

# The Power of Temporal Framing: Framing a Donation in Periodic Terms Increases Charitable Perceptions

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## Background

- Companies frequently struggle to effectively communicate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions.
- Does the framing in which companies present donation information affect charitable perceptions?
- Effect Hypothesis:** Periodic donation framing (e.g., \$1,000 donation per month for 12 months) improves company favorability more than aggregate donation framing (e.g., a one-time donation of \$12,000).

## Study 1a: Field Experiment

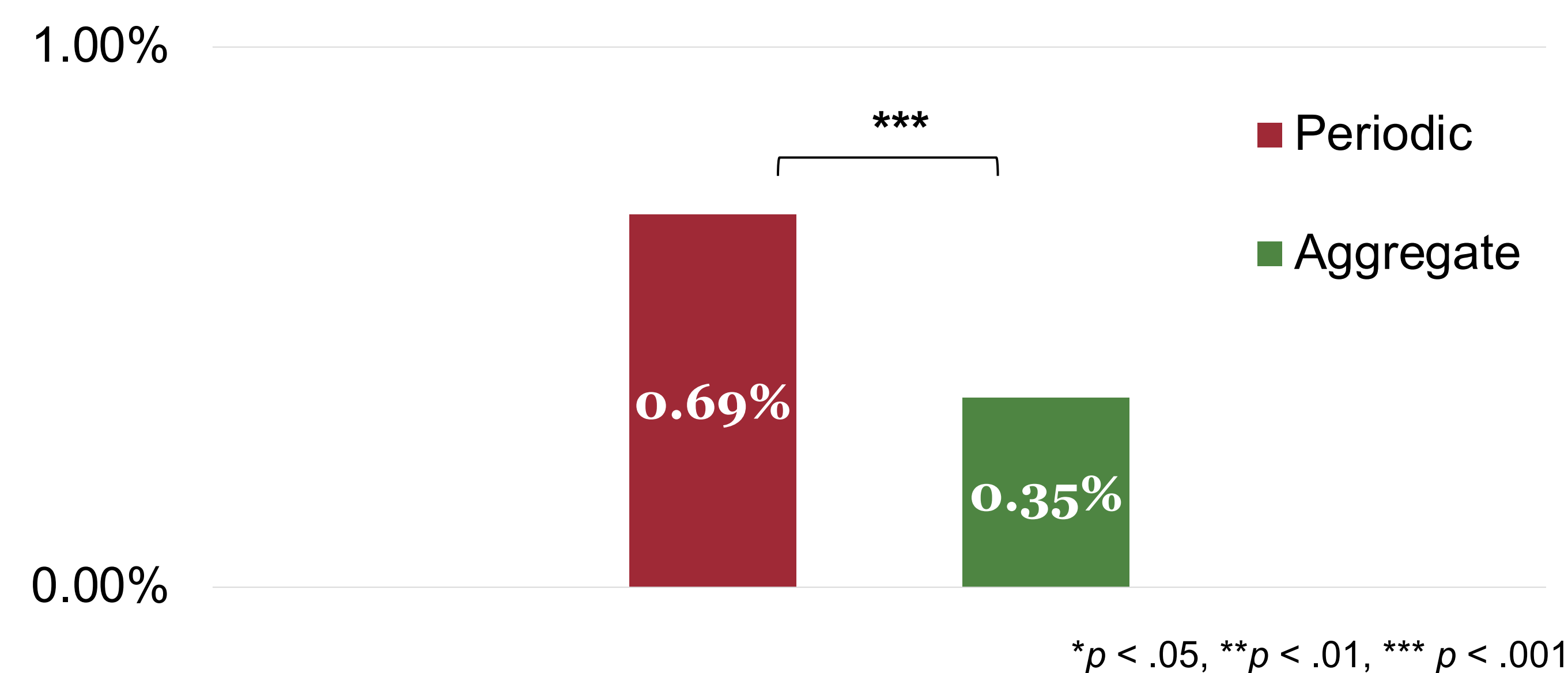
**2-cell design (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate)**  
 N = 75,514, local restaurant customers

### Email campaign

**Periodic donation:** "...donate **\$5,000 each month to Gateway Children's Charity** between September 2022 – December 2022!"

**Aggregate donation:** "...donate a **one-time donation of \$20,000 to Gateway Children's Charity** before the end of the year!"

### Clickthrough Rate by Framing Condition



**Summary:** Periodic framing of donations elicits greater customer engagement than aggregate framing for **monetary donations**.

## Study 1b: Field Experiment

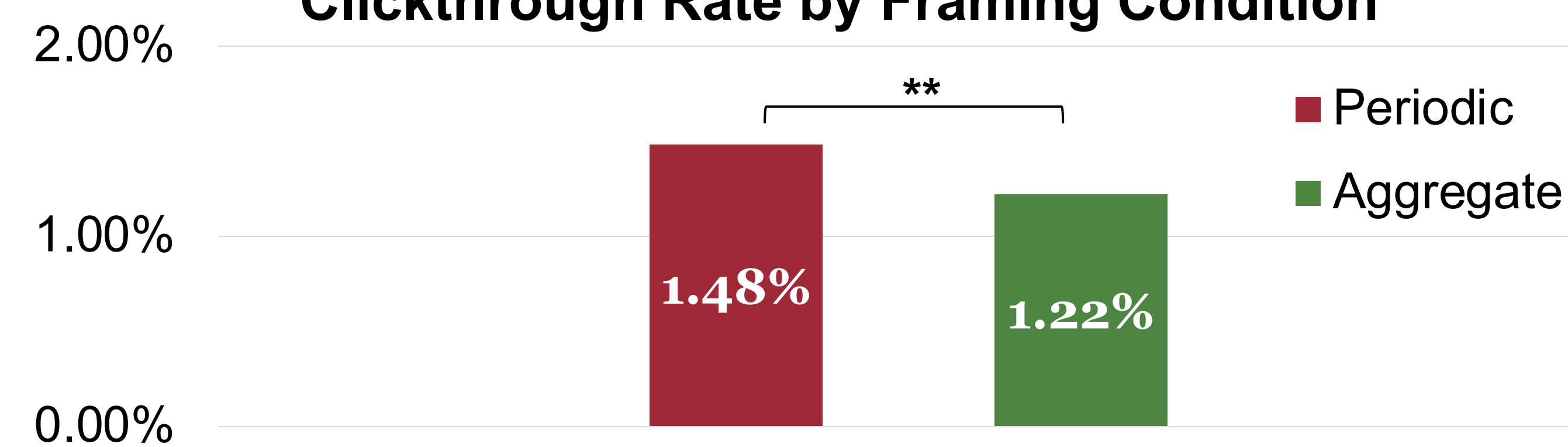
**2-cell design (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate)**  
 N = 67,576 Facebook users

### Facebook Ads

**Periodic donation:** "...donated **25,000 meals every month to local communities last year.**"

**Aggregate donation:** "...donated **300,000 meals to local communities last year.**"

### Clickthrough Rate by Framing Condition



**Summary:** Periodic framing of donations also elicits greater customer engagement than aggregate framing for **goods donations**.

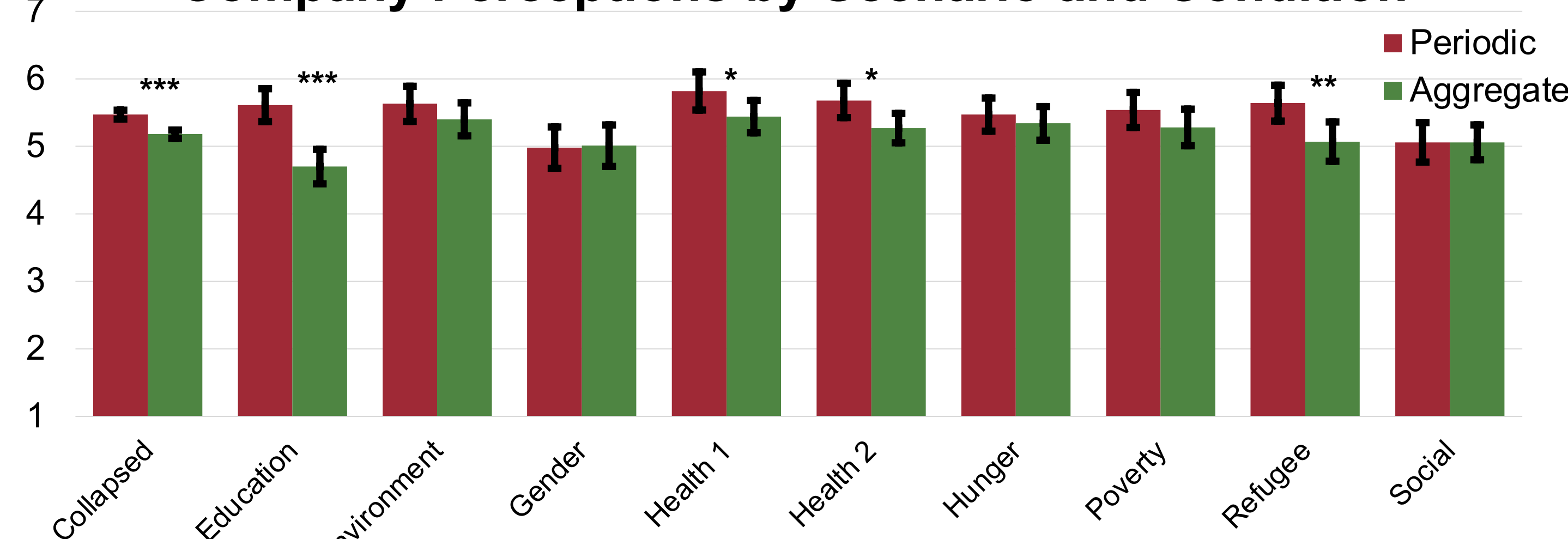
## Study 2: Stimulus Sampling

**2 (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate) x 9 (scenarios)**  
 N = 1,665; Prolific

Participants read that a company pledged to donate a portion of their earnings to support a prosocial cause either in periodic terms or in aggregate terms.

**Company perception DV** (3 items,  $\alpha = .95$ , e.g., "How much do you admire [company]?")  
 • 1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much

### Company Perceptions by Scenario and Condition



**Summary:** Across donation contexts and amounts, periodic (vs. aggregate) framing increased charitable perceptions of the company.

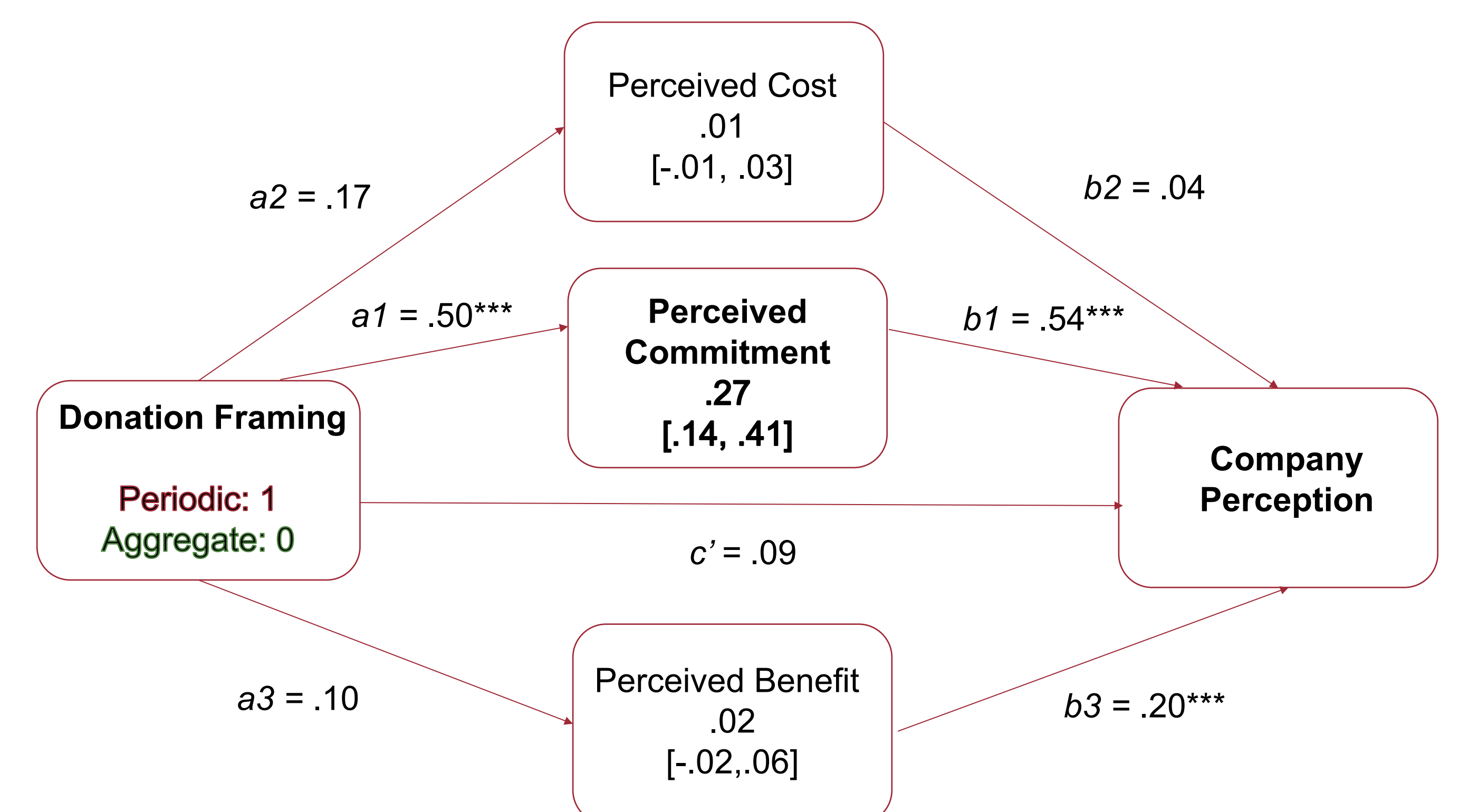
## Study 3: Mechanism

**2-cell design (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate)**  
 N = 581; Prolific

Similar design as Study 2.

Then participants answered our key DV, company perception, proposed mechanism, perceived commitment, and alternative mechanisms (perceived cost and benefit).

**Perceived commitment mechanism:** "How committed is [company] to helping [prosocial cause]?"  
 • 1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much



**Summary:** Periodic (vs. aggregate) framing of donation increases perceived commitment, which in turn increases charitable perceptions of the company. We also ruled out alternative mechanisms.

## Summary

- Across two preregistered field experiments and five scenario studies (N = 147,996), we find that company donations presented as a series of periodic donations improve favorability.
- The effectiveness of this temporal framing is driven by the perceived commitment towards the cause.