# Exploring the Dynamics of Cause-Related Marketing: Insights from Literature

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## ARTICLE HISTORY

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** In the present time, companies have adopted cause-related marketing (CRM) as a prominent strategy to align their commercial objectives with social causes. CRM is a mutually beneficial arrangement for the company, cause, and customer. CRM is one of the method used to communicate corporate social responsibility (CSR). The present study does literature review on CRM over past 7 years.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This investigation utilised secondary data to examine the trends and outcomes of CRM from year 2017 to 2024. The Scopus database, which provides an exhaustive compilation of peer-reviewed literature, was used to acquire the data. The research aims to analyse the existing data sets in order to quantify the impact of various CRM initiatives, identify patterns, and understand the ways in which various factors have influenced the success of these campaigns over the specified period.

**Findings:** The research discloses many important findings regarding CRM. The review identifies a number of prominent theories that are employed in CRM research, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), social identity theory, theory of planned behaviour, and attribution theory. Altruism, skepticism, product type, donation, brand-cause fit, cause involvement, and cause-type are the primary variables that CRM literature examines. These results emphasise the significance of CRM as a strategy that is derived from CSR and emphasise the necessity of additional research in a variety of sectors and theoretical frameworks.

**Originality:** This research makes a substantial contribution to the current corpus of knowledge by providing a comprehensive and focused review of CRM. The reliability and credibility of the findings are improved by conducting a literature review of authoritative sources. The results of the investigation highlight the direction of future research.

**Paper Type:** Review of Literature

**KEYWORDS:**  Cause-related Marketing  |  Corporate Social Responsibility  |  Charity  |  Consumer Behavior

## Introduction

In the past 2 decades, numerous companies have implemented cause-related marketing (CRM) as a prominent marketing strategy (Thomas & Jadeja, 2021). CRM has been one of the main marketing programs that companies have implemented under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Kureshi & Thomas, 2020). The primary difference is that CRM is CSR combined with the sale of products and services (Adkins, 1999). Singh and Pathak, (2023) highlighted that that CRM is one of the methods used to communicate corporate social responsibility (CSR) . Varadarajan and Menon, (1988) defined *CRM* "as the development and implementation of marketing initiatives that involve a firm presenting an offer to donate a specific amount to a selected cause when consumers engage in transactions that generate revenue, thereby achieving both organisational and individual objectives"(p.60). Further Lafferty et al. (2016) defined *CRM* "a marketing initiative that aims to increase awareness of societal issues by means of cause promotions and associated advertising campaigns" (p. 952).

CRM has been implemented by numerous organisations, including Procter & Gamble, TOMS Shoes, KFC, Myntra, Uber, Vistara, Tata, Hindustan Unilever Limited, and Citibank, in order to effectively achieve their long-term objectives. The first CRM campaign was launched in 1983 by American Express with the dual objectives of promoting the use of credit cards and raising funds to reconstruct the Statue of Liberty. Ultimately, the initiative raised $1.7 million in donations to support the cause (Lafferty et al., 2016).

Kotler and Lee (2005) believe that CRM is the process by which organisations link their brands to a social cause. CRM has developed into a sustainable model that serves as a link between major brands and social issues (Kothari, 2021). In 2014, the Nielsen survey revealed that 55% of global respondents expressed a willingness to pay a premium for products from companies that actively contribute to society("Doing Well by Doing Good," 2014). A similar report by Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) in 2019 reported that US companies contributed USD 2.23 billion to charitable causes, approx. 5% increase from the previous year (Fan et al., 2022).

Businesses are compelled to distinguish their identities in order to survive in the fiercely competitive market. CRM has emerged as a successful method of brand positioning and differentiation (Thomas et al., 2022). CRM has recently emerged as the preferred method of marketing communications (MARCOM) directed at consumers (Hou et al., 2008). According to Pickton and Broderick (2005), "*MARCOM* encompasses all promotional components of the marketing mix that pertain to the company's interactions with its target audiences regarding all matters that influence marketing performance". In the previous studies CRM has been shown to have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention (Schamp et al., 2023; Terblanche et al., 2023) and brand image (Mobarak et al., 2022). This emerging field has not garnered much scholarly attention, despite its substantial theoretical and practical ramifications for improving persuasion, marketing communications, and CSR research (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2018). As a result, there is a lack of comprehensive comprehension regarding the evolution of CRM literature over time. The present study address this gap by doing a literature review on this topic over past 7 years.

## Research Methodology

Secondary data was employed in this investigation to investigate the trends and results of CRM over the past seven years, specifically from 2017 to 2024. The data was obtained from the Scopus database, which offers a comprehensive collection of peer-reviewed literature. The research endeavours to quantify the impact of various CRM initiatives, identify patterns, and comprehend the ways in which various factors have impacted the success of these campaigns over the specified period by analysing these extant data sets. This method enables a comprehensive analysis of CRM practices without the necessity of primary data collection, utilising the extensive information contained in the Scopus repository to derive meaningful conclusions regarding the efficacy of CRM strategies.

## Review of Literature

**Table 1:** Review of Literature

| Authors | Findings |
| --- | --- |
| R. Patel et al.(2024) | The study's objective is to empirically determine the psychological processes, specifically the Big Five personality traits, that influence the intention to engage in CRM. Furthermore, it investigates the manner in which subjective pleasure influences this relationship. The results indicate that agreeableness is the most significant predictor of CRM participation intention, with conscientiousness, subjective happiness, openness, age, and extraversion following in that order. Conversely, the intention to participate in CRM was not significantly predicted by neuroticism, education, or income. |

| Authors | Findings |
|---|---|
| Thomas et al. (2024) | This study examines the impact of consumer skepticism on the intention of generation Z consumers in emerging markets to engage in CRM campaigns. It also recognises the mediating function of skepticism in this context. The research reveals that consumer participation intentions in CRM luxury campaigns are positively influenced by CSR, religiosity, and cause involvement, both directly and indirectly, by reducing skepticism. The study also indicates that the relationship between skepticism and participation intentions is moderated by the store format (single-brand vs. multi-brand), with scepticism having a more pronounced negative impact in multi-brand stores. |
| Lopes et al. (2023) | The paper employs a survey from Brazil and Portuguese to examine the ways in which corporate image influences the impact of cause-related marketing on consumer behaviour. The finding indicates that CRM campaigns have significant impact on customer attitudes and behaviour through brand-cause fit, consumer-cause identification, and trust in the CRM campaign. Additionally, the impact of CRM campaigns on consumer attitudes and behaviours is mediated by corporate image. |
| Terblanche et al.(2023) | The study found that low-involvement products consistently elicited more positive consumer responses than high-involvement products, and that transparent donation expression, which uses an actual monetary amount, was more effective than a percentage-based expression, through qualitative focus group interviews in South Africa. |
| Shanbhag et al. (2023) | In the South Asian context, this research establishes and validates a theory of planned behaviour questionnaire to assess purchase intentions and behaviour towards products associated with cause-related marketing campaigns. The study indicates that the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control of individuals are influenced by their underlying beliefs about the behaviour, social influences, and perceived control. Consequently, these factors influence their purchase intention and behaviour. |
| Zhang et al. (2023) | The study revealed that the relationship between CSR and purchase intention is mediated by both corporate image and consumer ambivalence, as evidenced by a survey conducted in China. Additionally, the relationships between corporate image/consumer ambivalence and purchase intention are negatively moderated by consumer ethnocentrism. |
| Thomas et al. (2022) | The study revealed that consumers' attitudes towards the brand are positively influenced by cause involvement, donation magnitude, and firm motives in the Indian pharmaceutical industry, as determined by survey techniques and SEM analysis. Subsequently, this enhanced brand attitude results in CRM purchase intention |
| Le et al.(2022) | Through survey this study showed thatperceived-CSR has a positive relationship with repurchase intention and the relationship is mediated by brand image (BIMA) and customer satisfaction (CSAT), and moderated by perceived-CSR. |
| Chetioui and Lebdaoui (2022) | Utilizing survey method and PLS SEM analysis the study found that attitude towards COVID-19 cause-related campaigns act as a mediator between consumer purchase intention, and this attitude act as identification with the cause, donation size, emotional arousal, subjective norms and purchase intention. Also the relationships between brand attitude, purchase intention, and attitude towards the COVID-19 cause-related campaigns are moderated by Islamic religiosity. |
| Pandey et al.(2022) | Based on empirical research conducted in India and the Philippines, the study determined that skepticism towards CRM continues to be a critical factor in both countries. Additionally, consumers in India, who exhibit a higher degree of global connectedness, favour CRM campaigns led by multinational corporations, while consumers in the Philippines, who exhibit a lower degree of global connectedness, prefer CRM campaigns led by local companies. In contrast, consumers in the Philippines, who have a shorter-term orientation, prefer short-term CRM campaigns, while consumers in India, who have a higher long-term orientation, prefer long-term CRM campaigns. |

| Authors | Findings |
|---|---|
| Dagyte-Kavoliune et al. (2021) | Through a survey of 413 respondents, the study found that the message strength serves as a mediator between the prominence dimensions of fit and purchase intention and is contingent upon the brand's attitude, rather than the cause's affinity. |
| Silva et al. (2021) | The study revealed that consumers' purchase intentions in CRM campaigns are substantially influenced by the company's perceived motivation, brand-cause fit, consumer-cause identification, product category, and donation framing, as determined by a survey conducted in Portuguese. Furthermore, absolute value donations were more effective for low-priced products, whereas percentage donations were more effective for high-priced products. |
| Rapert et al. (2021) | The study discovered that social responsibility and empathic concern have a positive impact on cause-related purchase intentions through the use of survey methods and SEM analysis. Although these intentions are not directly correlated with moral reasoning or past helpfulness, interpersonal generosity serves as a mediator in part of the relationship. |
| Amawate and Deb (2021) | By conducting a survey in India in this research, the antecedents and consequences of consumer skepticism towards CRM are investigated. The results indicate that the relationship between skepticism and patronage intention is moderated by attitudes towards brand image and gender. |
| Duarte and Silva(2020) | The study demonstrated that the relationship between consumer-cause identification and purchase intention is mediated by attitude, as determined by survey methods and SEM analysis. Additionally, a positive attitude is a more reliable indicator of purchase intention than consumer-cause identification. |
| Gao et al. (2020) | The study investigated the impact of the combination of visual design, message content, and benefit type on consumer engagement with CRM campaigns. The paper discovered through experimentation that the efficacy of benefit appeal in promoting consumer engagement with a CRM campaign is contingent upon the compatibility between the visual design and the regulatory orientation of the message content. |
| Choi and Seo (2019) | The study investigates the impact of the brand's equity, perceived fit, and complementary fit between a brand and a social cause on consumer attitudes and intentions towardsCRM promotions. The results indicate that companies with high brand equity experience increased participation intent and more favourable consumer attitudes when they select a high or complementary fit with the supported cause. |
| Zheng et al. (2019) | The paper investigates the impact of cause acuteness (ongoing disasters versus abrupt disasters) on consumer attitudes in CRM.The finding suggest that consumers are more favourable to products associated with abrupt disasters than with ongoing disasters. This positive reaction is facilitated by an increase in moral elevation(mediator). Also When the product-cause alignment and information transparency (moderator) are high, the relationship is more robust. |
| Natarajan et al. (2018) | The paper discovered that CRM purchase intention is significantly influenced by the brand and cause attitude, as evidenced by a survey conducted in India. Additionally, the attitude towards CRM is more significantly influenced by donations than by brand-cause alignment. Additionally, consumers demonstrated a more favourable perspective towards advertisements for CRM that targeted children's malnutrition (Horlicks) than those that targeted women's sanitary napkins (Stayfree). |
| J. D. Patel et al. (2017) | Through an experimental research conducted in India, the study shows that CRM enhances attitudes towards brands, attitudes towards advertisements, and intentions to make purchases. Furthermore, a greater level of customer involvement with the cause helps to explain the impact of CRM on the attitude-purchase intention relationship. Skepticism does not affect purchase intention or attitudes. |

Note: The Author (s)

## Discussion

The study reveals that cause-related marketing CRM originates from CSR, with American Express being the pioneer in using CRM as a marketing tool. The review suggests that CRM has a positive impact on brand attitude, brand image, and purchase intention, with the majority of the research being conducted in developed countries such as the United States. Nevertheless, CRM research presents substantial opportunities in developing countries, including India (Kureshi & Thomas, 2020)

The analysis demonstrates a predominance of empirical studies over conceptual papers, which employ both experimental and survey research designs. The FMCG and Food & Beverage sectors have been the primary focus of previous research. The electronics, service, start-up, and artificial intelligence sectors offer significant potential for future research.

Furthermore, the review identifies the primary theories utilised in CRM research, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), social identity theory, theory of planned behaviour, and attribution theory. It is important to note that the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour have been underutilised in the existing research (Shanbhag et al., 2023). Future studies can focus on this under studied theories. Altruism, scepticism, product type, donation, brand-cause fit, cause involvement, and cause type are the primary variables that CRM literature examined. Future studies can explore other variable prominent in the domain of CRM.

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## Annexure 16.2.7

| Submission Date | Submission Id | Word Count | Character Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24-Apr-2024 | 2179064 (DrillBit) | 2388 | 16819 |

| Analyzed Document | Submitter email | Submitted by | Similarity |
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| 5.1 RoL1_Kanishk_ GJEIS Apr to June 2024. docx | kanishkkoushik@gmail.com | Kanishk Koushik | 04% |



**Reviewers Memorandum**

**Reviewer's Comment 1:** The paper provides a thorough review of the CRM literature from 2017 to 2024, covering a wide range of studies, variables, and theoretical frameworks. The focus on various CRM-related factors like altruism, skepticism, brand-cause fit, and donation size adds depth to the analysis. The inclusion of key studies from both developed and developing countries is commendable.

**Reviewer's Comment 2:** The manuscript provides a comprehensive review of cause-related marketing (CRM). However, the details on how the data from the Scopus database were selected and analyzed need further elaboration. Expanding on the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to select studies would enhance the transparency and replicability of the research. Still the manuscript does a good job of identifying gaps in the CRM literature, particularly the underutilization of certain theories like the theory of planned behavior. The emphasis on the need for more research in sectors like electronics and artificial intelligence, as well as in emerging markets, shows foresight and contributes to the relevance of future studies in this domain.

**Reviewer's Comment 3:** Although the paper is quite well structured but author could have added review of the literature section could have been stronger. Also the review seems to be heavily focused on empirical studies in developed countries. Providing more detailed insights into CRM in emerging markets, where different cultural and socio-economic factors may influence consumer behavior, would add valuable context which also provide scope for future research.

**Conflict of Interest:** Author of a Paper had no conflict neither financially nor academically.

## Editorial Excerpt

The article has 4% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the authors (Kanishk & Madhulika), and accordingly, all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "**Exploring the Dynamics of Cause-Related Marketing: Insights from Literature**" both subject-wise and research-wise. The identification of research gaps is particularly strong, and the authors' focus on under-researched areas and the potential for applying novel theories is highly appreciated.This manuscript delivers a well-organized and insightful literature review on CRM, capturing key developments in the field over the past seven years. Still the manuscript would be strengthened by discussing CRM in diverse socio-economic contexts, particularly in emerging markets. After comprehensive reviews and the editorial board's remarks, the manuscript has been categorized and decided to publish under the "**Review of Literature**" category.

## Acknowledgement

## Disclaimer