



The Reputational Benefits of Periodic Donations

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Abstract

How should firms best communicate their CSR efforts?

- Consumers are particularly sensitive to **cues of donation consistency** when evaluating CSR efforts.
- **Hypothesis:** Periodic (vs. aggregate) donations will increase perceived donor commitment, which in turn increases favorable outcomes for the company.

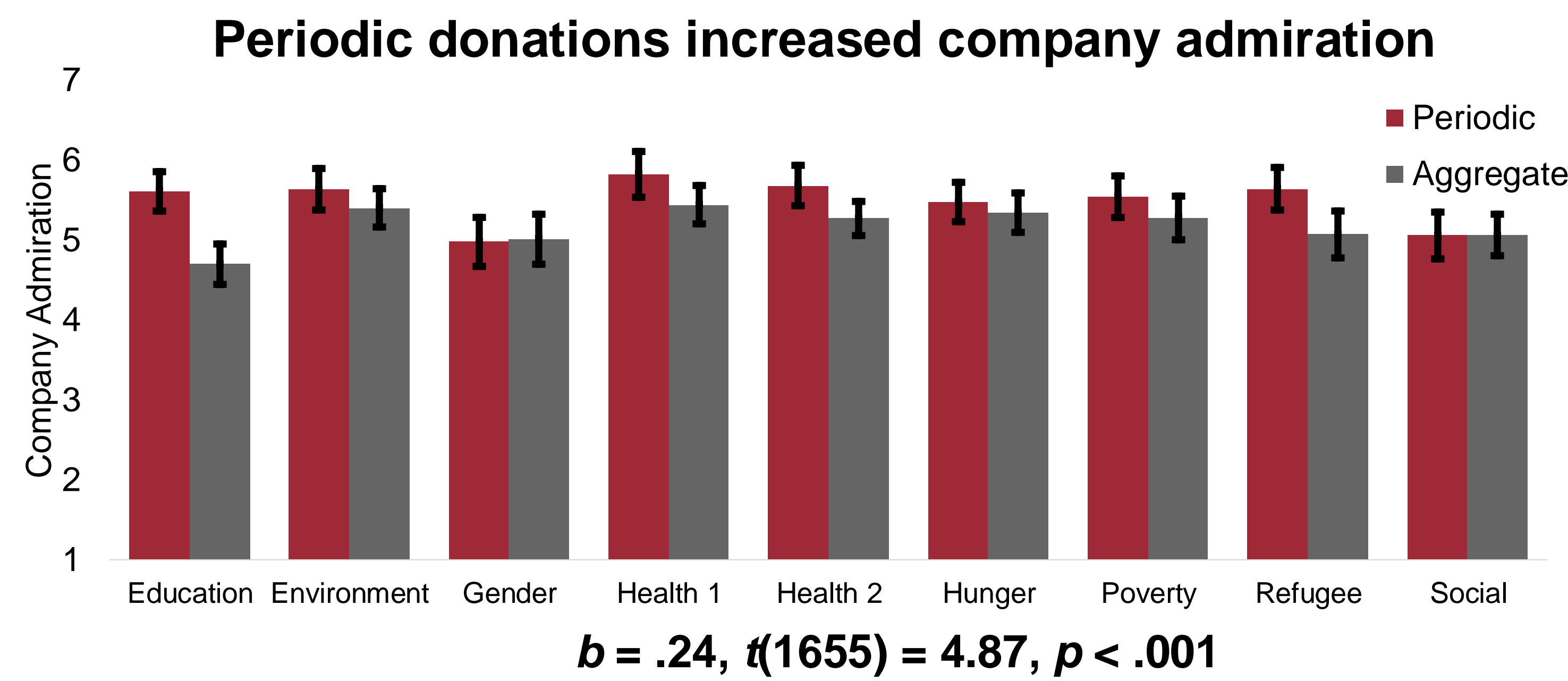
Study 2: Stimulus Sampling



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 Admiration DV** ($\alpha = .95$; 1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much)
1. "How much do you admire [company name]?"
 2. "How favorably do you view [company name]?"
 3. "How positively do you view [company name]?"



*replicated with purchase likelihood DV ($p = .01$)

Study 1: Field Experiment

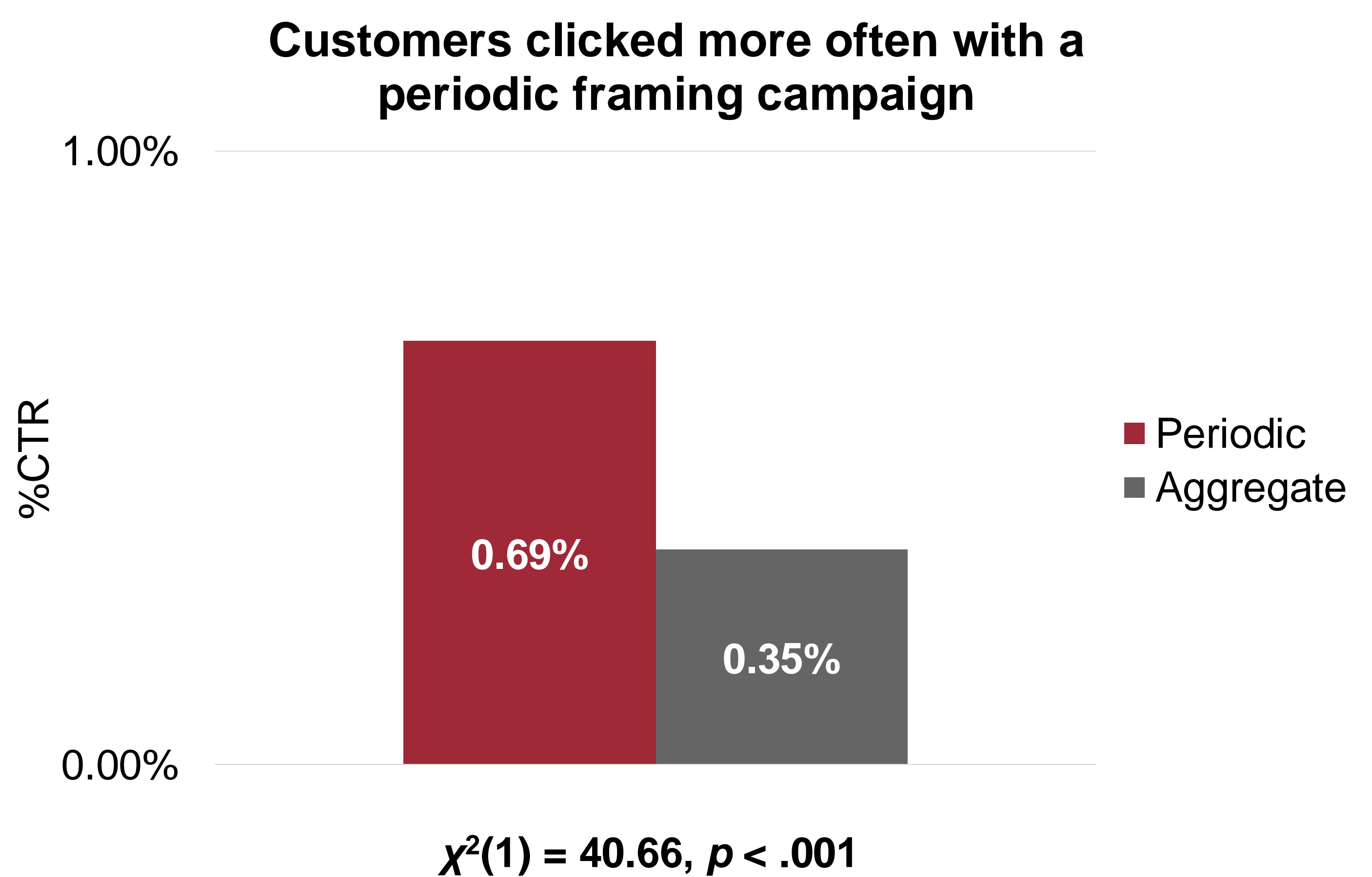


2-cell design (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate)
N = 75,514, local restaurant customers

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!"



Study 3: Moderation via Company Commitment



2 (Framing: Periodic vs. Aggregate) x 2 (Company commitment: Neutral vs. low)
N = 1,643; Connect

Periodic donation: "...donate **\$500,000 every month in 2024 to support wildlife and environmental conservation.**"

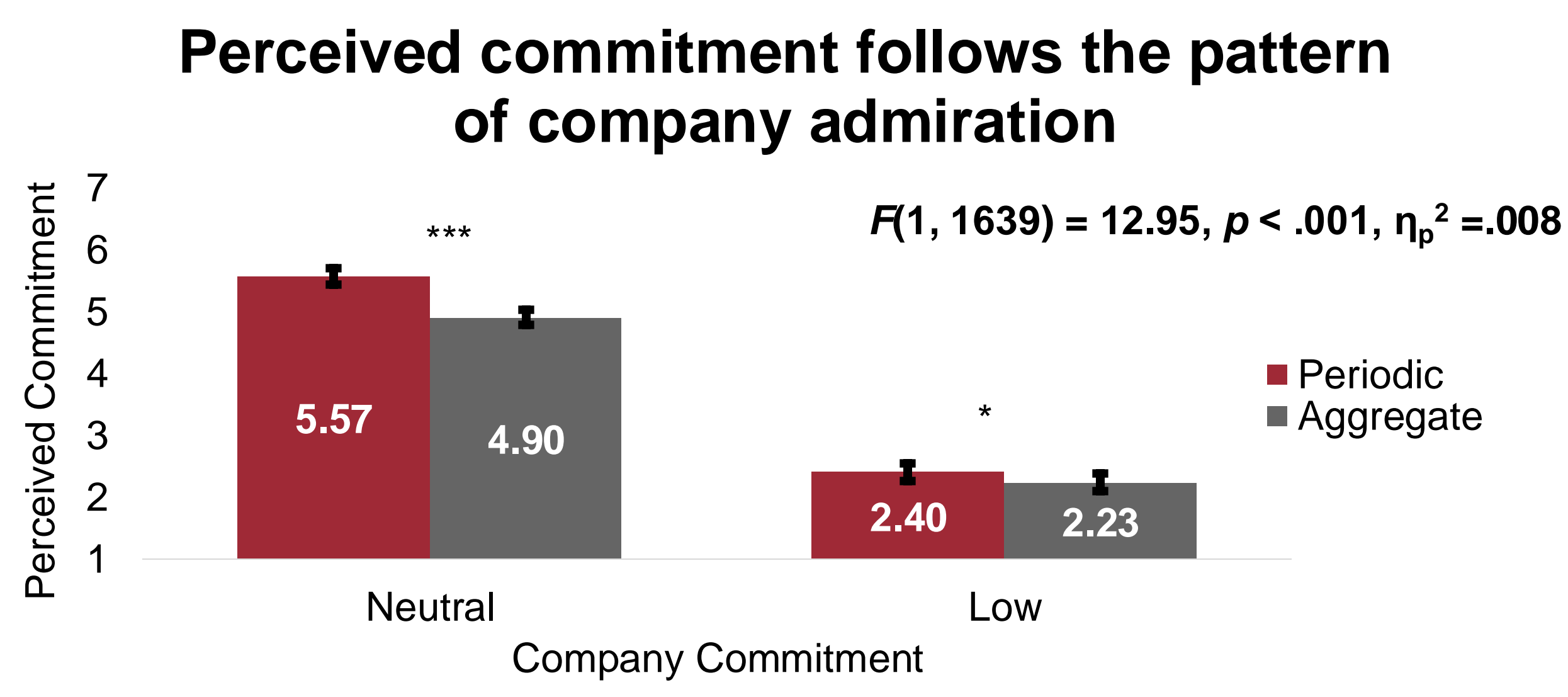
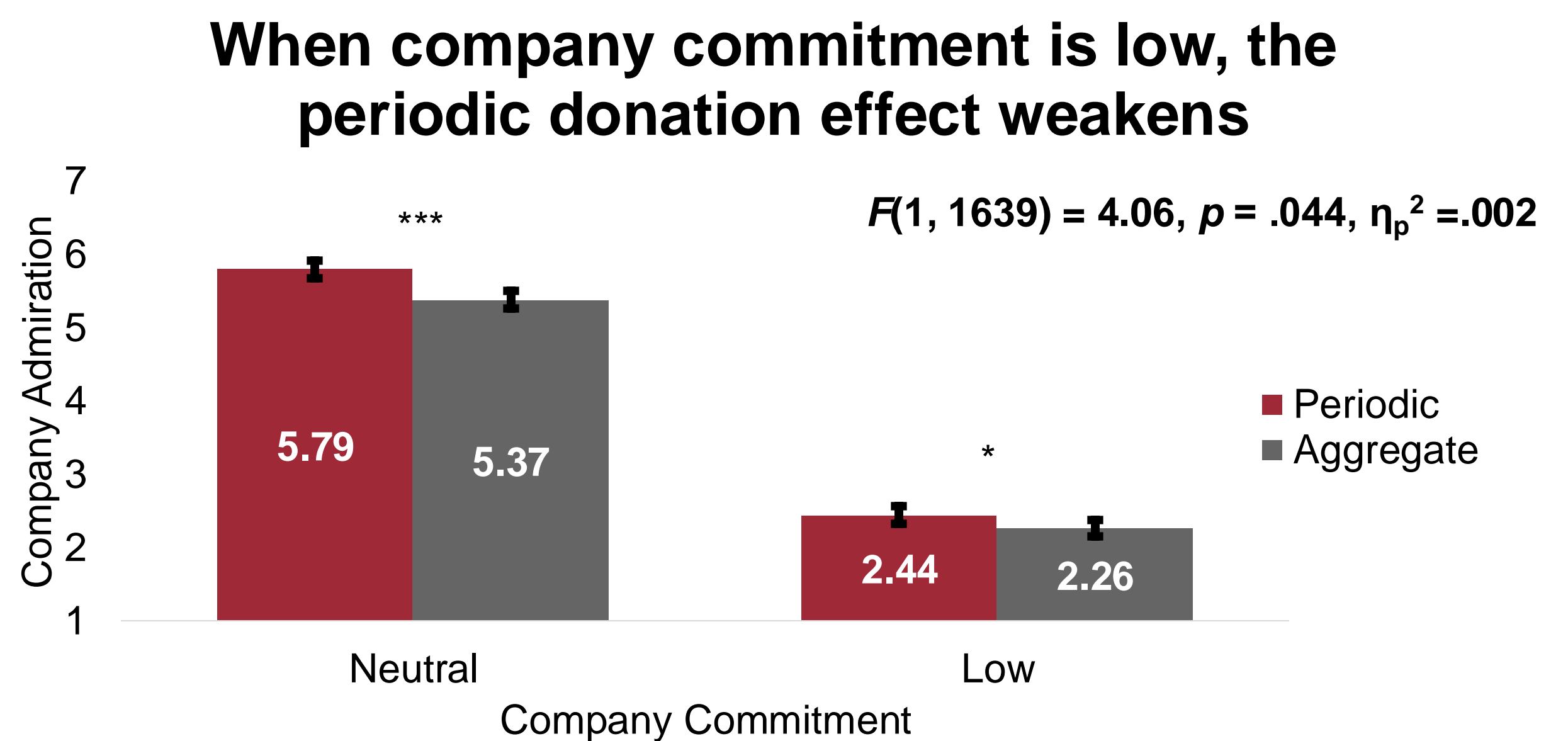
Aggregate donation: "...make a total donation of \$6 million in 2024..."

Only in the low-company-commitment condition:

"It is also true that YNA Corporation is widely known for their intentional overproduction, unethical sourcing of materials, and severe environmental damage, demonstrating a complete disregard for ecological sustainability."

Company Admiration DV (see Study 2)

- Perceived Commitment** (3 items, $\alpha = .96$; 1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much)
- E.g., "Regarding efforts to support wildlife and environmental conservation, how much would [company name]'s actions show genuine commitment?"



Summary

Across seven preregistered studies (N = 149,213; two large field studies and five online lab experiments), we find that framing donations as a series of **periodic** contributions rather than an equivalent **aggregate** amount improves **favorable judgments** of the donor company, **engagement** with the donor company, and **purchase likelihood** from the company