

Hope has been conceptualized as an emotion that, when felt by a person striving for a specific outcome, instills the determination to engage in behaviors leading toward that outcome (Lazarus, 1991, 1999; McGeer, 2004; Pettit, 2004; Shade, 2001). In an analysis of personal narratives, Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990, p. 34) maintained that someone who hopes for an outcome is “willing to take appropriate action to achieve” it. Hope has been found to increase engagement and achievement in academic and sporting activities (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997); and to motivate healthy behaviors, such as compliance with medical advice (Makarem, 2015). Consumer researchers have highlighted the role of hope to reduce unhealthy consumption (Winterich & Haws, 2011) and to drive wiser personal financial decisions (Reimann, Nenkov, MacInnis, & Morrin, 2014). However, less is known about the potential of hope to encourage actions toward the greater good. Such actions are not guided by self-interest as in the examples presented above but serve the collective well-being. Moreover, consumers can contribute but they have little control over the outcomes of their actions toward the greater good (Cryder, Loewenstein, & Scheines, 2013). The effect of these actions is, indeed, often uncountable, highly uncertain, or may appear only in the distant future. For example, when consumers donate to a charity association, turn off a light, or buy an electric car, they have to trust that their contribution, although limited, can contribute to solving the larger problem. In this paper, we aim at covering this gap by investigating the role of hope in motivating consumers to contribute to the greater good, specifically by engaging in pro-environmental behaviors.

Protecting the environment is often perceived as demanding (Leiserowitz, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, Rosenthal, Cutler, & Kotcher, 2018), and consumers may find it difficult to prioritize behaviors that serve long-term conservation goals (Milfont, Wilson, & Diniz, 2012; White, Macdonnell, & Dahl, 2011). Media coverage has engendered a high degree of uncertainty regarding the possibility of mitigating climate change (Antilla, 2005; Chang, 2012; Schmidt, Ivanova, & Schäfer, 2013), and the results of the various pro-environmental behaviors that consumers could adopt will be visible only in the medium- to long-term (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, 2014; Loewenstein & Schwartz 2010). However, climate change is an urgent problem that needs to be tackled now. Thus, it is essential to identify psychological factors that could promote ecological well-being. In this direction, our objective is to shed light on the process by which hope

may motivate pro-environmental behaviors. We illustrate our conceptualization in the following sections.

Theoretical background

According to MacInnis and Chun's (2007, p. 108), hope is "a positive emotion that varies as a function of the degree of yearning for an uncertain, yet possible outcome." These authors further offer a detailed description of how hope differs from similar constructs. Notably and interestingly they distinguish between hope and two other constructs often used as synonyms, i.e. hopefulness and optimism. Whereas hope reflects the degree of yearning for a specific outcome, hopefulness reflects the expectation of achieving it. Also, MacInnis and Chun (2007) suggest that optimism is a point along the hopefulness continuum, meaning that optimism refers to high expectations regarding outcomes achievement. In other words, hope focuses its attentions on the degree of personal involvement for the outcome to become true. Instead, optimism and hopefulness are a cognitive calculation of the actual possibilities for the outcome to happen (Bruininks & Malle, 2005; Chan, Sengupta, & Mukhopadhyay, 2013; MacInnis & Chun, 2007).

In this study, we focus on hope rather than hopefulness and optimism. The reason for this choice is that the expectation that climate change can be mitigated is empirically low (IPCC, 2014). Increasing hopefulness and optimism, that in this case would be increasing the expectation that climate change can be reversed, may, therefore, be challenging (Chadwick, 2015), however inspiring hope, meaning, here, instilling the desire for a better environmental future, remains an achievable goal for marketers and policymakers.

Several theories of hope have highlighted its motivating power (Howell & Larsen, 2015; Lazarus, 1999; MacInnis & Chun, 2007; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010; Shade, 2001; Snyder, 2000; 2002). Consumer researchers have successfully induced hope in consumers to influence their consumption behavior. For instance, they have shown that making consumers remember a hopeful experience reduces unhealthy consumption (Winterich & Haws, 2011) and that making them feel hope increases their willingness to test the product advertised (Poels & Dewitte, 2008). It has also been shown that people induced to feel hope make less risky investment choices (Nenkov, MacInnis, & Morrin 2009) and support firms' corporate social responsibility activities more (Kim, Kang, & Mattila, 2012).

Hope exerts its motivating effect even in adverse situations (Bury, Wenzel, & Woodyatt, 2016; Nelissen, 2017). For example, Nelissen (2017) found that people with high levels of hope are more likely to persist and succeed when confronting negative feedback than those with low levels of

hope. In a first longitudinal study, the author investigated the effect of hope on resolutions to lose weight by measuring the level of hope that people had regarding weight loss. He showed that the more hope people had, the less they were affected by negative feedback (information about weight gained) and the more successful they were in achieving their goal. In a second study, he replicated the results regarding the effect of hope on increasing persistence in goal-striving by inducing hope in subjects assigned to solve a mathematical puzzle.

Because hope has been shown to motivate behaviors toward self-oriented goals, a baseline prediction of our study is that hope can also motivate behaviors toward the greater good. Specifically, we expect that experiencing hope regarding a better future for the environment will be positively correlated with pro-environmental behaviors. Previous findings support this hypothesis (Kim et al., 2012; Ojala, 2012; Smith & Leiserowitz, 2014; Stevenson & Peterson, 2015). For instance, with a nationally representative US survey, Smith and Leiserowitz (2014) investigated what emotions play a role in public support for climate policies and found that hope was strongly associated with greater policy support. Stevenson and Peterson (2015) compared the effect of hopefulness on children's behaviors with that of despair and concern about climate change mitigation (Stevenson & Peterson, 2015). They collected information from undergraduate students using a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. Hope and concern were found to be positive predictors of pro-environmental behaviors such as "ask my family to recycle some of the things we use," whereas despair negatively impacted the students' willingness to engage in these behaviors. Based on these findings, our first hypothesis assumes that the positive motivational effect of hope for self-interest goals extends to behaviors toward the greater good, such as environmental protection:

H1: Feeling hope for the future of the environment increases pro-environmental behaviors.

In this research, our major goal is to shed light on the underlying mechanism by which hope affects pro-environmental behaviors. We postulate that psychological empowerment mediates the effect of hope on pro-environmental behaviors. Indeed, hope has been found to instill a sense of strength and power in individuals, and the literature highlights that the feeling of making a difference is necessary to motivate individuals to engage in costly behaviors such as pro-environmental behaviors (Hartmann, Apaolaza, & D'Souza, 2018).

Psychological Empowerment

Experiencing hope allows consumers to act as if the hoped-for goal is obtainable (Pettit, 2004). According to Miceli and Castefranchi (2010, p. 268):

[This] doesn't necessarily imply that one is more confident than the evidence allows one to be. Hope may not ignore or reject a belief of probability. It merely sticks to the belief of possibility. Without altering likelihood estimates, hope may go on looking at the positive prospect *as long as it is possible*.

Experiencing hope encourages broader and more flexible thinking, produces better cognitive performance, and fosters the development of one's strengths and resources (Ciarrochi, Parker, Kashdan, Heaven, & Barkus, 2015; Curry et al., 1997; Snyder, 2002), which, in turn, may result in an increase of perceived personal power (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2005; Luthans & Jensen, 2002). Power "is the extent to which actors (power holders) are capable of acting with agency, and producing positive effects on the environment" (Van Dijke & Poppe 2006, p. 538). Moreover, the literature on empowerment describes how psychological empowerment includes four different dimensions. Gaining power entails a sense of meaningfulness, self-determination, competence, and impact in regards to goals and objectives (Lee & Koh, 2001; Rappaport, 1987; Spreitzer, 1995). Empowered individuals do not only perceive they can influence the environment, but they also feel the goal to be valuable, believe in their capability to perform the goal-related actions, and perceive to have the control to initiate, continue and stop their actions.

It is important to note that feeling powerful does not mean that one actually has power. However, both actual and perceived power seem to motivate individuals' actions (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Kuppaswamy & Bayus, 2017). Research on powerful body posture offers an illustration of this idea. Several studies have found that adopting expansive body postures can activate a sense of power and have the same or even stronger effects on power-related behaviors than a position of actual power (Huang, Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Guillory, 2011; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003).

When making decisions, perceiving that one has personal power over a situation influences goal-directed behavior. The behavioral approach to the theory of power suggests that feeling powerful enhances active engagement in goal-related tasks (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Previous research has found that empowered individuals are more action-oriented and creative in their approach to desirable outcomes than are people who do not feel empowered (Galinsky et al., 2003; Guinote, 2007; Maner, Kaschak, & Jones, 2010). Guinote (2007) found that powerful individuals perform better than powerless individuals along the whole process of goal pursuit. They set goals

more quickly and take less time to initiate goal-related action. They are also more resistant to obstacles and react to them with greater flexibility. Investigating psychological factors that enable consumers to pursue their long-term goals, Patrick and Hagtvedt (2012) found that framing a temptation refusal with the phrase “I don’t” (vs. “I can’t”), results in the sense of empowerment that increases resistance to future temptation. In their studies, respondents who were told to tell themselves “I don’t do X” reported feeling more powerful and they were more likely to choose a healthy option (over an unhealthy one) compared with individuals who were told to tell themselves “I can’t do X.”

Feeling powerful is a psychological state closely related to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000), confidence and internal locus of control (for review, see O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). The literature suggests that all these psychological states enhance one’s motivation to engage in pro-environmental actions and goal-related actions in general (for a discussion, see Caprara, Alessandri, & Eisenberg, 2012; Cleveland, Kalamas & Laroche, 2012; Hartmann et al., 2018; Kals & Maes, 2002). However, based on the definition described above, three main elements help to delineate the uniqueness of psychological empowerment and its relevance for our research. First, feeling powerful entails the simple and direct perception that one can be successful whereas the other related constructs concern more the personal ability to control the environment. This distinction means that psychological empowerment is *felt* when both environmental and internal factors are perceived as favorable for the achievement of the goal. Second, self-efficacy, competence, confidence and internal locus of control are more stable in nature than psychological empowerment, which is instead conceptualized as a process. Third, only empowerment entails a sense of meaning. To illustrate this aspect with a comparison, self-efficacy is defined as the ability to perform the action, psychological empowerment, instead, is the feeling of being able to achieve a *valued* goal. According to the above reasoning, we propose the following hypothesis regarding the underlying mechanism behind hope’s motivational effect.

H2: A sense of power mediated the effect of feeling hope for the future of the environment on pro-environmental behaviors. Specifically, individuals who have hope for the future of the environment perceive more power over the situation than do individuals who have less hope for the future of the environment. This greater sense of power is positively related to pro-environmental behaviors.

Hope by definition frames the hope-related goal as an achievement, and thus, from a self-regulatory perspective, hope aligns to a promotion focus orientation. In the following section, we posit our hypothesis about the interaction between individuals’ regulatory focus and their experience

of hope. According to regulatory focus theory, individuals' regulatory focus affects their emotional experiences. We expect that the effect of hope will be stronger on those who are inclined to have a promotion regulatory focus than on those who are inclined to have a prevention regulatory focus.

The Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus

Regulatory focus theory is a goal-pursuit theory based on the assumption that during childhood individuals are taught how to achieve pleasure and avoid pain through different self-regulatory systems. Specifically, the theory describes two self-regulatory systems which represent goals either as strong *ideals* or as strong *ought*. *Ideals* refer to individuals' wishes, accomplishments, and aspirations, whereas *ought* refers to individuals' beliefs about their obligations, duties, and responsibilities. *Ideals* self-regulation involves a promotion focus, whereas *ought* self-regulation involves a prevention focus (Higgins, 1997; 1998; 2001). During an individual's life, the learned self-regulatory system becomes a chronic orientation and influences individuals' perceptions, behaviors, and goals (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1998; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). Individuals who are promotion-oriented are motivated to satisfy their aspirations and have a heightened sensitivity to positive outcomes as possible means to satisfy their nurturing need and achieve pleasure. By contrast, individuals who are prevention-oriented are motivated to fulfill duties and have a heightened sensitivity to negative outcomes as possible obstacles to satisfy their safety need and avoid pain.

Individuals' regulatory focus has also been found to influence the *nature* and *magnitude* of emotional experiences. Specifically, the *nature* of emotional experience seems to be dictated by the promotion or prevention focus that individuals have (Higgins, 2001). The literature has, for instance, investigated emotions as signals of self-regulatory effectiveness (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Higgins, 1996; Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997). According to this literature, for promotion-oriented individuals, emotional reactions vary along a cheerful/dejected dimension. Information about their effectiveness in self-regulation elicits cheerful reactions, while information about their ineffectiveness in self-regulation brings about dejection (e.g., disappointment and depression). Instead, for prevention-oriented individuals, emotional reactions vary along a quiescence–agitation dimension. Information about their effectiveness in self-regulation elicits quiescence, while information about their ineffectiveness in self-regulation elicits agitation (e.g., anger and fear). As another example regarding how individuals' regulatory focus determines the nature of emotional experiences, Strauman and Higgins (1988) bring evidence that regulatory focus affects the type of anger that individuals experience when an obstacle impedes the achievement of a goal. Promotion-oriented individuals

experience frustration (a type of anger) when facing a barrier to fulfilling aspirations or attaining accomplishments. Instead, prevention-oriented individuals experience resentment (a type of anger) when facing a barrier to fulfilling duties or attaining safety.

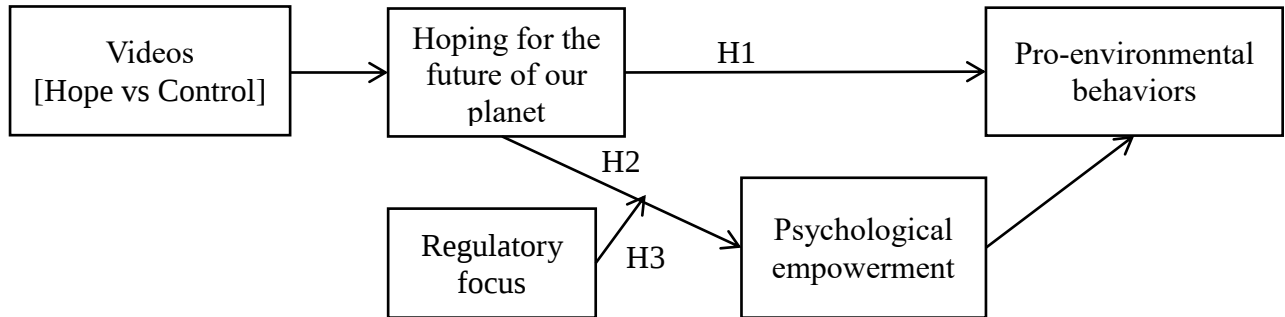
Additionally, the literature suggests that individuals' regulatory focus regulates the *magnitude* of emotional responses. The strength of the emotional experience is proportional to the psychological significance of the goal for which the emotion is elicited (Higgins, 1989). In other words, promotion-oriented individuals are expected to be more emotional about goals satisfying their nurturing need, and prevention-oriented individuals are expected to have stronger emotional reactions for goals satisfying their safety need.

Thus, from a self-regulatory perspective, the feeling of hope aligns by nature to a promotion focus orientation (Higgins et al., 1997). Hope is felt for the desired end state that one wishes to achieve (Averill et al., 1990; MacInnis & Chun, 2007; Poels & Dewitte, 2008). Additionally, the literature explicitly cites 'hopes' in the definition of how a promotion focus represents goals, as well as in the operationalization of the construct (Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Freitas, Liberman, & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, 1997; 1998). For example, the most-known manipulation task to manipulate a promotion focus orientation asks respondents to "describe ... your hopes and aspirations... In other words, what accomplishments would you ideally like to meet at this point in your life?" (Freitas et al., 2002, p.295). As hope reinforces the attention on the achievement of a positive desired end-state, which is a promotion concern, the effect of hope should be stronger for promotion-oriented than prevention-oriented individuals. Therefore, for the specific context under study, we predict that regulatory orientation moderates the effect of hope on pro-environmental behaviors.

H3: Individual regulatory mindset moderates the effect of hope on psychological empowerment and thus on pro-environmental behaviors. Specifically, we predict that promotion-oriented individuals who experience hope will perceive a higher sense of power over the situation than prevention-oriented individuals and that this higher sense of power will, in turn, increase pro-environmental behaviors.

Our conceptual framework (Fig. 2.1) proposes that hope exerts its influence through the mediation of psychological empowerment. Study 1 tests this prediction. Additionally, we expect that regulatory focus moderates the effect of hope, so, in study 2, we measure individuals' regulatory focus and test its moderation effect. In the following sections, we first describe the design and the results of our study. Then, we discuss our findings, and we offer both theoretical and practical implications of experiencing hope and its effect on guiding behaviors.

Fig. 2.1. The theoretical framework of the effect of hoping on pro-environmental behaviors.



STUDY 1

This study included a sample of 197 US respondents (56.9 % women; $M_{\text{age}} = 38$, $SD = 12.02$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). To have a convincing cover story as well as to increase the variability of self-reported hope, we described the study as intended to receive feedback on a short video.

First respondents were asked several demographic questions, to indicate their environmental concern (5 items, $\alpha = .86$; Amatulli, De Angelis, Peluso, Soscia, & Guido, 2017; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008) and then were randomly assigned to watch one of the two videos. Since we were interested in amplifying the spectrum of experienced hope to look at its effect, one of the two videos aimed at eliciting hope for the future of the environment whereas the second was emotionally neutral. The material was previously pretested (see web appendix for more details). After watching the video, according to the cover story, we asked respondents whether they found the video engaging, whether they would share the video to their friends and whether they would like to watch related content. These questions used a 7-point Likert scale from “definitely not” to “definitely yes” and we averaged responses to these three items to form a single index of attitude toward the video ($\alpha = .87$).

Our dependent variable followed these questions. We explained that the researchers were collaborating with a fictitious nonprofit organization that is willing to share tips on how to live an eco-friendly life. Respondents were asked to choose as many tips as they wanted to read at the end of the survey (DV). We explained that the more tips they read, the more they were taking action to help the environment. We reassured respondents that their payment was independent of their choice and that they would be redirected to the tips at the end of the survey after they received the code to be paid.

Then, we asked them to recall the video they just saw, to indicate how strongly they felt a sense of hope, and to write what they remembered from the video message in an open-ended question.

To measure psychological empowerment, we used two items adapted from Patrick and Hagtvedt (2012); “with regards to helping the environment I feel... *in control/empowered*”. We adopted a 7-point Likert scale from “not at all” to “very much,” and we averaged responses to the two items to form a single index ($\alpha = .87$).

Finally, we assessed if they had any trouble watching the video and whether they had any comments or recommendations to provide us. We thanked respondents and ended the survey. Then we redirected respondents to the number of tips they selected before.

RESULTS

We conducted several preliminary analyses to examine our sample. Respondents were homogeneously distributed in terms of environmental concern between the two conditions ($M_{\text{hope}} = 3.63$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 3.61$; $t(195) = .17$, $p = .86$, two-tailed). This condition is important because environmental concern affects responsiveness to emotional appeals (e.g., Amatulli et al., 2017; Lockwood & Kunda 1997; Nash, McGregor, & Prentice, 2011) and it could have biased our manipulation.

Moreover, respondents equally appreciated the two videos (attitude toward the video: $M_{\text{hope}} = 5.11$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 4.92$; $t(195) = .90$, $p = .37$, two-tailed), so attitude toward the video cannot be an alternative explanation for our results. Finally, regarding the dependent variable, we verified that respondents read the number of tips they said they agreed to read (i.e., our dependent variable) (see web appendix for more details).

Pro-environmental behavior. First, the result of an independent t-test shows that the hope-eliciting video significantly increased self-reported hope compared to the control video ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.60$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 4.31$; $t(195) = 5.29$, $p = .000$, two-tailed) and the results of a regression analysis show that self-reported hope increased significantly pro-environmental behaviors ($\beta = .14$, $p = .004$; $F(1, 196) = 8.50$, $p = .004$).

Second, we tested whether *power* mediates the effect of experiencing hope on pro-environmental behaviors. We used the Process Macro developed by Hayes (2017), Model 4 with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval. The result shows that self-reported hope ($\beta = .33$, $SE = .05$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.22, .44]) affected positively *power*. When *power* was introduced into the regression, self-reported hope marginally statistically increased pro-environmental behaviors ($\beta = .10$, $SE = .05$, $p = .06$, 95% CI [.00, .20]) and *power* did significantly

($\beta = .12$, $SE = .06$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.00, .24]). The indirect effect was significant as evidenced by a confidence interval that did not pass through zero ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.00, .10]).

DISCUSSION

Study 1 produced first evidence of the positive effect of hope on the adoption of pro-environmental behaviors and of the mediational role of feeling empowered on the effect. Specifically, experiencing hope increased significantly psychological empowerment, which in turn enhanced the number of tips respondents read on how to live an eco-friendly life. The first step to behave pro-environmentally is to know what behaviors are damaging the environment and which ones could be adopted to be more eco-friendly. Thus, our dependent variable represents the first and most important step that individuals need to make for the greatest good of our planet.

Many pro-environmental campaigns spend much effort in informing the population about what behaviors are damaging the environment and which ones could be adopted to reduce personal footprint; thus to provide instruments that encourage active information seeking is extremely valuable.

In study 2, we aim to replicate the baseline effect (H1 & H2), but we also consider the moderating role of regulatory focus (H3). Aligned with our third hypothesis, we believe that hope empowers all individuals, but especially those with a promotion orientation. Additionally, we use a new dependent variable to test whether the effect holds for various pro-environmental behaviors and so to increase the generalizability of our model.

STUDY 2

This study included a sample of 191 US respondents (41.4 % women; $M_{age} = 35$, $SD = 10.69$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). As in study 1, the cover story describes the study as aiming at receiving feedback regarding a short video. Respondents were first asked few demographic questions; next we measured respondents' regulatory focus (11 items, Promotion orientation subscale, $\alpha = .73$; Prevention orientation subscale, $\alpha = .81$; Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Idson, Ayduk, & Taylor, 2001) and their environmental concern (same as study 1, $\alpha = .87$). Then respondents were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (hope-eliciting vs. control video, same as study 1). After watching the video, we asked the same three questions regarding video appreciation as in study 1 ($\alpha = .90$) followed by our dependent variable. We mentioned that the team collaborates with a fictitious nonprofit organization that wanted to ask them for their voluntary help, and we measured

the willingness of respondents to contribute to the environmental cause. To measure it, we asked respondents to choose between five options that represent an increasing degree of commitment to the environmental cause. The choices varied from not making any contribution (0), to writing and signing a comment to support the cause and posting it on their social media (5), (see web appendix for more details). According to Koo and Fishbach (2016), an increase of sharing information on the self translates in an increase of personal commitment and engagement toward the cause. They were assured that the payment was independent of their choice and that they would be redirected to the type of contribution they wanted to make at the end of the survey.

As in study 1, we asked respondents how strongly they felt a sense of hope, and we used the same items for psychological empowerment ($\alpha = .83$) used in study 1. We then assessed whether they had any trouble watching the video and whether they had any comment or recommendation to provide us. We thanked them, and respondents ended the survey or were redirected to the type of contribution they selected before.

RESULTS

As in study 1, we conducted several preliminary analyses to assure the validity of our results. Respondents were homogeneously distributed in terms of environmental concern between the two conditions ($M_{\text{hope}} = 3.64$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 3.61$; $t(189) = .18$, $p = .85$, two-tailed). Moreover, respondents equally appreciated the two videos ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.02$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 4.75$; $t(189) = 1.18$, $p = .24$, two-tailed). Finally, respondents who agreed to testify did provide the information they agreed to share (see web appendix for more details).

Pro-environmental behavior. We replicated the analyses regarding the hypothesized relationship between elicited hope and pro-environmental behaviors (H1 & H2). The result of an independent t-test shows that the *hope*-eliciting video significantly increased self-reported hope compared to the control video ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.68$ vs $M_{\text{control}} = 4.35$; $t(189) = 5.71$, $p = .000$, two-tailed) and a regression showed that self-reported hope increased significantly pro-environmental behaviors ($\beta = .09$, $p = .01$; $F(1, 189) = 6.15$, $p = .01$).

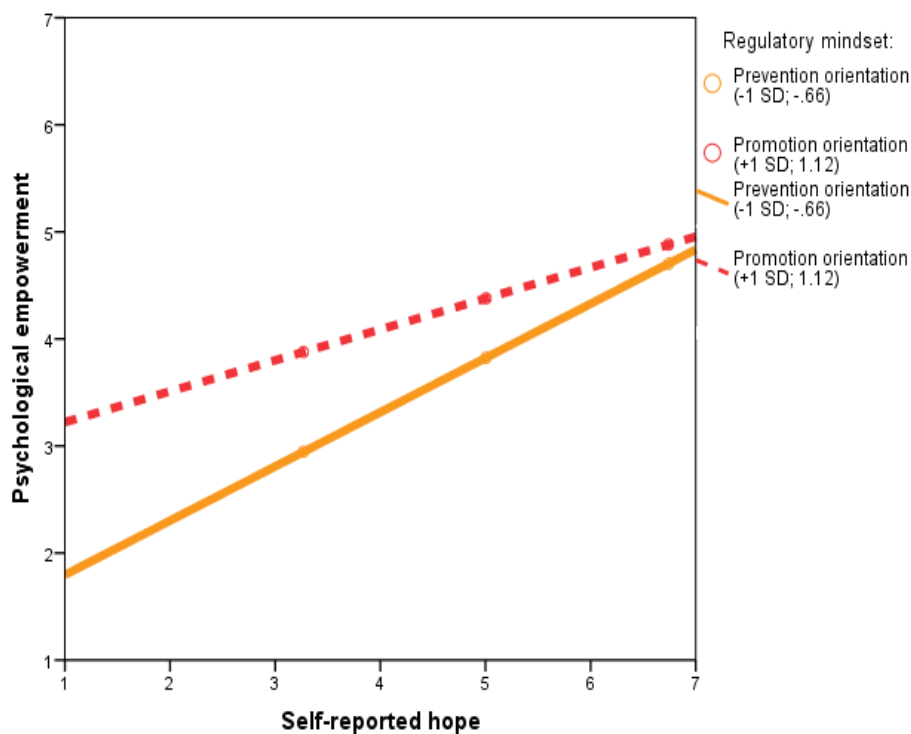
Next, as we did in study 1, we tested whether *power* mediates the effect of experiencing hope on pro-environmental behaviors. We used the Process Macro developed by Hayes (2017), Model 4 with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval. The result shows that self-reported hope ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .06$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.30, .53]) affected positively *power*. Self-reported hope ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .04$, $p = .46$, 95% CI [-.05, .10]) did not significantly affected pro-environmental behaviors when *power* was introduced into the regression. Finally, *power* ($\beta = .15$, SE

= .04, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.06, .23]) significantly predicted pro-environmental behaviors. The indirect effect was significant as evidenced by a confidence interval that did not pass through zero ($\beta = .06$, 95% CI [.02, .11]).

Moderation role of individuals' regulatory focus. We conducted a moderation analysis using the Model 7 of the PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2017) with self-reported hope, regulatory focus, and their interaction to test whether regulatory focus moderates the effect of hope on psychological empowerment (H3), and thus on pro-environmental behaviors. We found that both self-reported hope ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .06$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.31, .54]) and regulatory focus ($\beta = .91$, $SE = .33$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.27, 1.57]) increase *power*. Additionally their interaction was significant ($\beta = -.12$, $SE = .06$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [-.23, -.01]). Experiencing hope appears to be effective in increasing *power* on prevention-oriented individuals (-1 SD; -.66), $\beta = .51$, $SE = .08$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.36, .67] and promotion-oriented individuals (+1 SD; 1.12), $\beta = .29$, $SE = .08$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.13, .45].

We then used the Johnson and Neyman technique to identify significant regions of self-reported hope's effect across different levels of regulatory focus (Spiller, Fitzsimons, Lynch Jr, & McClelland, 2013). The effect of self-reported hope was significant for levels of regulatory focus lower than 1.74, $\beta = .21$, $SE = .11$, $p = .05$, 95% CI [.00, .42] (Fig. 2.2), meaning that for highly promotion-oriented individuals the effect of hope on *power* was no longer significant.

Fig. 2.2. The moderation role of regulatory focus (H3).



Moreover, *power* significantly increased pro-environmental behaviors ($\beta = .15$, $SE = .04$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.06, .23]). Overall, the effect of self-reported hope was positive and significant for the whole sample. More specifically, for prevention-oriented individuals (-1 SD; -.66), the indirect effect of self-reported hope through *power* (mediation variable) was significant given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .07$; 95% CI [.03, .13]). For promotion-oriented individuals (+1 SD; 1.12), the indirect effect of self-reported hope through *power* (mediation variable) was significant given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .04$; 95% CI [.01, .09]).

DISCUSSION

Study 2 replicates the results of study 1, finding that hope facilitates engagement in pro-environmental behaviors. Specifically, experiencing hope increased psychological empowerment in individuals, which in turn led to a larger contribution in helping the environment. Moreover, consistent with our third hypothesis (H3), regulatory focus moderated the effect of hope on psychological empowerment. However, contrary to our predictions, the effect was particularly strong for highly prevention-oriented individuals and disappeared for highly promotion-oriented individuals.

We found an explanation for our unexpected results by looking closer at the literature on regulatory focus theory and emotional experiences. In developing our hypothesis, while we primarily concentrated on the *nature* of hope and its alignment with a promotion focus orientation, we only briefly mentioned that regulatory focus also affects the *magnitude* of the emotional experience (Higgins, 2001). It is instead within this argument that our reinterpretation lies. Regulatory focus theory posits that the *magnitude* of emotional experiences is determined by the psychological significance of the event eliciting the emotion (Higgins, 2001). In other words, individuals experience the emotion more intensely when the emotion is associated with goals that align with their regulatory focus. Prevention-oriented and promotion-oriented individuals are concerned with very different goals; the former aim to attain safety and the latter to attain accomplishments. Thus, prevention-oriented individuals will experience a more intense feeling of hope for prevention focus goals, such as avoiding being fired, than for promotion focus goals such as obtaining a promotion. The opposite is true for promotion-oriented individuals, who will hope more strongly for promotion focus goals than for prevention focus goals.

In our studies, the focus of hope was to strive for positive outcomes, such as achieving a sustainable lifestyle and a better environmental future. Referring to environmental protection as an aspiration aligns with a promotion focus (Higgins, 1997; 1998). Therefore, we expected to verify our

third hypothesis and find that the effect of hope was stronger for promotion-oriented individuals than for prevention-oriented individuals. Yet, the nature of climate change itself, and how it has been depicted in the media so far, frames environmental issues as a threat to humanity (Chang, 2012; Gifford, 2011; IPCC, 2014). Hence, it threatens individuals' safety needs that refer to prevention-focused concerns. Therefore, it is possible that in the individuals' minds, environmental protection, as a goal, is strongly associated with a prevention focus. This alternative interpretation of respondents' hope would explain why its effect was stronger for highly prevention-oriented individuals than for highly promotion-oriented individuals in our study.

This explanation is supported by two articles looking at how advertising may elicit hope (Kim et al., 2012; Poels & Dewitte 2008). The common assumption of these two papers is that products can be advertised as a means to attain a desirable goal, which triggers the feeling of hope (MacInnis & Chun, 2007). Advertisements can trigger a "prevention" or "promotion" oriented hope, depending on the goal (promotion-focused or prevention-focused) that the product enables individuals to attain (Kim et al., 2012; Poels & Dewitte 2008). These findings seem to validate our explanation of our unexpected result. Even though hope is a promotion focus emotion by *nature* (Averill et al., 1990; Higgins et al., 1997; MacInnis & Chun, 2007), the most relevant aspect to understand the effect of regulatory focus on hope is the regulatory focus of the hope-related goal.

Finally, we found that a promotion orientation directly affected psychological power. Highly promotion-oriented individuals felt themselves to have more power over the situation than highly prevention-oriented individuals, which in turn increased their environmental behaviors. Aligned with these results, Bullard and Penner (2017) investigated the role of individuals' regulatory focus on philanthropic giving. They found that promotion-oriented individuals donate more compared to prevention-oriented individuals, and they did so because they interpret philanthropy as making an impact in the lives of others. These results offer an additional potential explanation for our unexpected findings. They seem to suggest that the positive effect of hope was particularly true for prevention-oriented individuals since a promotion orientation already embodies a sense of "making an impact" as a way to achieve a goal.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research contributes to the promotion of the greater good by addressing the difficult and urgent threat of ecological degradation and by investigating the resulting consumption problems, and offers both theoretical and practical implications. First, our work contributes to extant research on mood, affects, and emotions (Nabi, 2010; Smith & Leiserowitz, 2014; So, Achar, Han, Agrawal,

Duhachek, & Maheswaran, 2015). Very limited scientific research has been devoted to the mechanism behind the motivational power of positive emotions (e.g., Bissing-Olson, Fielding, & Iyer, 2016; Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce 2015; Peter & Honea, 2012). This paper makes an important step in this direction by investigating and underlining the role of hope in such circumstances.

Two studies support our conceptual framework proposing that hope exerts its positive influence through psychological empowerment. Hope fosters personal strengths and resources (Ciarrochi et al., 2015; Snyder, 2002) resulting in a feeling of powerfulness. In our studies, individuals who feel hope for a better future of the environment experience indeed a higher sense of personal power over the environment, which in turn motivates them to act. The perception of having an impact is particularly valuable in the environmental domain, where it is difficult to observe the direct effect of consumers' actions either protecting or damaging the environment (Lorenzoni, Nicholson-Cole, & Whitmarsh, 2007; Milfont, 2012).

Moreover, our results suggest that consumers' characteristics may interact with the effect of hope. Especially, we investigated whether individuals' regulatory mindsets play a role in the effect of hope (Adams, Faseur, & Geuens, 2011; Averill et al., 1990; Higgins et al., 1997; 1998). We found that regulatory focus moderates the highlighted effect. Experiencing hope is beneficial for all consumers. However, experiencing hope is more effective for prevention-oriented individuals than for promotion-oriented ones. These results suggest that the goal for which individuals hope, and not hope predisposition to being promotion focus (Averill et al., 1990; Higgins et al., 1997; MacInnis & Chun, 2007), is the key element to predict the effect of regulatory focus on individuals' emotional experiences. Individuals experience more intensively emotions elicited by goals aligned by their regulatory focus (Higgins, 2001). As environmental protection is commonly perceived as a threat (Chang, 2012; Gifford, 2011; IPCC, 2014), it refers to safety concerns and thus aligns to a prevention focus orientation. Therefore, emotional experiences toward the environmental situation should have the strongest effect on prevention-oriented individuals. In our study, experiencing hope increased their sense of power, especially for highly prevention-oriented individuals.

Second, this study aims not only to address an academic audience, but also to offer practical instruments to professionals, marketers, nongovernmental organizations, and policymakers. According to our results, these actors can appeal to hope to increase the effectiveness of social campaigns and prosocial messages promoting the greater good. Despite some literature supporting the use of fear, guilt, and shame appeals to promote pro-environmental behaviors (Amatulli et al., 2017; Ferguson & Branscombe, 2010; Hartmann et al., 2014; 2016; Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017), research also evidences that the negativity of environmental campaigns may lead to active denial of the problem (as illustrated by Norgaard, 2011; Gifford, 2011). Since 2008, there has been an increase

in the number of US citizens who deny humans' contribution to climate change (Leiserowitz et al., 2018). This is why it is extremely important to communicate the urgency to protect our planet without discouraging consumers. We propose to do so by cultivating consumers' hopes toward a better future for the environment.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This research faces some limitations. Our studies were conducted online in a weakly controlled environment. It would be interesting to replicate our experimental design in a laboratory setting and with a field study to reinforce the internal and external validity of our results. Additionally, although we have observed the effect of hope on various pro-environmental behaviors, the literature and practice would benefit from observing its effect on real-life choices.

Moreover, in our research, we were interested in underlining the effect of hope, so we did not investigate deeper what elicited hope in the videos we used in our two studies. Further research could work on the content of messages inspiring hope in order to identify the key elements of the message that elicit hope. We have the intuition that many different aspects contribute to building a message inspiring hope. For example, we identified a positive look at the future and a sense of belonging to a bigger movement as possible elements that may trigger hope. The literature has found indeed that individuals are more willing to take action for close others than for distant others (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Small & Simonsohn, 2007). Investigating these and other components of the message more closely can help to find the right formula for inspiring hope.

Furthermore, the same content aiming at eliciting hope may or may not work on different individuals. As we did with the regulatory focus, a research avenue would be to explore individual differences that may moderate the effect of hope. Besides, it would be interesting to reveal what triggers hope for the different segments of consumers.

Finally, hope is a *powerful* and *contagious* emotion. We believe it can indeed motivate individuals to contribute to the greater good in many ways. To verify this hypothesis, its effect should be tested in various contexts, others than the environmental one. We also think that hope may have a positive effect not only on the person experiencing hope but also contagiously affect those who read or listen to others' hopes. Further research could look into how individuals interpret others' hope and how it affects their behavior.

APPENDIX CHAPTER 2

Study 1 & 2

Videos' links:

Hope-eliciting video	Control video
https://youtu.be/hz0mQiPjs9U	https://youtu.be/qmRxmoWJCdo

We excluded respondents who did not watch the entire video: four respondents in study 1 and 2.

We pre-tested our material with an online survey (Mturk) (N= 144). Specifically, we selected two videos expected to elicit hope, and two videos expected to do not evoke any specific emotion. Respondents were randomly submitted to watch one of the videos, and then they were asked to assess if and how much the video made them feel a sense of hope /a sense of happiness on a 7-point scale from “not at all” to “very much” (adapted from Smith & Leiserowitz, 2014). We select happiness as measure of positive affect in general (Ellsworth & Smith 1988; Fredrickson, 2001; Winterich & Haws, 2011) to control that the videos equally pleased respondents, and that the effect of hope was unique and not attributable to a general positive mood.

We conducted an ANOVA to examine the effect of the videos on self-reported emotions. Among the two options, we selected the video that more strongly elicited hope. Among the control videos, we selected the one that elicited hope the least. The videos were similar in length (around 1m30s). The selected hope-eliciting video raised awareness of the importance of climate change and the urgency to tackle it. It depicted the role humans have in causing and potentially reducing climate change, and ended with the message: “help the environment” on a white background. The selected control video was a 180-second video of art history on Albrecht Durer’s Sketchbook. Results showed that, for the selected videos, self-reported hope in the hope-eliciting video condition ($M_{\text{hope video}} = 5.69$) was significantly higher than in the control video condition ($M_{\text{control video}} = 4.38$; $p = .001$; $F(1, 75) = 12.83$, $p = .001$). Self-reported happiness in the hope-eliciting video condition ($M_{\text{hope video}} = 5.03$) was not significantly higher than in the control video condition ($M_{\text{control video}} = 4.56$; $p = .19$; $F(1, 75) = 1.76$, $p = .19$). Moreover, a paired sample t-test showed that self-reported hope and self-reported happiness did not differ in the control condition; $t(38) = -.81$, $p = .42$, but, in the hope-eliciting video condition, self-reported hope was significantly higher than self-reported happiness; $t(35) = 4.18$, $p = .000$.

Study 1

Dependent variable:

The survey is about to finish.

We are collaborating with a nonprofit organization called **MyClimate** that would love to share some tips with you on how you can live an eco-friendly life. Being up-to-date with what you can do is the first step to actively engage in helping the environment.

You will first complete the survey, then you will receive the MTurk code to be paid and lastly you will be redirected to **MyClimate** tips. Reading more tips will take more time but will also be a way of taking more action to help the environment.
You will receive your payment independently of your choice.

How many tips do you want to read?

No tips, thanks!

1 tip

5 tips

10 tips

15 tips

Example of a tip we gave respondents to read:

Travel climate-consciously!

Mobility is the area where personal carbon accounts are widest apart. Some people drive around in massive off-road vehicles, some cannot think to walk neither ten minutes walk, some need to get around the world in their leisure time. The energy-saving potential is just as big.

Use public transport. Walk. Fly only when you really have to.

How important do you think this tip is?

Not at all important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Extremely important

Summary of actual compliance with the option selected in the dependent variable of study 1.

	Answer	Actual behaviors
No tips, thanks!	81	-
1 tip	41	41
5 tips	53	51 (2 respondents just read 4 tips)
10 tips	6	6
15 tips	17	16 (1 respondent just read 14 tips)
Total	198	

Study 2

Dependent variable:

The power of your voice

The Earth needs people to stand up for her.

To have individuals testifying their commitment to helping the environment adds a tremendous boost to our campaigns. This is why we are collecting material to support our campaigns and we would like to ask you to stand up for the environment and to make your own contribution. Your actions have an impact.

You will first complete the survey, then you will receive the MTurk code to be paid, and lastly, you will be asked to give testimony in the form you agreed. Adding more elements to your contribution would take more time, but will also be a way of taking more action to help the environment.

You will receive your payment independently of your choice.
In case you decide to give testimony, you will be informed when we will use it.

What kind of contribution do you want to make?

- ☐ I prefer not to testify
- ☐ I agree to add my name at the list of your supporters
- ☐ I agree to write a comment supporting the environment and sign it
- ☐ I agree to write a comment supporting the environment , sign it and upload a selfie to give a face to my testimony
- ☐ I agree to write a comment supporting the environment, sign it and publish it with my Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram profile

At the end of the survey, respondents were redirected to the option they selected:

- For “I agree to add my name at the list of your supporters”:

Thank you for standing up for the environment!

You agreed to be on the list of our supporters, please spell out your full name for us:

- For “I agree to write a comment supporting the environment and sign it”:

Thank you for standing up for the environment!

Write a comment that could motivate other people to help the environment.
Your voice is powerful.

As signature, please spell out your full name for us:

- For “I agree to write a comment supporting the environment, sign it and upload a selfie to give a face to my testimony”:

Thank you for standing up for the environment!

Write a comment that could motivate other people to help the environment.
Your voice is powerful.

As signature, please spell out your full name for us:

Finally, upload a selfie that we can associate to your comment.

Drop files or click here to upload

- For “I agree to write a comment supporting the environment, sign it and publish it with my Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram profile”:

Thank you for standing up for the environment!

Write a comment that could motivate other people to help the environment.
Your voice is powerful.

As signature, please spell out your full name for us:

You can choose which profile you may use to publish the comment, please provide your username:

Facebook:

Instagram:

Linkedin:

Summary of actual compliance with the option selected in the dependent variable of study 2.

	Answer	Actual behaviors
I prefer not to testify	105	-
I agree to add my name at the list of your supporters	61	58 signatures (2 missing and 1 “good job” as signature)
I agree to write a comment supporting the environment and sign it	18	17 comments and signatures (1 missing)
I agree to write a comment supporting the environment, sign it and upload a selfie to give a face to my testimony	2	2 comments and signatures
I agree to write a comment supporting the environment, sign it and publish it with my Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram profile	5	3 comments, signatures and social media contact (2 comments and signatures without social media contact)
Total	191	

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CHAPTER 3: HOPE IN THE MARKETPLACE

Title:

We ‘hope to’ vs We ‘can’ make a difference: The role of verbal framing in consumers’ evaluation of companies’ philanthropy.

ABSTRACT

Companies engaged in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, such as philanthropy, must demonstrate sincere altruism to gain consumer support. We study how two popular expressions, "we *can* make a difference" and "we *hope to* make a difference," used in CSR promotion, influence consumers' perceptions of the company. In three studies, we observe that consumers deduce the CSR motivations of the company by the specific verbal framing used in the message, which in turn influences the effectiveness of the campaign. The ‘hope’ framing is perceived as more sincere than the ‘can’ framing. Perceived sincerity of the message further results in a higher attribution of altruistic motives and thus increases consumers' intentions to support the company in its CSR activity. Moreover, we studied the boundary conditions of the identified effect. The fit between the firm's activity and the supported cause moderates the suggested effect of the verbal framing on consumers' intentions to support the cause. When consumers do not perceive a congruency between the company and the supported cause (low firm/cause fit), verbal framing had the strongest effect. Our conclusions offer several theoretical and managerial implications for CSR promotion and the literature on semantic meaning, specifically verbal framing.

Keywords:

Can, Hope, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Two-sided messages, Firm/cause fit

INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, the role of corporations in society has been challenged and rethought (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). Nowadays, political and societal pressures push companies not only to be responsible actors of the economy but also to help the society proactively. Thus, when companies engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, and especially philanthropic actions, they might think that consumers would spontaneously appreciate their efforts and support the company's initiatives. However, this is not always the case. For consumers, the motivations behind CSR activities are even more important than what the company does and how much it actually helps society (de Jong & van der Meer, 2017; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011). To enhance the overall success of their CSR activities, companies need to truly care about what they do, and equally importantly to communicate their sincere commitment effectively (De Vries & Duque, 2018). The literature highlights that the way in which the company's prosocial activities are communicated plays an important role in consumers' perception and appreciation of these activities (e.g., Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Samu & Wymer, 2009). In sum, what firms say and how they say it is not just a secondary detail, but it can have significant effects on consumers. In this article, we investigate whether linguistic elements in CSR promotion, such as the advertisement of companies' philanthropic actions, may affect consumers' perceptions of the company and so influence their intention to support the activity.

More specifically, we suggest that consumers can infer the company's motives from its linguistic choices, which in turn influences the effectiveness of the firm's communication. In particular, we study how two popular expressions, "*we can* make a difference" and "*we hope* to make a difference," when adopted in CSR promotion, influence readers' perceptions of the company and its actions. In the everyday life, these two verbs are used interchangeably to express commitment to a future-oriented goal, such as 'making a difference' to society in this case. However, they are distinct by subtle differences in the information they provide. The 'can' framing communicates that the subject is sure to achieve the goal. Therefore, the firm adopting the 'can' framing affirms its capability to 'make a difference' and effectively help the society. The 'hope' framing instead communicates a certain degree of uncertainty about the achievement of the goal. Thus, the company adopting 'hope' framing communicates its wish to make its contribution, even though it admits to having low control on solving the problem.

We hypothesize that these two verbal framings inform the reader about the company's involvement in the cause by affecting the perceived sincerity of the message. In general, consumers expect companies to present themselves in a favorable light and try to convince them that they are

highly performant. Instead, the ‘hope’ framing deliberately underlines the company's uncertainty about its success, so that consumers exposed to this framing may feel that the company is acting against its own interests. In return, they may perceive the message as very honest. Thus, based on the expectations of the two-sided persuasion literature (Eisend, 2006; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973), we posit that a company that uses a ‘hope’ framing will be perceived as more sincere than one that uses a comparable message but with a ‘can’ framing that clearly expresses the company's certainty about its success. Message sincerity in turn should persuade consumers that the company is truly committed to the cause. As mentioned above, consumers are particularly susceptible to the firm's motives when they are asked to support a CSR activity, so we expect that for the CSR promotion, the “*we hope to make a difference*” message phrasing would be more effective than the “*we can make a difference*” one.

Moreover, we hypothesize a moderation effect of firm/cause fit, meaning the perceived overall congruency between the firm and the cause supported (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Specifically, we believe that when the fit between the cause and the firm is high, consumers see more easily the connection and reasons for the firm to support that specific cause. Hence, in the case of a high fit between the firm and the cause, consumers do not scrutinize beyond the message and further question themselves about the motives of the company to do the CSR activity (e.g., Du, et al., 2010; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). In such cases, the effect of the linguistic choices made by the company should be diluted. Instead, when the fit between the cause and the firm is low, consumers were found to have doubts about the company's commitment to the cause (Nan & Heo, 2007), and as a result tended to pay more attention to the content of the message (Menon & Kahn, 2003; Samu & Wymer, 2009). In such cases, we, therefore, expect consumers to be more attentive to the content of the message and therefore affected by its linguistic nuances.

In study 1, we observe that the ‘can’ and ‘hope’ framings in companies' philanthropy advertisements have a different effect on consumers' willingness to support the firm's initiative. Specifically, consumers exposed to the ‘hope’ framing have a higher intention to support the firm's initiative than the ones exposed to the ‘can’ framing. Study 2 further illustrates the mediating effect of the perceived message's sincerity and firm's motive attributions. The ‘hope’ framing is perceived as more sincere than the ‘can’ framing. This, in turn, makes consumers infer that the company has altruistic motives, meaning that its engagement in CSR activities is primarily driven by the firm's willingness to help the cause and contribute to the society. Finally, in study 3, we explore the boundary conditions under which verbal framing exerts its influence. The literature shows that the perceived fit between the company core business and the supported cause affects the message fluency and consequently consumers' scrutiny of the message. When consumers can easily see the link

between the firm and the cause they support, they spend less time on the message details. Instead, perceiving a low firm/cause fit increases consumers' suspiciousness and the research for additional information to deduce the firms' motives. Thus, we hypothesize and find that verbal framing is particularly effective in cases of low fit, where individuals spend more effort in reading the message. In the following sections, we first illustrate the theoretical foundation for the current research. Second, we describe our studies' designs and results. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications for our findings.

Theoretical background

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers “to company activities – voluntary by definition – demonstrating the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and interactions with stakeholders” (Van Marrewijk, 2003, p. 102). The most altruistic facet of CSR consists of philanthropic actions. For example, a company can raise money for a cause, have programs of volunteering for the employees, or contribute to a cause with a part of the revenues obtained by the sales of a particular product, that is, a cause-related product (Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Hult, 2004; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Firms' philanthropic actions seem overall beneficial for both the supported cause and the company. They enhance the company's image (e.g., Chernev & Blair, 2015), and boost purchase intentions and actual sales (e.g., Andrews, Luo, Fang, & Aspara, 2014; Koschate-Fischer, Stefan, & Hoyer, 2012). Moreover, nowadays consumers actively seek out cause-related products that offer such added value and are willing to switch brands to one that is associated with a cause (Cone communications, 2017).

However, several studies highlight that consumers' appreciation and responsiveness to CSR activities depends on the reasons why the company implements such activities (e.g., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Hillenbrand, Money, & Ghobadian, 2013; Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009). According to the attribution theory, individuals have a natural tendency to draw inferences about the motives of others and these attributions influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973). In general, consumers infer two types of corporate CSR motivations. Either they believe that companies engage in CSR activities to increase their profits, or that companies are sincerely motivated to improve their practices and help the society. Although consumers seem to accept companies with mixed motivations (i.e., altruistic and egoistic), stronger allocations of altruistic motivations lead to a better perception of the company and therefore to a greater intention to support the firm's CSR activities, such as buying their cause-related products. Conversely, when consumers perceive the company to have predominantly self-

interest motives, consumers tend to evaluate the firm negatively and be less willing to support the company (Du et al. 2010; Ellen et al., 2006; Foreh & Grier, 2003; Groza et al., 2011; Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006; Walker, Heere, Parent, & Drane, 2010).

Consistent with these findings, a growing body of academic research has investigated the elements of CSR that play a role in driving consumers' attributions of the company's motives. Many of these elements regard actual characteristics of the firm, the cause, and the specific CSR activity. Consumers deduce companies' CSR motives from company size (De Vries & Duque, 2018), the perceived fit between the firm and the cause (Lafferty, 2007; Pracejus & Olsen, 2004; Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004), the type of contribution (Cuypers, Koh, & Wang, 2015), the amount donated (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012), and the durability of the association (Zhu, He, Chen, & Hu, 2017).

De Vries and Duque (2018) for instance, observed in four experiments that consumers are more favorable to philanthropic actions implemented by small firms than big firms. The underlying mechanism of their observation is that as small companies have fewer resources, the cost to implement CSR activities is perceived as higher for them than for big firms, and that this higher cost involved acts as a signal of the genuine intention to support the cause. To give another example, in several studies, Zhu and colleagues (2017) manipulated the CSR donation strategy adopted by companies. They tested whether it is more effective for firms to give one big donation showing that they have the ability to support the cause —ability-oriented donation strategy—, or to offer smaller, but continuous help —effort-oriented donation strategy—. Consumers rated more favorably the effort-oriented donation strategy than the ability-one because they deduce that the company had higher altruistic motivation when more effort was involved.

A growing body of literature also highlights the essential role of communication in the field of CSR (e.g., Du et al., 2010; Samu & Wymer 2009; Tangari, Folse, Burton, & Kees, 2010). The main idea is that the way companies communicate about their CSR activities is as relevant as the actual activities implemented in influencing the consumers' attribution of CSR firm's motives. For example, Samu and Wymer (2009) investigated how consumers infer the authenticity of the company's motives by the relative emphasis (dominance) given to the cause or the firm in the communication. With various experiments, they show that a cause-dominance message drives the attribution of a higher firm's commitment compared to a company-dominance message. They additionally found that some other characteristics such as the perceived fit between the company and the supported cause may moderate the effect.

The intrinsic characteristics of the firm and of the cause are often outside the control of the marketers. For example, the CEO of a company may impose his wish to support a specific cause, or the firm may be in a market sector that *a priori* arises strong suspicions among consumers. In general,

and for such cases in particular, it seems, therefore, interesting to investigate further how communication elements may affect consumers' perceptions of the company, so as to minimize consumers' attributions of companies' egoistic motives and to enhance the success of firms' CSR activities. Specifically, in this research, we propose that the way companies frame the goal of their CSR activity may suggest how much the company is committed to the cause and thus determine consumers' support to the initiative. This framing is achieved via language, and specifically by word choices, as small differences in the words have a substantial influence on readers' message perceptions.

Semantic meaning and message persuasion

The literature suggests that the linguistic system determines the way individuals think and perceive reality (e.g., Cheema & Patrick, 2008; Mayer & Tormala, 2010; Senay, Albarracín, & Noguchi, 2010). On the one hand, the literature shows that individuals use specific words that affect, for example, their self-control (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012), motivation (Senay et al., 2010), and word of mouth (Schellekens, Verlegh, & Smidts, 2010). On the other hand, individuals interpret others' messages. The specific words adopted by the message sender have effects on listeners/readers' interpretations of the message. In particular, many authors have investigated the role played by language in persuasion processes (e.g., Charles-Sire, Stefan, & Guéguen, 2016; Kronrod, Grinstein, & Wathieu, 2011; 2012; Lee, Morewedge, Hochman, & Ariely, 2019; Packard, Moore, & McFerran 2018; Puntoni, De Langhe, & Van Osselaer, 2008; Sela, Wheeler, & Sarial-Abi, 2012). For example, specific words define the tone of a message and may determine its persuasiveness. Kronrod and colleagues (2012) observed in laboratory studies, as well as with real advertisement banners, that different levels of assertiveness in messages promoting pro-environmental behaviors are not perceived homogeneously among consumers. For those to whom climate change is an important threat, high levels of assertiveness are not only well-received but even required. For individuals who are not concerned with the issue, high levels of assertiveness are instead perceived as aggressive and thus counterproductive. In a similar vein, pronouns signal a speaker's involvement with the listeners and their needs. Packard and colleagues (2018) found with lab experiments and field data that when answering to complaints, the employees should privilege the use of 'I' rather than 'we' pronouns to signal a personal and active engagement in solving a complainer's problems.

Closer to the scope of this paper, research in linguistics and persuasion has recently been interested in investigating the effect of semantic synonyms, meaning words that in the common language are often used interchangeably, but nonetheless are distinct by subtle differences in the

information they provide (Cheema & Patrick, 2008; Mayer & Tormala, 2010; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012). For example, with three experiments Mayer and Tormala (2010) show that introducing a persuasive message by ‘I think’ or by ‘I feel’ is differentially effective on consumers. The ‘I think’ framing refers to a cognitive evaluation whereas ‘I feel’ results in an affective judgment on the topic. The greatest persuasive effect is achieved when the message framing matches the listeners’ orientation. The ‘I think’ (cognitive) framing is more effective on cognitively oriented recipients than on affectively oriented ones. The opposite is true for ‘I feel’ (affective) framing. These orientations can be both a dispositional characteristic and a situational reaction primed by external stimuli. Another example is the study of Cheema and Patrick (2008) where the authors manipulated the description of a coupon’s reduction window while keeping the actual time available for reduction constant. Consumers’ evaluations and usage of the coupon was determined by whether it could be used ‘anytime between’ or ‘only between.’ They theorized that ‘anytime’ conveys an expansive frame that draws attention to the feasibility of taking advantage of the promotion, whereas ‘only’ conveys a restrictive frame, being perceived as less ambiguous and more precise. The effect of the two framings depends on the most salient concern of the consumer. “[W]hen consumers focus on offer feasibility (they have an implemental mind-set, or a low construal level), they are more likely to prefer the expansive (anytime) frame than the restrictive (only) frame”. The opposite was true when consumers are not focusing on the feasibility of the offer, such as if they have a high construal level or a deliberative mind-set (Cheema & Patrick 2008, p. 468). Overall, these two examples show how the words used by a company may determine consumers’ perceptions of the message and its effectiveness.

We build on this work to examine how, in the CSR promotion, verbal framing, i.e., slightly changing the semantic meaning of a sentence by using different verbs, affects consumers. We are interested in exploring whether the linguistic choices a company makes to express its engagement affect individuals’ perceptions of the company and thus their intention to support the CSR activity. More specifically, we want to compare the effect of two commitment-verbal framings on consumers. A company may say that they either ‘can’ or ‘hope to’ make a difference for the society. These two verbs are indeed commonly used as synonyms since they both express engagement to a goal to be achieved (MacInnis & Chun, 2007; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012). However, they slightly differ in how much the subject is sure to achieve the goal. ‘Can’ framing relates to the certainty of achieving the desired goal; instead ‘hope’ is defined as the desire of achieving an uncertain goal (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990; Howell & Larsen, 2015; Shade, 2001). We believe that the specific connotation that distinguishes these two verbal framings plays an important role in how consumers interpret the CSR promotion and perceive the company. We expect consumers exposed to messages promoting CSR

activities that adopt ‘can’ versus ‘hope’ framing to deduce different degrees of message sincerity and thus of company commitment to the supported cause.

We build our reasoning on two-sided persuasion and attribution theories (see Eisend, 2006 for a review). When consumers are suspicious about a company’s purposes or perceive the manipulative intent of a message, they activate defense mechanisms that diminish the persuasiveness of the message. In such contexts, advertisers found that using two-sided persuasive appeals was beneficial to regain consumers’ trust and increase message persuasiveness. Two-sided messages include negative information about the firm or the product and stand apart from traditional marketing communications where the product and the brand are exclusively presented in a favorable light (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Kelley, 1973; McGuire, 1961). Historically, the literature considered messages as two-sided when they explicitly refer to inferior performance of some secondary attributes of the product (Pechmann, 1992). More recently, the concept has been used to define a broader range of messages where the firm voluntarily integrates a negative argument. For example, the literature looked at sidedness in various forms of companies’ disclosures. CSR disclosures are two-sided when they “mention the positive and the negative aspects of a company’s social performance” (Jahn & Brühl, 2019, p.118). An advertisement is two-sided when it discloses the use of digital manipulation and photograph retouching (Semaan, Kocher, & Gould, 2018).

To explain why two-sided communication is sometimes beneficial, the literature draws on consumers’ expectations and interpretations of the companies’ communications. Companies’ commercial communication has the primary objective of persuading consumers and stakeholders by obtaining a favorable attitude toward the company, and the ultimate goal is to sell. Consequently, consumers expect companies to adopt one-sided persuasion by speaking highly of themselves and their products. Two-sided communication appears, instead, counterintuitive to consumers. Attribution theory posits that consumers perceive a firm that exposes negative aspects of a product or its fragilities as acting against its own selling interests, yet acting upon an internal disposition toward honesty. “Hence, acknowledging negative information in a message lets the receiver conclude that the communicator is credible” (Eisend, 2010, p. 1034). In other words, consumers attribute two-sided information to actual characteristics of the situation or product and thus conclude that what is told is the truth. Therefore, using two-sided messages usually decreases counter arguments and thus results in positive inferences about a company’s trustworthiness and sincerity (Bohner, Einwiller, Erb, & Siebler, 2003; Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Ein-Gar, Shiv, & Tormala, 2011; Rucker, Petty, & Briñol, 2008).

The use of two-sided persuasion appeals is particularly beneficial when consumers have an overall low trust of a company or when they hold specific negative attitudes or belief about the

company (Eisend, 2006). In the context of CSR activities, consumers often doubt about the reasons of the company to engage in such activities (Alhouthi, Johnson, & Holloway, 2016; Cuypers et al., 2015), thus two-sided persuasion appeals seem a promising tool to diminish consumers' defense mechanisms. Consumers exposed to two-sided communications about a company's CSR activity should infer a truer and stronger company commitment to the cause than when they read a one-sided message.

Specifically, we theorize that using a 'can' versus 'hope' verbal framing changes the perceived sidedness of the message resulting in different attributions of the company's motives. On the one hand, we posit "we *can* make a difference" as one-sided communication. Indeed, the 'can' framing exclusively presents the company in a favorable light as it signals that the firm is in control of the situation and is able to achieve its goal. On the other hand, "we *hope to* make a difference" expresses the company's wish to make an effort but acknowledges some uncertainty regarding goal achievement. This highlights a company's weakness and undermines its strength. We consider the 'hope' verbal framing as a two-sided communication. Hence, based on the above reasoning, we expect that adopting a 'hope' framing would enhance the perception of message sincerity and altruistic firms' CSR motives, and consequentially increase consumers' intentions to support the cause.

H1: When promoting a CSR activity, the 'hope' framing increases consumer intention to support such activity more than the 'can' framing.

H2: The effect of verbal framing on consumer intention to support a firm's CSR activity is mediated by the perception of the message's sincerity and company motivation's attributions. Specifically, the 'hope' framing is perceived as more sincere than the 'can' framing. Message sincerity leads to the attribution of an altruistic motivation, which in turn positively affects consumer intention to support the company and its CSR activity.

We further investigate the boundary conditions of the identified effect. More specifically, we hypothesize that the fit between the company's core business and the supported cause moderates the effect of verbal framing on consumers' attributions of the firm's CSR motives and thus their intentions to support the company. In the following section, we describe the literature supporting our hypothesis.

The moderating role of firm/cause fit

The fit between a firm and the CSR activity implemented is defined as the overall perceived congruency between the core business of the company and the supported cause (Lafferty, 2007; Menon & Kahn, 2003; Pracejus & Olsen, 2004; Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004). The literature shows that the perceived fit between the company and the supported cause affects consumers' attributions of the firm's CSR motives and thus consumers' intentions to support the CSR activity (Alhouthi et al., 2016; de Jong & van der Meer, 2017; Mendini, Peter, & Gibbert, 2018; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006).

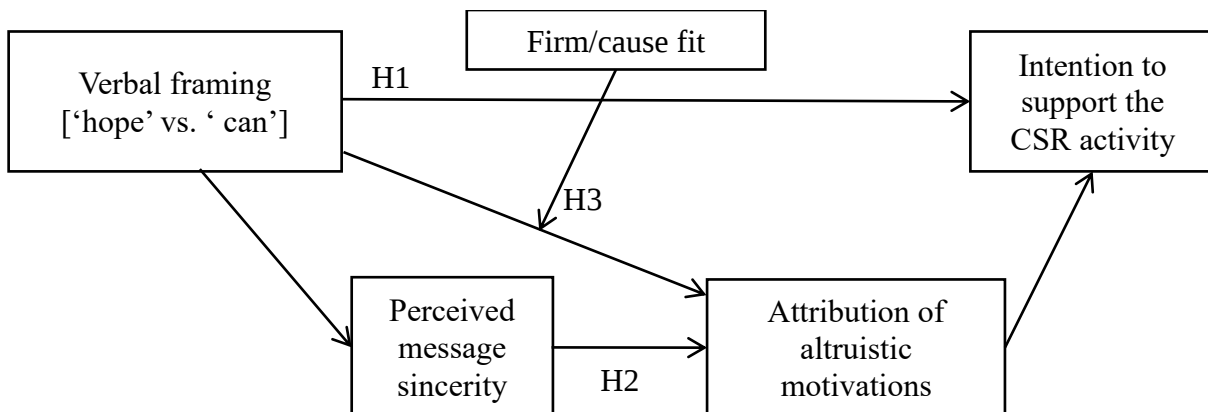
Several authors argue that message fluency theories explain the effect of firm/cause fit on consumers' attributions of the company's motives (e.g., Du et al., 2010; Ellen et al., 2006). When message fluency is high, the message is easier to process and usually translates into a favorable evaluation of the message and the company (e.g., Lee & Labroo, 2004). Instead, low message fluency tends to arouse suspicion of readers who consequentially engage in more elaborative processing in order to eventually correct their first impressions, which are commonly positive. When applied to CSR communications, a higher fit between the company and the supported cause increases message fluency and thus diminishes readers' efforts in scrutinizing the message content. In other words, in high fit cases, the logical connection between a cause and a firm's core business match facilitates consumers' elaboration of the message, allays consumer suspicion, and entices consumers to believe that the company is honestly committed to the cause (Du et al., 2010; Ellen et al., 2006; Gilbert, 1989). Instead, in the case of low fit, consumers may find difficult to deal with the incongruity between the company and the supported cause, which in turn is likely to increase message processing to find additional information about the firm's CSR motives (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Du et al., 2010).

According to the above paragraph, we expect that the fit between the company and the supported cause moderates the identified effect of linguistic variations in the message. When consumers perceive a low fit between the firm and the supported cause, they engage in high message scrutiny. So we hypothesize that the readers will pay attention to the nuances of the words' meanings, and thus, as described, they will not only perceive the 'hope' framing as more sincere than the 'can' framing, but they will also use this information to infer the firm's CSR motives. Instead, when consumers perceive high congruency between the firm and the cause, research suggests that consumers do not deeply process the message. Thus, we hypothesize that in such cases, linguistic variations are not used by respondents to deduce the company's motives.

H3: The effect of verbal framing on consumer intention to support a firm’s CSR activity is moderated by the fit between the company and the supported cause. Specifically, the increase of the fit between the company and the supported cause dilutes the effect of verbal framing. In other words, in case of low fit between the company and the supported cause, the ‘hope’ framing increases consumer intention to support the CSR activity more than the ‘can’ framing by the mediating effect of altruistic motives’ attribution. In case of high fit, instead, the effect of verbal framing disappears.

The following sections describe the studies we designed to test our hypotheses and the results we obtained. Study 1 looks at the main effect of verbal framing on consumers’ responses to CSR promotion (H1) and study 2 investigates the variables underlying the mechanism behind the identified effect (H2). In these studies, we vary the CSR activity promoted as well as the fictitious company implementing it to increase the generalizability of our results. Next, we introduce the fit between the company and the supported cause as a moderation variable, and we test the effect of this variable in study 3. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of our findings. The whole model is depicted in figure 3.1.

Fig. 3.1. The theoretical framework of the effect of verbal framing on consumers’ intention to support the CSR activity.



STUDY 1

The purpose of this study is to test whether verbal framings differentially influence consumers' intentions to support the company's CSR activity. Through our studies, we chose to use a fictitious brand for our stimuli to avoid any possible bias due to pre-existing perceptions that respondents may have held of known brands. We also created a fictitious advertisement where the company described its CSR "plant a billion trees" program to support reforestation and invited everyone to help the company by making a donation. One dollar equaled one tree planted by the firm. To manipulate the verbal framing, the message opened with one of the two sentences "we (*can*) *hope* to make a difference" in big and bold letters (see appendix for stimuli).

This study included a sample of 80 US respondents (47.5% men) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). The cover story described the study as aiming to collect feedback about a new campaign for the fictitious company's CSR program. We asked some demographic questions to verify US citizenship. Then, respondents were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (verbal framing: 'can' vs. 'hope') and they were asked to assess their likelihood to donate a dollar to support the company's CSR program (7-point bipolar scale: *unlikely/very likely*, *impossible/very possible*, *improbable/very probable*; $\alpha = .95$). Before ending the survey and thanking respondents for participation, we measured possible confounding variables. We controlled for expectations of the program's success as well as the overall perception of the firm. Specifically, we asked how much respondents considered the firm as being capable of making a difference, how familiar they were with the firm, how much they liked the firm, and whether they considered the firm as a for-profit/non-profit organization (Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; all measured on 7-point scale).

RESULTS

We conducted various independent t-tests to control for confounding variables and isolate the effect of verbal framing. Results showed that there was no significant difference between the two conditions in terms of familiarity ($M_{\text{hope}} = 2.00$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 2.56$, $t(78) = -1.47$, $p = .14$) and firm appreciation ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.00$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 4.79$, $t(78) = .71$, $p = .48$), as well as regarding how much the firm was perceived as a profit organization ($M_{\text{hope}} = 4.28$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 3.92$, $t(78) = 1.57$, $p = .12$), and able to make a difference ($M_{\text{hope}} = 6.29$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 6.38$, $t(78) = -.30$, $p = .76$).

To test whether verbal framings affect respondents differently (H1), we conducted an independent t-test comparing the donation intention of respondents exposed to the two verbal

framings. We observed that respondents in the ‘hope’ framing condition had a significantly greater intention to donate than respondents in the ‘can’ framing condition ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.46$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 4.46$, $t(78) = 2.45$, $p = .02$).

DISCUSSION

Firms are increasingly investing in CSR activities, such as philanthropy (Cone communications, 2017). However, despite their best intentions, such initiatives are sometimes not successful in terms of consumer support and purchases. Many factors have been found to play a role in consumers’ responses to such initiatives; we hypothesized that specific words used in a message affect its interpretation. The results of study 1 support our central proposition. Specifically, we found that consumers have a higher willingness to support a firm that hopes to make a difference than one that asserts that they can do so.

The second experiment is designed to offer evidence of the mechanism behind this effect. According to the two-sided communication literature (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Kelley, 1973; McGuire, 1961), a company showing fragilities is perceived as more sincere, and this increases message persuasiveness. We theorize that verbal framings affect perceived sidedness of the CSR promotion. Specifically, with the ‘can’ framing the company affirms mastery of the situation and thus this framing is one-sided. With the ‘hope’ framing, instead, the company admits having low control on the outcome, so this framing is two-sided. We posit then that the ‘hope’ framing is perceived as more sincere than the ‘can’ framing. Consequentially, consumers are persuaded that the company holds truer concerns regarding the cause when exposed to the ‘hope’ framing than to the ‘can’ framing. In study 2, we test whether the effect we found in study 1, that is that verbal framing impacts consumers’ willingness to support a CSR activity, is indeed mediated by the perceived sincerity of the firm’s message and consumers’ attribution of a company’s altruistic motivation (H2).

STUDY 2

The purpose of study 2 is to investigate further the mechanism by which verbal framing influences consumers’ intentions to support companies’ CSR activities. Specifically, we seek to verify that the effect of verbal framing is driven by the perceived sincerity of the message and the attribution of altruistic motives to the company’s engagement in the activity.

This study included a sample of 112 US respondents (55.4 % men; $M_{age} = 31$, $SD = 10.61$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). The main structure of the survey was identical to study 1; however, in this survey, we created a scenario for a cause-related product. The company was introduced as a writing stationery producer and respondents were asked to give feedback regarding the firm's new CSR program to support reforestation. As in study 1, the message opened with the sentence “we (*can*) *hope* to make a difference” in big and bold letters. A short description followed about how the sales of the product, a pen, would support the company's reforestation project (Fig. 3.2 and see appendix for more information).

Fig. 3.2. Advertisement used in Study 2.



We asked how likely respondents were to buy the pen (our dependent variable), to recommend it, and to support the firm's future CSR programs. We asked to what extent they agreed that the message was sincere and whether they believed the company was committed to the cause (mediation variables). Finally, as in study 1, we controlled for familiarity, firm appreciation, and for the type of organization (non-profit or for-profit, 9-point bipolar scale). All variables, except where specified, were measured on a 7-point scale.

RESULTS

As in study 1, we conducted various independent t-tests to control for confounding variables and isolate the effect of verbal framing. There was no significant difference between the two conditions in terms of familiarity ($M_{hope} = 2.40$ vs. $M_{can} = 2.20$, $t(110) = .55$, $p = .58$), firm

appreciation ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.40$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 5.29$, $t(110) = .43$, $p = .66$), as well as in how much the firm was perceived as a profit organization ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.49$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 4.94$, $t(110) = 1.00$, $p = .32$).

We conducted an independent t-test with verbal framing and buying intention to test our main hypothesis that verbal framing affects respondents' responses to the message (H1). Respondents in the 'hope' framing condition had significantly greater intention to buy the pen than respondents in the 'can' framing condition ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.35$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 4.71$, $t(110) = 2.31$, $p = .02$). Additionally, respondents in the 'hope' framing condition had significantly greater intentions to support the firm's future CSR programs than respondents in the 'can' framing condition ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.60$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 5.00$, $t(110) = 2.29$, $p = .02$), and marginally significantly to recommend the product to others ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.35$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 4.76$, $t(110) = 1.91$, $p = .06$).

Moreover, we posited that the effect of verbal framing on buying intention is mediated by the perceived message's sincerity and the altruistic motives attribution (H2), so first, we compared how consumers perceived the message's sincerity and their attribution of company motives in the two conditions. The result of the independent t-test shows that respondents perceived the message as significantly more sincere in the 'hope' framing condition than respondents in the 'can' framing condition ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.84$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 5.31$, $t(110) = 2.27$, $p = .02$), but the difference was not significant for altruistic motives ($M_{\text{hope}} = 6.28$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 5.93$, $t(110) = 1.59$, $p = .11$).

Then we tested the serial mediation path using the PROCESS Macro Model 6 by Hayes (2017), with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval. We used verbal framing (can = 0 and hope = 1) as the independent variable, sincerity as first mediation variable, altruistic motives as second mediation variable, and buying intention as the dependent variable. The results show that 'hope' framing led to significantly higher levels of perceived firm sincerity compared to 'can' framing ($\beta = .53$, $SE = .23$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.07, 1.00]). Higher levels of perceived firm sincerity in turn resulted in more altruistic motives attribution ($\beta = .47$, $SE = .08$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.31, .63]). Finally, higher levels of perceived firm sincerity and higher level of altruistic motives attribution resulted in higher buying intention (sincerity: $\beta = .37$, $SE = .11$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.16, .59]; altruistic motives: $\beta = .44$, $SE = .11$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.21, .67]). With the mediating variables included in the model, the direct effect of verbal framing on buying intention was no more significant ($\beta = .29$, $SE = .23$, $p = .22$, 95% CI [-.18, .75]). The indirect effect through the two mediation variables was significant, given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .11$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.01, .27]). We obtained similar results when we ran the model on intention to support future CSR campaigns by the company and intention to share the campaign with friends and relatives (see appendix for more details).

DISCUSSION

With study 2 we tested the serial mediation model on the underlying process that drives consumers' responses to messages promoting CSR activities. We observed that readers project higher firm sincerity when exposed to the 'hope' framing compared to the 'can' framing, which in turn leads to inferring higher company altruistic motives. Message sincerity and altruistic motives increase consumer's intentions to buy the product and support the cause, as already highlighted by previous literature (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Hillenbrand et al., 2013; Vlachos et al., 2009).

Study 3 is designed to investigate the conditions under which consumers use (or not) verbal framing to be convinced of the company's commitment to the cause. Specifically, we assume that the fit between the firm's activity and the supported cause moderates the effect of verbal framing on consumers' attributions of the company's CSR motives and consequently their intention to support such activities. We expect the effect of verbal framing to be the most effective when respondents engage in a high elaboration of the message, such as in cases of low firm/cause fit.

STUDY 3

In study three, we investigate the boundary conditions under which verbal framing increases in effectiveness. Specifically, we theorize that the fit between the company and the supported cause moderates the effect of verbal framing on consumers' attributions of the company's motives and thus on their intention to support the CSR activity. We hypothesize that when consumers perceive a low firm/cause fit, they increase message processing, and thus the message's words gain higher importance for attributing the firm's motivations. In such cases, the 'hope' framing induces the perception that the company cares about the cause more than the 'can' framing. Attribution of an altruistic motivation drives further consumer intention to support the company's CSR activity.

To test the hypothesized boundary condition, we adopted a 2 (verbal framing: 'can', 'hope') x 2 (firm/cause fit: high, low) between-subject design. We kept the same fictitious firm name from study 2, but we changed the company's core business as well as the cause-related product. The company was selling premium tea and the product was a 3.5oz tea bag. To select the product, we used the same criteria as in study 1, product use, appreciation, and price. Both men and women drink and like tea and, despite it being affordable, the actual price tag can fluctuate substantially. To manipulate the fit between the company and the supported cause, we selected two causes that have different levels of fit regarding the core business of the tea brand. In the high fit conditions, the social cause

related to the purchase of the product was reforestation, while in the low fit conditions it was the education of children (see appendix for stimuli details). We based our choice on three main reasons. 1) Consumers could imagine that a tea company has higher competence in planting trees than in offering stationery and educational supports. 2) Consumers easily see the link between tea, plants, and the environment in general. 3) Many tea companies support projects protecting nature. Finally, a short description, which came along with the product, explained that for each purchase of the tea bag, the company donates 1 dollar to an NGO working for one of the two selected causes.

We pre-tested these stimuli with an online survey (Mturk; N=98). Respondents were randomly submitted to the high or the low fit condition (we tested just the ‘hope’ framing), and then they were asked to rate the fit between the organization and the cause on four attributes (7-point, bipolar scale: low fit/strong fit, dissimilar/similar, inconsistent/consistent, not complementary/complementary; Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; $\alpha = .92$). We also controlled for the perceived importance of the cause (5-points from “not at all important” to “extremely important”), as it could have been a confounding variable in explaining consumer intention to support the cause. We conducted an independent sample t-test to verify that our manipulation worked. The perceived fit in the high fit condition ($M_{\text{high fit}} = 5.65$) was significantly higher than in the low fit condition ($M_{\text{low fit}} = 5.01$, $t(96) = 2.61$, $p = .01$). Moreover, respondents considered the two causes as similarly important, the difference between the two conditions was indeed not significant ($M_{\text{high fit}} = 3.37$ vs. $M_{\text{low fit}} = 3.37$, $t(96) = .00$, $p = 1.00$).

Procedure

This study included a sample of 251 US respondents (62.2 % men; $M_{\text{age}} = 34$, $SD = 9.85$) recruited from a US-based online pool (MTurk). As in the previous studies, the cover story described the study as aiming at receiving feedback regarding a new campaign for a company’s CSR program. First, we collected some information regarding the respondents’ demographics (7-point scale). Second, the company was presented as well as its intention to launch a new campaign for its corporate social responsibility (CSR) program. Then respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions, 2 (verbal framings: can vs. hope) x 2 (firm/cause fit: high vs. low). We asked respondents how likely they would be to buy the product (7-point scale). Additionally, they indicated how likely they would be to recommend the product to others and their willingness to support future CSR actions developed by the company.

Third, we measured our mediators. We asked to what extent the message was sincere (7-point scale), and whether the company was truly committed to the cause (9-point scale). We included the same measure for firm/cause fit as used in the pre-test (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; $\alpha = .91$).

Finally, we added several control variables before the end of the survey. Since we manipulated the fit, we included a question about the perceived importance of the cause (5-point scale). Moreover, as we did in the previous studies, we controlled for familiarity with the organization, how much they liked the firm (all on a 7-point scale), and whether it was a non-profit or for-profit organization (9-point bipolar scale). We asked them if they had any comments or recommendations, and thanked them for their participation.

RESULTS

We conducted an independent t-test to examine the effect of our manipulation on the perceived fit between the firm and the cause. Results showed that the perception of fit differed significantly among conditions. The perceived fit in the high fit conditions ($M_{\text{high fit}} = 5.72$) was significantly higher than in the low fit conditions ($M_{\text{low fit}} = 5.29$, $t(249) = 3.00$, $p = .003$). Regarding the high/low fit causes, an independent t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the perceived importance of the causes ($M_{\text{high fit}} = 3.63$ vs. $M_{\text{low fit}} = 3.57$, $t(249) = .49$, $p = .62$).

We controlled that the respondents in the different conditions were homogenous in terms of perception of the company. We ran several ANOVAs between conditions and these variables. We did not find any significant main effect for familiarity and how much respondents like the company (NS). Additionally, among the conditions, the firm was homogeneously considered as a for-profit organization (NS).

To test our main hypothesis about the effect of verbal framing on consumers' intentions to support company CSR activities, we conducted several ANOVAs. We used verbal framing conditions and fit, as well as their interaction as independent variable, and a) buying, b) recommendation, c) future support intentions as dependent variables. The results show that the main effect of verbal framing on a) buying intention was significant ($F(1, 247) = 4.39$, $p = .04$). The results of the pairwise comparison show that respondents in the 'hope' framing conditions had significantly greater intentions to buy ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.36$, $SD = .13$) than respondents in the 'can' framing conditions ($M_{\text{can}} = 4.98$, $SD = .13$; $F(1, 247) = 4.39$, $p = .04$). However, the main effect of fit and the effect of the interaction between verbal framing and fit were not significant (Fit: $F(1, 247) = .30$, $p = .58$; Interaction: $F(1, 247) = .12$, $p = .73$). The results of the ANOVAs on b) recommendation and c) future support intentions show that neither main effects nor their interaction were significant.

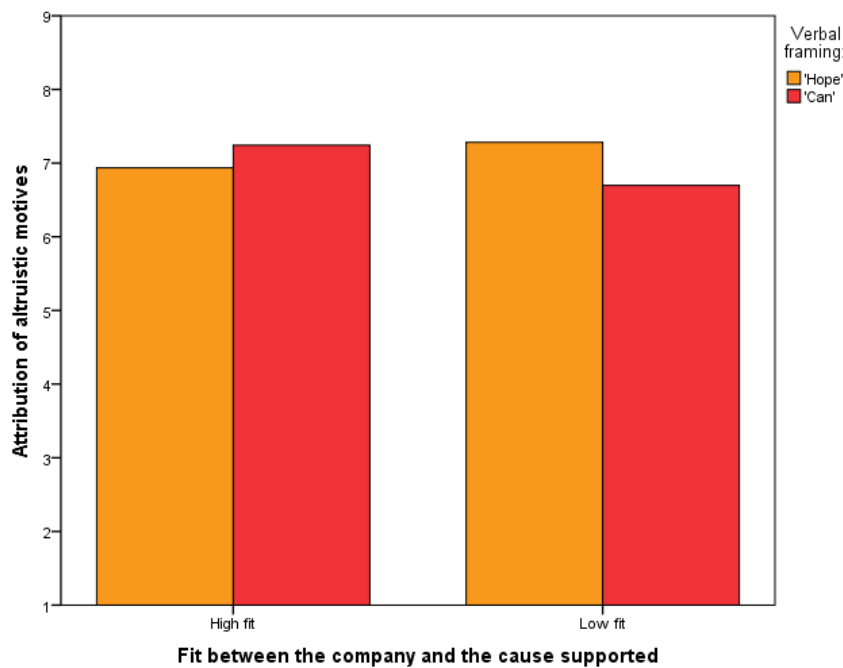
Next, we tested our second hypothesis about the mediational effect of message sincerity and altruistic motives on the effect of verbal framing. First, we conducted two ANOVAs with verbal framing conditions and fit, as well as their interaction as independent variables and with a) message sincerity, as well as b) altruistic motives as dependent variables. The results show that the main effect of verbal framing on a) message sincerity was marginally significant ($F(1, 247) = 2.69, p = .10$). The results of the pairwise comparison show that respondents in the ‘hope’ framing conditions perceived the message as more sincere ($M_{\text{hope}} = 5.57, SD = .11$) than respondents in the ‘can’ framing conditions ($M_{\text{can}} = 5.31, SD = .11; F(1, 247) = 2.69, p = .10$). However, the main effect of fit and the effect of the interaction between verbal framing and fit were not significant (Fit: $F(1, 247) = 1.30, p = .25$; Interaction: $F(1, 247) = 1.51, p = .22$).

As in Study 2, the results show, instead, that the main effect of verbal framing on b) altruistic motives was not significant ($F(1, 247) = .46, p = .50$). Moreover, the main effect of fit was not significant as well ($F(1, 247) = .23, p = .63$). However, the effect of the interaction between verbal framing and fit was significant ($F(1, 247) = 4.72, p = .03$). To further investigate this significant interaction, we examined the effect of verbal framing in the low versus high fit cases. In the low fit conditions, respondents who read the ‘hope’ framing ($M_{\text{hope}} = 7.28$) perceived the firm as significantly more committed to the cause than respondents who read the ‘can’ framing ($M_{\text{can}} = 6.70, t(125) = 2.01, p = .05$). In the high fit conditions, the difference was not significant ($M_{\text{hope}} = 6.94$ vs. $M_{\text{can}} = 7.24, t(122) = -1.1, p = .29$), (Fig. 3.3).

Finally, to observe if the whole model was significant, we tested the moderated mediation model using the PROCESS Macro Model 7 by Hayes (2017), with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval. We used verbal framing (can = 0 and hope = 1) as independent variable, firm/cause fit (high = 0 and low = 1) as moderator variable, altruistic motives as mediation variable, and buying intention as dependent variable. The direct effect of firm/cause fit on altruistic motives was marginally significant, such as that the low fit marginally significantly decreased respondents perception of firm commitment to the cause ($\beta = -.54, SE = .29, p = .06, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.11, .03]$). As expected, the interaction between verbal framing and fit was significant ($\beta = .89, SE = .41, p = .03, 95\% \text{ CI } [.09, 1.70]$). Specifically, in high fit conditions, the effect of verbal framing was not significant ($\beta = -.31, SE = .29, p = .29, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.88, .27]$). In low fit conditions, ‘hope’ framing significantly increased altruistic motives attribution ($\beta = .58, SE = .29, p = .04, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, 1.15]$). Finally, altruistic motives significantly increased buying intention ($\beta = .44, SE = .05, p = .000, 95\% \text{ CI } [.35, .53]$). In the low fit conditions, the indirect effect of verbal framing through altruistic motives (mediation variable) was significant given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .26; 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .52]$). It was not the case in high fit conditions. When we ran the

same model with the other dependent variables, intention to recommend the product to others and willingness to support future CSR actions developed by the company, we obtained similar results (see appendix for more details).

Fig. 3.3. The moderation effect of firm/cause fit on the effect of verbal framing on respondents' attribution of the firm's CSR motives (H3).



DISCUSSION

With study 3, we tested the boundary conditions under which consumers use verbal framing to make inferences regarding the firm's CSR motives. We observed again that respondents have a higher intention to buy the cause-related product when exposed to the 'hope' framing compared to the 'can' framing independently to the cause the company is supporting. As in study 2, we found that this effect is explained by the perceived message sincerity and the attribution of altruistic motives to the company. However, other elements of the message influence the attention that consumers spend on the message and thus determine whether consumers use (or not) verbal framing to deduce the company's motives. For this study, we were particularly interested in the firm/cause fit. The results of our study show that firm/cause fit moderates the effect of verbal framing on the intention to buy cause-related products. Respondents inferred a significantly higher altruistic motivation when exposed to the 'hope' framing compared to the 'can' framing only in low fit conditions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Companies engage more and more in philanthropic actions as a form of CSR (Cone communications, 2017). Yet, consumers are sometimes skeptic regarding firms' motives to engage in CSR activities, especially in philanthropic actions, and this can affect consumers' attitudes toward the company and consequently their buying intentions (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Consumers indeed place a high value on a firm's motives when evaluating the company and deciding whether to support its CSR activities (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Hillenbrand et al., 2013; Vlachos et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important for companies not only to be truly committed to the cause but also to communicate their altruistic motivation effectively. With this research, we suggest that language, in terms of the words used in advertising, provides insights about firms' motives and can have important consequences for the success of companies' CSR activities.

With a set of three experiments, we have investigated the influence of using 'hope' versus 'can' verbs to frame the firm's commitment to the cause supported by various CSR activities. We have found that consumers deduce companies' motives from the words used in the CSR promotion and this affects consumers' intentions to support the CSR activity. The 'hope' framing increases consumers' positive responses to the ad compared to 'can' framing (studies 1–3), and this effect is mediated by the perception of message sincerity and the attribution of an altruistic motivation of the company (studies 2 & 3). However, consumers rely on words to infer the firm's motives only when they perceive a low fit between the company and the cause supported (study 3). Finally, across studies we have varied the core business of the fictitious firm, the causes supported, and the CSR activity advertised — i.e., fundraising and cause-related products— to strengthen our findings and to increase their generalizability.

The current article contributes primarily to two streams of research: the literature on semantic framing in marketing and CSR promotion. The first avenue of research looks at how the use of specific words in advertising may influence a wide variety of consumer perceptions and reactions to these messages (e.g., Kronrod et al., 2011; 2012; Sela et al., 2012). For example, synonyms are often used interchangeably in practice, but the specific effect of each synonym is often overlooked. Further research is demanded to increasingly understand how language affects individuals' actions as both the sender and the message receiver (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012). In this paper, we have investigated the difference between two verbs expressing commitment to a goal, namely 'can' and 'hope', and we have found that readers actually use language nuances to interpret the message and deduce the intentions of the senders, which were, in our case, companies.

The second stream of research looks at consumer perception of CSR activities such as philanthropy. This literature highlights the importance of the consumers' perceptions of the company's commitment in order to predict consumers' attitudes toward the firm and consequentially the success of such actions (Groza et al., 2011; Vlachos et al., 2009). Prior studies have identified different factors influencing consumer attribution of firms' motives, such as firm size (De Vries & Duque, 2018), and the perceived fit between the firm and the cause (Lafferty, 2007; Pracejus & Olsen, 2004; Rifon et al., 2004). This study extends these findings by empirically testing the role of advertisement language in informing consumers about the motives of the company.

More specifically, we have looked at the effect of the subtle difference in meaning between 'can' and 'hope'. We have found indeed that readers perceive a difference between the two verbs, and this has implications on the readers' opinions of the firm and their willingness to support the CSR activity. The 'hope' framing acknowledges the uncertainty regarding goal achievement and expresses firms' weaknesses. In light of two-sided communication (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Kelley, 1973; McGuire, 1961), the use of this verb induces the perception of higher message sincerity compared to the certain 'can' framing. Message sincerity, in turn, increases consumers' perceptions that the firm is truly concerned with the cause and thus their willingness to support the CSR activity.

This research also provides interesting managerial implications. Nowadays, companies receive political and societal pressure to operate responsibly and sustainably. Besides an improvement of the different aspects of internal operations, firms are also involved more and more in various philanthropic actions as forms of CSR. A better understanding of consumers' responses to such initiatives helps to maximize the societal benefits of these actions as well as to reward firms by more positive consumer evaluations and higher intentions to buy.

Prior research offers guidance regarding structural choices to implement a successful CSR. However, we suggest that the words used in advertising play an important role on the effectiveness of CSR and cause-related marketing. The choice of the words is particularly relevant when other external conditions constrain the choice of the activity to implement and the cause to support. To reduce consumers' defense mechanisms and increase the perception of a firm's altruistic motives, companies should adopt a more sincere tone by emphasizing their willingness to contribute to the society rather than claiming that they can solve the problem, for example, as we unveiled, by using a 'hope' framing.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In the following section, we identify some limitations of our work along with our suggestions for further research. In our paper, we were primarily interested in how consumers interpret the message and what type of inferences they make regarding the company. However, the ultimate scope of marketing research is to understand ways to increase consumers' appreciation of the firm and their intention to buy the products. We just included measures of intention to buy. Yet, the three studies were conducted online, fictitious companies were adopted, and respondents were not purchasing an actual product. Both research and practice would benefit by replicating the effect in a real setting.

We further offer evidence regarding the mechanism that underlies the different effects of 'hope' or 'can' framings. However, future research may uncover additional effects of these verbal framings. For example, the literature in psychology suggests that individuals evaluate and form impressions of the communicator based on who the communicator accounts for his successes (Hareli & Weiner, 2000). When a subject downplays his role in goal achievement, he is often perceived as modest and humble. Instead, when a subject boasts about his capacity to justify success, he may be perceived as arrogant. In our context, given that 'can' connotes the assessment of the firm's capability to achieve the goal, it may result in signaling arrogance. Instead, 'hope' connotes the firm's uncertainty regarding the achievability of the goal. Thus it may result in signaling modesty and humility. Future research could test whether individuals do actually form impressions of the firm's personality based on the advertising content as they do at an individual level in conversations. Moreover, the literature shows that both arrogance and humility may enhance positive consumers' responses (e.g., Maldonado, Vera, & Ramos, 2018; Munichor & Steinhart, 2016). Therefore, if the verbal framing affects the impression of a firm's arrogance or humility, it would be interesting to untangle the effect of these impressions on consumers' intentions to buy.

Moreover, we used diverse philanthropic actions and found consistent evidence for the effect of verbal framing. Yet, the focus of our paper was limited to the specific context of CSR activities. Further research could broaden our findings, testing the effect of verbal framing in other kinds of company communications. Additionally, cross-cultural studies may highlight differences in terms of consumers' perception of companies. Countries may have stricter or softer regulations than in U.S., and this may affect consumers' attention to firms' communications. For example, business in Europe is much more scrutinized than in U.S. As a consequence, consumers might either trust or, on the opposite, scrutinize more the companies in such countries compared to U.S. In the first case, verbal framing would have a small effect on consumers' perception of the companies. In the second case, the words a company uses would gain even more importance.

Future research may also investigate deeper the interaction between verbal framing and the perceived fit between the company and the cause. According to previous findings, the perceived fit between the company and the cause seems to determine the message fluency and consequently the effort that individuals put in elaborating the message (e.g., Du et al., 2010; Ellen et al., 2006). Because we observed that the firm/cause fit moderates the effect of verbal framing on buying intention, it would be interesting to also verify whether the message fluency hypothesis can explain the identified moderation effect.

Additional avenues of research can be found not only on the topic of the message but also on the structure of the message itself. What are the structural boundary conditions to maximize the effect of words? We manipulated verbal framing in the first sentence of the message that functioned as the title of the ad, but it is unknown whether we would have obtained the same results by manipulating secondary components of the message such as the description following the title.

In the current research, we reveal the perceptual and behavioral consequences of the semantic meanings of ‘hope’ versus ‘can’. However, it is possible to think to almost infinite pairs of words that are used interchangeably in the common language, but that can instead activate different interpretations, processes and consequently outcomes. The linguistic literature has interesting avenues of research not only in the study of a specific language but also among languages (Puntoni et al., 2008). It would be also extremely enriching to examine whether the effect of semantic framing is replicable across languages or if each culture builds specific connotations to words that account for different effects. For example, in the U.S. both ‘can’ and ‘hope’ have strong political connotations that may have influenced our results.

APPENDIX CHAPTER 3

Study 1

Introduction

On the next page, you will read our fundraising advertisement.

Please look at the ad carefully. We value your feedback as we begin to market this advertisement to the public.

We are a firm who cares about the future of our planet!

Conditions

WE HOPE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



WE ALL SHOULD STRIVE TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WHICH MAY RESULT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF OUR ACTIONS.

HELP US AND DONATE A TREE.

*FOR EACH DOLLAR DONATED, WE WILL PLANT A REAL TREE AS PART OF OUR "PLANT A BILLION TREES" PROGRAM.

WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



WE ALL SHOULD STRIVE TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WHICH MAY RESULT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF OUR ACTIONS.

HELP US AND DONATE A TREE.

*FOR EACH DOLLAR DONATED, WE WILL PLANT A REAL TREE AS PART OF OUR "PLANT A BILLION TREES" PROGRAM.

Material preparation: Brand name and logos selection for study 2 & 3

We selected eight brand names and logos online from website offering professionally designed logos. In a pre-test, we asked respondents how much they perceived the brand as a non-profit/profit organization, and to evaluate the organization's warmth and competence (Aaker, Vohs and Mogilner, 2010) and several other attributes (bipolar scale: unappealing/appealing, bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, unfavourable/favourable, unlikable/likeable; Spears and Singh, 2004). We randomized the order of appearance of the brands. We selected the logo with the highest scores in the variables considered. Respondents perceived "Seven" as a profit organization, highly competent and had an overall good perception of the brand.

Study 2

Introduction

SEVEN is a US company committed to creating high-quality writing and drawing instruments.

Our mission is to provide the best products for our clients and for the environment.

Since 2015, we collaborate with amazing reforestation partners around the world that need our support to help get trees in the ground.

We will launch soon a new CSR programme, and before to market it to the public we want some feedback. On the next page, you will read our advertisement. Please look at the ad carefully. We value your opinion.

Conditions

WE **HOPE** TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You buy this recycled pen and we give the profits to our partners who plant trees around the globe.

Reforest the planet with us!

Please visit our website seven.com to know more about CSR programme.



WE **CAN** MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You buy this recycled pen and we give the profits to our partners who plant trees around the globe.

Reforest the planet with us!

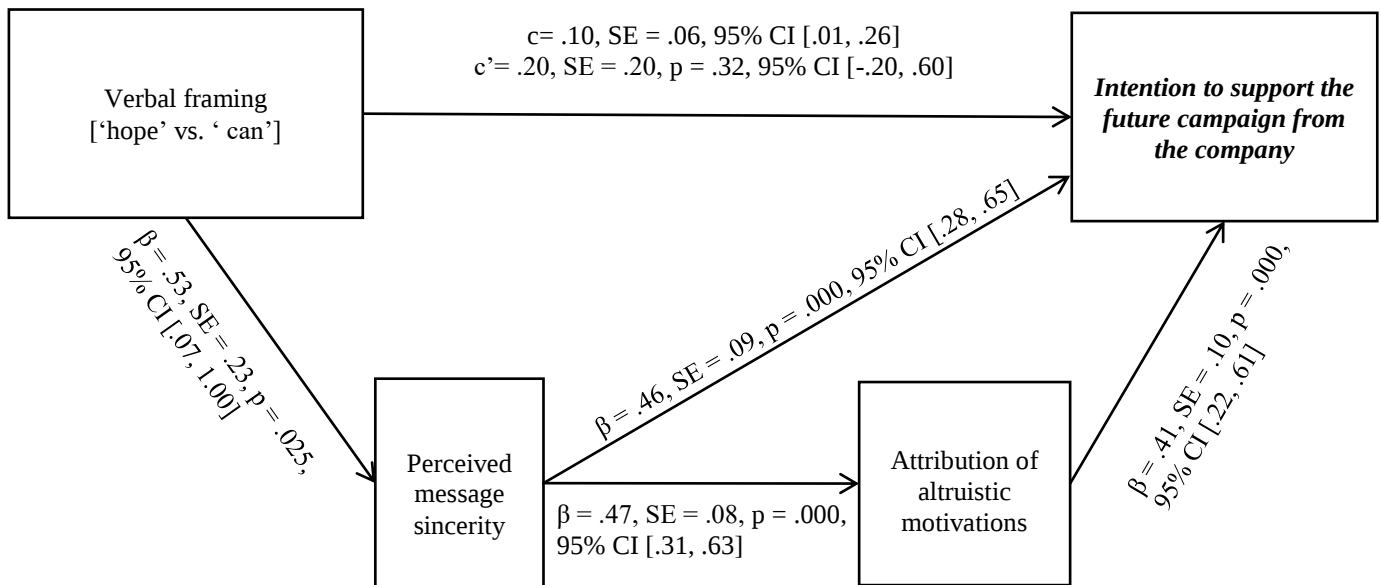
Please visit our website seven.com to know more about our CSR programme.



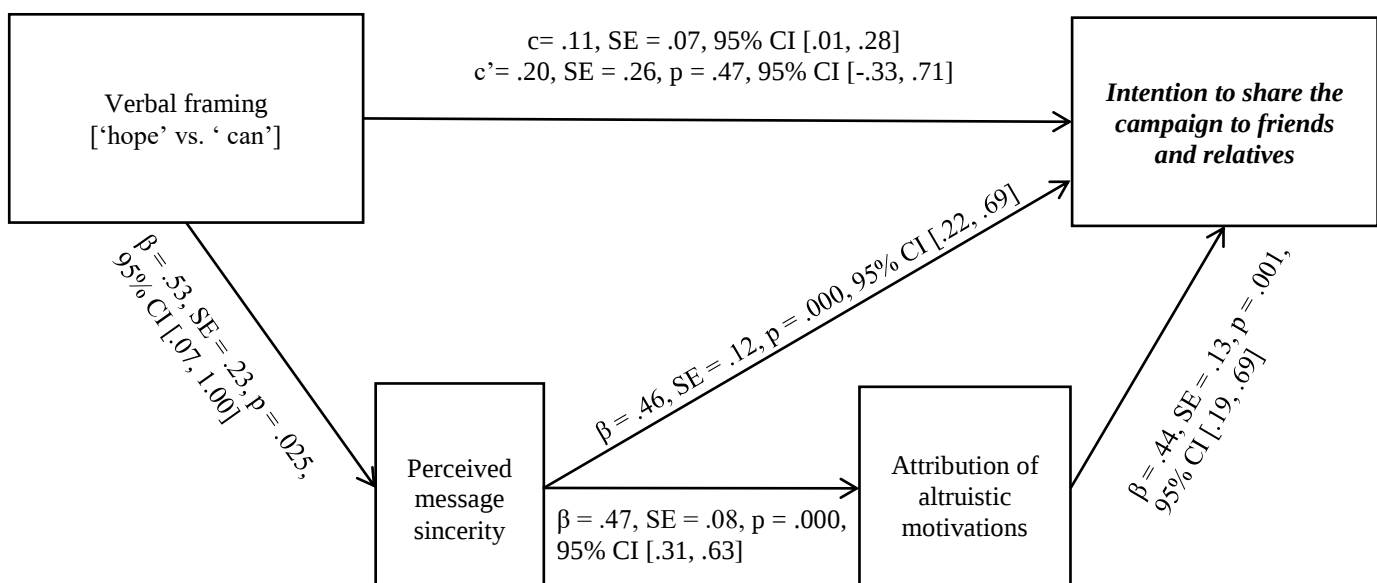
Result of the model 6 on additional dependent variables:

We run the serial mediation model using the PROCESS macro Model 6 by Hayes (2017), with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval.

We used verbal framing (can = 0 and hope = 1) as the independent variable, sincerity as first mediation variable, altruistic motives as second mediation variable, and intention to support the future campaign from the company as the dependent variable.



We used verbal framing (can = 0 and hope = 1) as the independent variable, sincerity as first mediation variable, altruistic motives as second mediation variable, and intention to share the campaign to friends and relatives as the dependent variable.



Study 3

Introduction



The story of SEVEN began in 1986 when a group of 7 friends opened a shop selling tea with the mission to introduce people to the best teas. This philosophy lies behind everything the company does. SEVEN'S co-founders cultivate teas by themselves in teas' countries of origin. This guarantees the best quality for their products.

For the past 30 years, they have spent much of their time visiting gardens and plantations, meeting farmers and producers. This has given them an in-depth knowledge of the tea regions, plants properties, and techniques to cultivate by themselves the best teas. Thanks to this constant presence in the field, they have been able to taste some exceptional teas and discover rare pluckings that are prized local specialties, but often completely unknown in our country. This inestimable knowledge is particularly reflected in the selection of rare, limited-edition and artisanal teas prepared by SEVEN.

SEVEN will launch a new campaign soon as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. Before marketing their new campaign to the public, they want some feedback. On the next page, you will read their advertisement.

Please look at the ad carefully. We value your opinion.

Conditions

High fit:



WE HOPE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When you purchase this box of tea, we donate a dollar to the NGO One Tree Planted, which supports reforestation. Thanks to your contribution, trees will be planted in high risk zone for deforestation around the World.

Please visit our website seven.com/we-hope-to-make-a-difference to know more about our campaign.



WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When you purchase this box of tea, we donate a dollar to the NGO One Tree Planted, which supports reforestation. Thanks to your contribution, trees will be planted in high risk zone for deforestation around the World.

Please visit our website seven.com/we-can-make-a-difference to know more about our campaign.

Low fit:



WE HOPE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When you purchase this box of tea, we donate a dollar to the NGO Read Educational Trust, which supports children's education. Thanks to your contribution, school textbooks will be offered to unprivileged children around the World.

Please visit our website seven.com/we-hope-to-make-a-difference to know more about our campaign.



WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

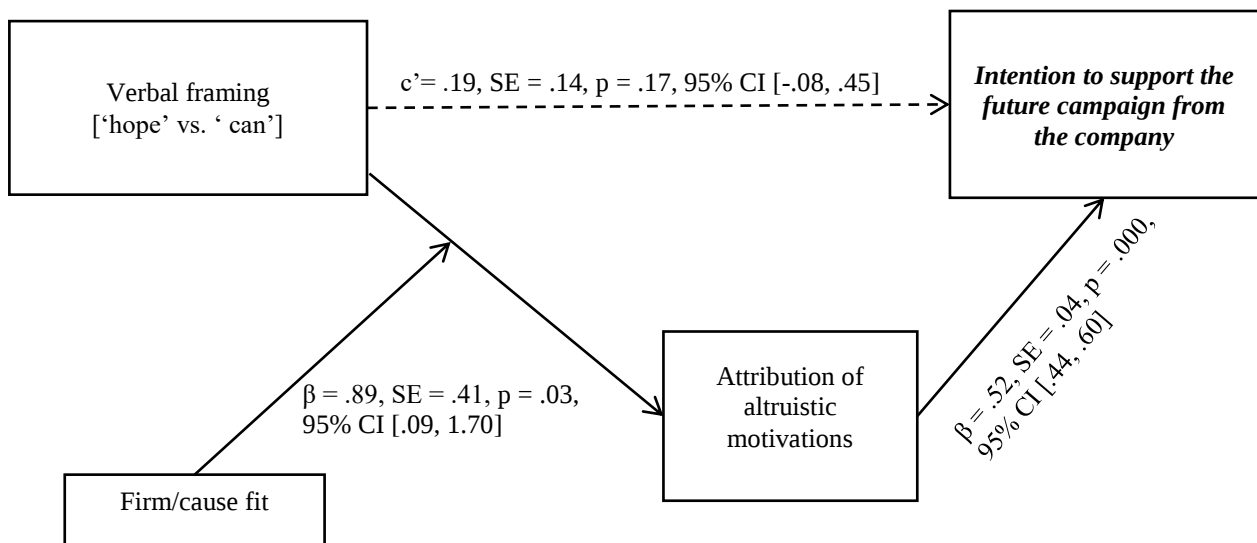
When you purchase this box of tea, we donate a dollar to the NGO Read Educational Trust, which supports children's education. Thanks to your contribution, school textbooks will be offered to unprivileged children around the World.

Please visit our website seven.com/we-can-make-a-difference to know more about our campaign.

Result of the model 7 on additional dependent variables:

We run the moderated mediation model using the PROCESS macro Model 7 by Hayes (2017), with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval.

We had verbal framing (can = 0 and hope =1) as independent variable, firm/cause fit (high = 0 and low =1) as moderator variable, altruistic motives as mediation variable, and *intention to support the future campaign from the company* as dependent variable.



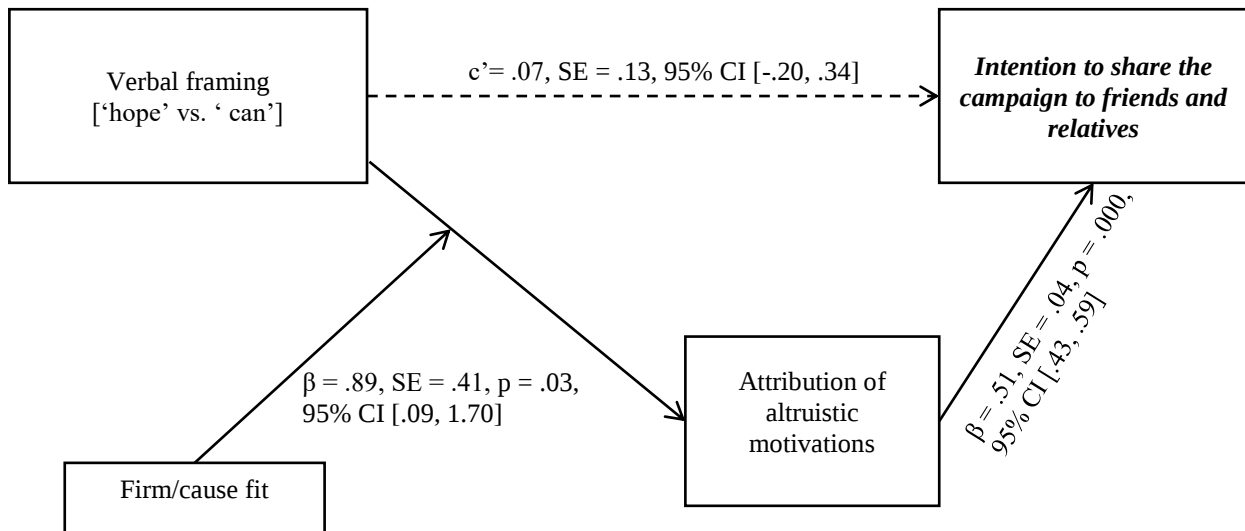
Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
W1	,4633	,2109	,0495	,8794

The direct effect of firm/cause fit on altruistic motives was marginally significant, such as that the low fit marginally significantly decreased respondents perception of firm commitment to the cause ($\beta = -.54$, $SE = .29$, $p = .06$, 95% CI [-1.11, .03]). Moreover, in high fit conditions, the effect of verbal framing was not significant ($\beta = -.31$, $SE = .29$, $p = .29$, 95% CI [-.88, .27]). In low fit conditions, 'hope' framing significantly increased altruistic motives attribution ($\beta = .58$, $SE = .29$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.02, 1.15]). Finally, altruistic motives significantly increased *intention to support the future campaign from the company* ($\beta = .52$, $SE = .04$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.44, .60]). In the low fit conditions, the indirect effect of verbal framing through altruistic motives (mediation variable) was significant given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .30$; 95% CI [.01, .61]). It was not the case in high fit conditions.

We run the moderated mediation model using the PROCESS macro Model 7 by Hayes (2017), with 10,000 bootstrap samples for bias correction and a 95% confidence interval.

We had verbal framing (can = 0 and hope =1) as independent variable, firm/cause fit (high = 0 and low =1) as moderator variable, altruistic motives as mediation variable, and *intention to share the campaign to friends and relatives* as dependent variable.



Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
W1	.4559	.2120	.0421	.8792

The direct effect of firm/cause fit on altruistic motives was marginally significant, such as that the low fit marginally significantly decreased respondents perception of firm commitment to the cause ($\beta = -.54$, $SE = .29$, $p = .06$, 95% CI [-1.11, .03]). Moreover, in high fit conditions, the effect of verbal framing was not significant ($\beta = -.31$, $SE = .29$, $p = .29$, 95% CI [-.88, .27]). In low fit conditions, ‘hope’ framing significantly increased altruistic motives attribution ($\beta = .58$, $SE = .29$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.02, 1.15]). Finally, altruistic motives significantly increased *intention to share the campaign to friends and relatives* ($\beta = .51$, $SE = .04$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.43, .59]). In the low fit conditions, the indirect effect of verbal framing through altruistic motives (mediation variable) was significant given that the confidence interval did not include zero ($\beta = .30$; 95% CI [.01, .59]). It was not the case in high fit conditions.

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GENERAL DISCUSSION

“Hope is not a mysterious force imbued with supernatural power which allows us to transcend any and every condition, but rather a creativity ability whereby we overcome limitations and transform ourselves and our environment” (Shade, 2001, p. 201). Despite the pervasiveness of hope in our lives, and the common acceptance of its beneficial effect, empirical evidence about the effect of this emotion is scarce.

This dissertation aims to provide an in-depth investigation into the role of hope in guiding behavior, especially pro-environmental actions. Indeed, although some studies have investigated the effect of hope on behaviors aiming to achieve personal goals (e.g., Peterson, Gerhardt, & Rode, 2006; Makarem, 2015; Winterich & Haws, 2011), our work offers insights into the role of this positive emotion on prosocial behaviors. Here, prosocial behaviors are defined as all the actions that benefit the environment and society (e.g., Caprara, Alessandri, & Eisenberg, 2012; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010; Small & Cryder, 2016). The literature suggests that individuals face many barriers to adopting these social actions. Therefore, it is relevant to highlight the variables that can promote and encourage behaviors for the greater good. The above-mentioned characteristics make hope especially interesting in this regard.

To unveil the role of hope in encouraging prosocial behavior, we have looked at hope from different angles. First, at a broader level, we have characterized prosocial behaviors as actions achieving long-term social and environmental well-being, and we have investigated the temporal focus of emotions as a central dimension that can help to understand their effect on individuals’ actions (chapter 1). Second, we have focused on the psychological mechanism behind the motivational power of hope (chapter 2) and, third, we have studied how hope is interpreted by external eyes and how being exposed to others’ hopes affects individuals’ actions (chapter 3). More specifically, we have tested consumers’ reaction to companies that hope to make a difference by engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

Through the three chapters, we have adopted various dependent variables (e.g., self-reported behaviors, donation and purchase intention, as well as actual behaviors, such as reading tips about how to live an eco-friendly life). We have employed correlational and experimental study designs, three forms of hope manipulation (writing, watching, and reading tasks), as well as a self-reported measurement of individuals’ feelings regarding the actual environmental situation. Importantly, although the majority of previous studies looked at the effect of incidental emotions (e.g., Wyer et al., 2019), we have, instead, investigated the role of integral emotions. Integral emotions are elicited by a situation of interest (Pham, 2007), and thus, they can be used in creating campaigns and

communications. Hence, they are particularly interesting for practitioners. Moreover, we have predominantly investigated prosocial behaviors in the environmental context, but in the third chapter, we have also integrated societal issues. Overall, we have thus collected robust evidence that hope can encourage individuals to take actions for environmental and societal well-being.

More specifically, in chapter 1, we highlight an important dimension distinguishing prosocial behaviors from other everyday actions, which is their temporal dimension. Actions in favor of the well-being of society and the environment serve future-focused goals. The results of such actions are often very uncertain and visible mainly in the long term (Ein-Gar, 2015). We suggest that the temporal focus of emotions is, thus, a relevant dimension to study the effects of emotions on prosocial behaviors. Emotions can be characterized by various appraisals and are the result of a unique combination of these appraisals. The Appraisal Tendency Framework suggests that emotion's appraisals help to understand their effect on behaviors (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007; Lerner, Han, & Keltner, 2007). An emotion guides behaviors that are consistent with its most salient appraisals. This means that to understand how emotions influence behaviors, it is possible to identify what appraisals characterize a specific emotion and so predict its effects on contexts that tap in the same dimensions.

According to the temporal focus appraisal, emotions can be distinguished according to their past, present, or future orientation. An emotion can be characterized by a past orientation such as, for example, in the case of pride and guilt (we feel pride or guilt about something that has already happened), a present orientation, such as in the case of awe and jealousy (we feel awe or jealous for something that is happening now), or a future orientation, such as in the case of hope and fear (we have hope or fear for something that has not yet happened and should happen later). As we just mentioned, prosocial behaviors are characterized by a temporal trade-off, and to engage in them, individuals need to prioritize long-term goals related to the future societal and environmental well-being. Thus, future-oriented emotions seem to align with these objectives.

In chapter 1, we evidenced that compare to present-focused emotions, such as happiness and amusement, future-focused emotions, especially hope, help individuals to consider the future consequences of their actions and thus to act accordingly. We also observed that the effect of the temporal focus of emotions overcome individuals' predisposition in terms of temporal orientation. Individuals are naturally predisposed to base their decisions either on the delayed or immediate consequences of their actions (Strathman et al. 1994; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2015), but situational primes can change, temporally, these enduring predispositions in terms of temporal orientation (e.g., Van Lange & Joireman, 2008). Additionally, as suggested by previous research (Fessler, Pillsworth, & Flamson, 2004; Fisher & Dubé, 2005; Kemp, Kennett-Hensel, & Kees, 2013; Thory, 2013; Winterich,

Mittal, & Ross, 2009), we have found also that men and women experience and react differently to emotions and that eliciting positive future-focused emotions appears particularly beneficial for men. These results are particularly interesting as previous literature suggests that a) present orientation encourages goal oriented toward personal short-term benefits, which often results in anti-environmental behaviors (Arnocky, Milfont, & Nicol, 2014; Milfont & Demarque 2015), and b) men are less likely to adopt prosocial behaviors than women (Brough, Wilkie, Ma, Isaac, & Gal, 2016; Eagly, 2009; Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). Therefore, we highlight that hope can be a valuable tool for fostering prosocial behaviors and especially for those who are most reluctant to adopt such beneficial actions.

Overall, the results of chapter 1 are in line with recent literature suggesting that emotions have the strongest effect when they match congruent aspects of the pro-social behaviors they are supposed to guide (e.g., Cavanaugh, Bettman, & Luce, 2015; Goenka & van Osselaer 2019). For example, in their study, Goenka and van Osselaer (2019) looked at the moral appraisal of emotions and found that individuals' charitable giving was highest when the moral appraisal of emotions matched the one of the cause. They have found that compassion encompasses the moral value of care and, therefore, can stimulate donation to care-oriented charities such as humanitarian relief and welfare causes. Gratitude, instead, refers to the moral domain of fairness and equality and should be used for charities that defend, for example, equal rights and justice. Our findings are consistent with these results. We show that the temporal orientation of emotions plays a role in the overall effect of emotions by changing the temporal orientation of individuals and guiding them to consider the present versus future consequences of their actions. Therefore, we contribute to the literature on discrete emotions and the promotion of prosocial behavior by highlighting the role of the temporal focus of emotions in promoting long-term environmental and societal well-being.

In chapter 2, we investigated more deeply the construct of hope by studying the psychological mechanism behind its motivational effect on behaviors. We have introduced this general discussion section by saying that hope is not magic; however, hope instills a strength that makes individuals feel that they can do something to achieve their goals. We suggest that hope gives power to individuals. Psychological empowerment is particularly interesting to explain how hope works for two contrasting reasons. On the one hand, individuals often feel powerless in front of the big challenges addressed by environmental and societal causes (e.g., Cryder, Loewenstein, & Scheines, 2013; Gifford, 2011), and it is, indeed, very difficult to have concrete evidence of the contribution that one single action can have on environmental and societal issues. It is, therefore, necessary to increase individuals' perception of *making an impact* to motivate them. On the other hand, feeling the power over the situation has been found to motivate individuals to take actions toward their goals (Galinsky,

Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Guinote 2007; Patrick & Hagtvedt 2012). Even more interesting, individuals can perceive that they are powerful and able to make a difference independently of the real impact of their actions (Patrick & Hagtvedt 2012). Thus, psychological empowerment seems a particularly promising variable to explain how hope encourages behaviors. The results in chapter 2 confirm this hypothesis. We have found that the feeling of hope increases individuals' psychological empowerment, which in turn increases prosocial behaviors.

Furthermore, we investigated the moderation role of regulatory focus on the identified effect of hope. According to regulatory focus theory, individuals have either a promotion or a prevention orientation (Higgins, 1998). Individuals with a prevention orientation are motivated by the avoidance of undesired end-state, whereas individuals with a promotion orientation try to achieve and move forward desired reference points. Individuals' regulatory focus further affects the nature and the magnitude of emotional experiences (Higgins, 2001). We have hypothesized that promotion-oriented individuals would be more keen to experience hope than prevention-oriented individuals, given that it's in line with their regulatory focus orientation. Hope, indeed, is defined as promotion focused because most of the time individuals' hopes describe their wishes and desired achievements (Averill et al., 1990; Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997; MacInnis & Chun, 2007). Instead, unexpectedly, we observed that hope is particularly powerful for individuals with high dispositional prevention-orientation. We draw our interpretation of this unexpected result on previous findings about 'prevention' hope (Kim, Kang, & Mattila, 2012; Poels & Dewitte 2008). According to this literature, hope-related goals can be framed with a prevention focus orientation and thus be more effective on prevention-oriented than on promotion-oriented individuals. Even though in our research, we have measured hope for a better future of our planet (i.e., a promotion-focused goal), the environmental situation itself is mainly described in terms of threat and crisis, so we can imagine that most people perceive it as a prevention-related concern. This could explain why the effect of experiencing hope was particularly strong for prevention-orientation individuals. In sum, in chapter 2, we unveil the psychological mechanism behind the effect of hope. The power that hope instills in individuals make them perseverant in their objectives (Shade, 2001).

In chapter 3, instead, we looked at how hope can be used in practice, joining the line of research about how to promote companies' philanthropy. The purpose of chapter 3 is, therefore, twofold. First, it contributes to the fascinating literature about the role of words in message persuasiveness. Semantic synonyms have been found to differentially affect consumers (Cheema & Patrick, 2008; Mayer & Tormala, 2010; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012) and in this third chapter we were especially interested by two verbs that are commonly used as synonyms. We investigated and compared the differential effect of 'hope' and 'can' verbs in messages promoting companies' CSR

activities. Our research highlights that consumers are more willing to support companies' CSR activities when firms *hope to* contribute to society than when they state that they *can* make a difference.

Second, the aim of this third chapter is to complement CSR promotion literature by understanding how a message using 'hope' is interpreted by consumers and how it can affect consumers' attitudes and behaviors. We observed that companies that *hope to* make a difference are strongly appreciated and receive high support by consumers. Moreover, consumers deduce more altruistic motives for companies' CSR activities when companies *hope to* make a difference for society than when they say they *can* make a difference.

We hypothesized that the positive effect of messages using 'hope' could be explained by the fact that consumers perceived the use of a 'hope' framing as a two-sided message. When companies *hope to* make a difference, they, in fact, admit that the contribution of their CSR activity is uncertain, and thus show their weaknesses. Instead, when companies say that they *can* make a difference, they adopt a one-sided message. They present themselves in a favorable light by showing their certainty about their ability to bring about change. According to two-sided persuasion literature and attribution theories, two-sided messages can decrease individuals' defensive mechanisms and thus increase their perception of message sincerity (Eisend, 2006; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973). In our studies, we have found that consumers inferred higher message sincerity when they had been exposed to the 'hope' framing (two-sided message) than to the 'can' framing (one-sided message). Message sincerity, in turn, increased consumer's attributions of altruistic motives to company engagement in the activity. Positive consumers' attitude toward the company increased their willingness to support the CSR activity promoted, as already suggested by previous literature (de Jong & van der Meer, 2017; De Vries & Duque, 2018; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011).

Moreover, we examined the moderating role of the perceived fit between the company and the cause supported as a boundary condition for the identified effect. Overall, respondents exposed to messages adopting 'hope' framing had a higher intention to support the company than respondents exposed to messages adopting 'can' framing. However, we observed that consumers used linguistic nuances to infer companies' motives to engage in philanthropic actions only when they had difficulties to see the congruency between the firm core business and the cause supported. In sum, chapter 3 reinforces the evidence about the role of communication in determining the success of companies' CSR activities. What firms say and how they say it is not just a secondary detail, but can have significant effects on consumers.

In conclusion, each chapter offers both theoretical and managerial implications that we summarize here in four main contributions. First, emotions are an integral part of individuals' lives

(Pham & Lee, 2019), so revealing emotions' functioning is extremely interesting. Despite the fact that many theories describe emotions, as well as how and when individuals experience them (e.g., Lazarus 1991; Lerner & Keltner 2000; Smith & Ellsworth 1985; So, Achar, Han, Agrawal, Duhachek, & Maheswaran, 2015), there is still much to be done to understand the variety of ways emotions affect decisions and actions. Earlier research adopted different approaches to look at the unique effect of emotions on behaviors (e.g., Nabi, 2010; Smith & Leiserowitz, 2014). They either explored the mechanism behind some understudied emotions, such as awe (Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015) and gratitude (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Grant & Gino, 2010), or compared the effect of various emotions in a specific context (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Goenka & van Osselaer, 2019). This thesis aimed to study the emotion of hope in depth with both approaches. On the one hand, we reveal the mechanism behind the effect of hope on behaviors: it instills a sense of psychological empowerment that, in turn, encourages actions. On the other hand, we compared hope to other emotions in the environmental domain. We observe that the temporal focus characterizing hope affects decisions where the temporal arbitration is decisive. Hope refers to a future situation and compared to emotions that are defined as being focused on the present helps individuals to look to the future and prioritize long-term goals.

Second, this dissertation extends current discourse in prosocial behaviors literature, and more specifically, on the link between emotions and such actions. Pro-social behaviors entail a variety of diverse and specific consumption activities. Moreover, individuals face many barriers to take actions toward societal and environmental well-being (Caprara, Alessandri & Eisenberg, 2012; Small & Cryder, 2016). Thus, practitioners, psychologists, and consumer behavior researchers have been interested since a long time to understand when and why individuals engage in specific prosocial behaviors. Our research brings attention to the temporal focus of such activities as well as on the consumers' sense of power as important aspects to understand and explore the mechanism behind prosocial behaviors. Most of the time behaving for societal and environmental causes means giving up some personal benefits in favor of long-term societal goals. We investigated whether specific emotions can encourage these long-term objectives. We have found that emotions characterized by a future orientation are the most beneficial for pro-social behaviors. Moreover, as mentioned before, individuals need to feel that they have an impact to take action (Cryder, Loewenstein, & Scheines, 2013; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Guinote, 2007; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2012). We observed further that the feeling of hope could instill this sensation in individuals. In sum, we contribute to the growing body of research investigating how emotions can encourage or hinder prosocial behaviors (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010; Wang & Chao, 2019) by unveiling the role of hope in guiding such actions.

Third, the findings of chapter 3 provide an initial glimpse of how verbal framing, and in general linguistics, may benefit to CSR literature. Specific words affect companies' communication persuasiveness (Charles-Sire, Stefan, & Guéguen, 2016; Kronrod, Grinstein, & Wathieu, 2011; 2012; Packard, Moore, & McFerran 2018; Puntoni, De Langhe, & Van Osselaer, 2008; Sela, Wheeler, & Sarial-Abi, 2012; Senay, Albarracín, & Noguchi, 2010). In communication that promotes CSR, the way a message is perceived is particularly important as consumers often doubt the motivations of companies to engage in such initiatives (Alhouti, Johnson, & Holloway, 2016; Cuypers, Koh, & Wang, 2015). Individuals support such actions and increase their appreciation of the company only when they perceive that the companies' engagement is sincere (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Samu & Wymer, 2009). We hypothesized that consumers could deduce the sincerity and real intentions of the companies from the specific words used in a message. Hence, we posited and found that "hoping to make a difference for the society" is perceived as more sincere than stating that the company can do it. We explained these results based on the two-sided persuasion literature. According to this literature, two-sided messages are especially beneficial in situations where consumers have low trust in companies (Eisend, 2006), which can often be the case of CSR activities. When a company *hopes to make a difference for the society*, it admits a certain uncertainty regarding the results of its actions, and thus it can be perceived as a two-sided message. Instead, in a comparable message that says that the company *can make a difference for the society*, the company affirms its abilities to bring a change; thus, the message can be considered as one-sided. In our research, we bring evidence that CSR researchers as well as practitioners, should pay more attention not only to what to say, but also to how to say it.

Finally, our findings can help practitioners, government, and social marketers to increase the effectiveness of their communications. Marketers, practitioners, and governments can benefit from hope appeals to increase prosocial behaviors as well as to decrease antisocial ones. Additionally, we highlight various boundary conditions to which attention should be paid. First, hope is particularly effective on individuals that are usually not inclined to engage in behaviors toward environmental and societal well-being. Second, companies engaging in CSR activities should privilege a message of hope to a statement about their abilities to help the society, especially when individuals may have difficulties to understand why the company has chosen to support a specific cause.

The findings reported in this dissertation come along with some limitations that offer interesting avenues for future research. Although each chapter has its specificities, some weaknesses are common to the whole thesis. First, whereas experiments conducted online are better at isolating the effect of the variables under study, field experiments are more informative of consumers'

decision-making in real situations. Our research would have benefited from an application in a real setting; we had instead only online surveys.

A second and consequential criticism concerns our dependent variables. Through our studies, we went further than measuring intentions by integrating behavioral dependent variables. To do so, we attempted to identify actions that are both beneficial to the environment and implementable online, such as measuring how much respondents would effectively donate to an environmental association of the money they may have gained from a lottery; and how many tips about how to live an eco-friendly life they agreed to read. Although prior literature used and validated these kind of variables (e.g., Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017), other behaviors more representative of an eco-friendly lifestyle could have been measured in a real setting, such as the use of recycling bins or the purchase of green product.

One last concern regards the construct of hope itself. Hope is an extremely complex emotion, and we feel like we have only scratched the tip of the iceberg. Our research takes initial steps in unveiling the role of hope in guiding prosocial behaviors, however, there is still much to be done, and almost infinite ideas can be considered for future research. To give just a few examples, a promising, as well as an essential avenue of research, would be to focus on what can create hope and how to generate it. Future research could focus on the content of messages and investigate how to inspire hope through key elements of messages. Future research could also expand our findings by observing the effect of hope in other contexts. In addition, it would be interesting to compare the effect of incidental and integral emotions, to see which one has the strongest effect on guiding behaviors.

In conclusion, our societies need greater engagement in prosocial behaviors and finding ways to help and encourage people to adopt them should be a priority for researchers, professionals, marketers, psychologists, and policy makers. Emphasizing the positive effect of hope is an important step in this direction.

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