The Impact of Brand/Cause Fit and Cause’s Participation on Consumers’ Purchasing Intention: A Case Study among Customers of Iranian Chain Stores

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ABSTRACT

Today, many companies employ cause-related marketing strategies that link product sales to the support of a charity to create and maintain favourable brand images. Cause-related marketing (CRM) enables consumers to make a difference in society through their purchases. Cause related marketing, on the other handle, is about leveraging a charitable brand to increase Sales, support product positioning or differentiate from competitors. It is seen as an effective way to build brands, increase sales, revitalize corporate values, create product awareness and make corporate social responsibility and community involvement visible.

Previous studies of CRM have demonstrated that it can impact on consumers purchasing intention. Overall the impacts of cause-related marketing on consumers purchasing intention are significant. This paper investigates (1) the impact of brand/cause fit on attitude toward CRM and consumers purchasing intention. (2) The effect of cause’s participation on consumers purchasing intention to CRM. (3) The moderating role of gender on the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention. The results indicate that brand/cause fit and cause’s participation have a significant positive impact on consumers purchasing intention, also gender has an influence on the consumers purchasing intention in CRM and The Impact of cause’s participation is not the same for male and female consumers in CRM. Results of this study can be used as guidelines for manufacturing firms or companies, service, advertising and Businesses firms.

INTRODUCTION

In the past several years, companies have discovered the importance of strategic social alliances, particularly in the form of cause related marketing (CRM) programs. CRM alliances continue to grow in popularity [51].

CRM has become a major corporate philanthropic trend: a company donates money to a charity each time a consumer makes a purchase. It has been widely accepted in many countries as a promising tool for building positive brand awareness since brands involved with CRM are often viewed as “generous” and “altruistic” [47].

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a common and popular form of CSR. In last few decades the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) emerged as a main theme for corporations to address; and with each new corporate quandary this trend is picking up momentum [9].

The EU’s definition of CSR states that: “it is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” [22].

According to Macchiette and Roy [43], marketers have become increasingly responsible for their role in societal problems and the publicity engendered from this discussion has translated itself into a new competition arena, largely based on perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Indeed, the notion that CSR creates value for consumers is now widely accepted [30].

Causespecificity of CSR is, for various reasons, often more appealing than a more general approach to good corporatecitizenship. CRM is not only easier to communicate but most likely cheaper and more attuned or adjustable to the specific customer segments a company targets. A cause is not only an identifier of CSR but it also creates a direct linkage between customer and company. A customer’s association with a cause is described as the “cause affinity” of the customer [3,19].
More concretely, Beise-Zee and Sheikh [5] investigated how consumers respond to CRM campaigns depending on their cause affinity. They find that CRM may have negative effects in low affinity conditions and that CRM may be particularly useful in reducing the response to negative CSR information for high affinity consumers.

Heightened criticism of corporate behavior and the demand for more ethical and socially responsible behavior has transformed stakeholder expectations of the role of business in society and its concomitant responsibilities. Arguably CRM has the potential to provide the means to use the power of the brand to publicly demonstrate a firm’s commitment to addressing the social issues of the day through providing resources and funding whilst addressing business marketing objectives. American Express introduced the term “cause-related marketing” in 1983 when it promised to make a donation to renovate the statue of Liberty each time someone used its charge card [36].

Several CRM’s structural elements such as product type [62,61], cause-type [15,23], cause-proximity [28,56], Cause importance [50,24] and fit between sponsoring company and the cause supported [34] have been postulated in the literature to influence consumers’ response to CRM.

Manufacturers and retailers, including Proctor and Gamble, Home Depot, Kay Jewelers, and Ann Taylor, have long been involved with cause-related marketing (CRM) campaigns making specified donations to nonprofit partners each time consumers perform a prescribed behavior, such as purchasing the company’s products. For example, Kay Jewelers donates $4 to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital for each limited-edition teddy bear purchased as part of its annual CRM partnership with the hospital [32,53].

Varadarajan and Menon [66] describe the key feature of CRM as is that the firm’s contribution is linked to consumers’ engagement in revenue-producing transactions with the firm. It is essentially a way for a firm to “do well by doing good” and provides several benefits to both the firm and the nonprofit organizations receiving the donations.

Recent studies have begun to investigate when consumers are more likely to buy a product associated with a cause, and have identified product-cause fit as an important variable in the success of a CRM campaign [65]. One particularly essential factor for successful CRM campaigns is brand-cause compatibility or fit [8,47]. Strahilevitz and Meyers [61] have proposed that fit between brand and cause may impact the success of CRM. With the exception of Bendapudi et al. [6], who address the issue of donor/recipient similarity in the context of charitable giving, no other conceptual or empirical work has been done in the area of brand/cause fit in CRM. Other domains, however, have found robust effects of fit on other types of brand associations.

One study begins to address the issue of participation effort but from the firm level. Ellen, Mohr and Webb (2000) examined the effect of the firm’s effort on consumers’ attributions of CSR. The authors defined effort as the amount of energy put into a behavior. Using gift literature, they manipulated the level of effort as whether the firm gives money, indicating low levels of effort or products, indicating higher levels of effort. They hypothesized that donations requiring higher levels of effort were perceived more positively and found evidence to support this.

The present study aims at: (1) understanding the effect of brand/cause fit on consumers purchasing intention towards CRM (2) understanding the effect of cause’s participation on consumers purchasing intention towards CRM and (3) examining the role of gender on the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention towards CRM.

Literature Review:

Being the pioneers in this field, Varadarajan and Menon [66] defined CRM in an article comprehensively as “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives” [66].

An increasing number of scholars begin to concern and research in this marketing mode. For example, Kalligeros [35] considered CRM is a strategy that links a company, brand, or product to a NPO for a mutually beneficial purpose, and it can enhance the reputation of a corporate entity, differentiate a brand, and build the emotional bond between the consumer and a brand. Wymer [68] analyzed the three ways of corporate philanthropy: corporate giving, sponsorship and CRM.

The fact that donations to causes are tied directly to sales of products in CRM has led some skeptical consumers to doubt the motives of companies engaging in CRM campaigns. However, CRM has still been found to positively influence consumers’ buying decisions, and improve consumers’ perception of the sponsoring company [30,45].

CRM involves the contribution to a cause by a firm which is “linked to customers’ engaging in revenue producing transactions with the firm” [66].

Dupree [20] suggests that growth of interest in CRM is due to consumers’ growing social consciousness, whereas Fellman argues that companies are taking a more strategic approach to community involvement efforts, and are seeking ways of benefiting community organizations while simultaneously furthering company
business goals. In fact, many of the world’s most admired corporations maintain a sustained commitment to various forms of CRM [18].

Rifon et al. [55] demonstrated that greater fit between a company and a cause can promote positive evaluations of the sponsoring company. Rifon et al. also extended Pracejus and Olsen’s [54] initial findings by providing process evidence indicating that company–cause fit influences perceived motives, which, in turn, impacts the credibility and attitudes associated with the sponsoring firm.

Cause-related marketing (CRM) programs emerge as communication strategy creating distinction in the marketplace. Also Bennett and Sargeant suggest the need to more closely examine national and cultural factors influencing consumer attitudes toward CRM programs.

CRM campaigns exist at the corporate, divisional, or brand level, and their geographic scope varies from regional or national to international [66]. Most CRM campaigns are transaction-based in which the organization requires consumers to purchase products in order to make donations.

However, there are many ways companies get creative in structuring CRM offers and eliciting the participation of consumers. Some of these campaigns don’t involve purchase, but do require consumer action. Cui et al. [15] note an example where Lowe’s Home Improvement stores serve as a cash donation site for the Red Cross while also providing a match on customer donations.

CRM is transactional in away that a consumer’s product purchase triggers the company’s donation. Moreover, the total amount donated to the cause depends on the product’s turnover. The implementation of CRM usually follows financial and marketing aims, and CRM may thus provide emotional, social, as well as functional value to consumers [30].

Nonetheless, there should be “at least one noneconomic objective related to social welfare” [19]. Usually, companies cooperate with non-profit organizations (NPO) who have expertise in implementing the supported cause.

Webb and Mohr [67] found that most of their sample were aware of CRM and could provide two examples, and that nearly one third said that CRM had some impact on their purchases. More recent work has developed scales to measure individual differences in attitudes toward charitable organizations and attitudes toward helping others.

Brown and Dacin [11] also demonstrate that corporate social responsibility associations can influence product evaluations. This impact, however, was primarily through overall corporate evaluations, as opposed to attribute perceptions.

Conventional wisdom suggests that a company should support a cause which is consistent with its product image (i.e., a consistent fit between product and cause) [3, 33, 39, 54, 58, 65]. Avon Women’s products, for example, have supported the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Research Foundation to strengthen Avon’s brand image. Since both the target market for the products and the cause are related to women, the relation may be described as a “tight fit” or high fit. The consistency between product and brand has been identified as one important way to obtain a fit that benefits the brand [29, 65]. If it is successful in increasing sales of the company’s product, profit-driven motives would be the easy to infer with this type of campaign [63].

Previous studies demonstrated that consumers responded positively to companies that participated in CRM campaigns relative to companies that do not participate in philanthropic activities [67]. Research has further revealed several factors pertinent to improving the effectiveness of CRM campaigns, including the level of brand-cause fit [8, 19], the consumer’s familiarity with the cause [37], donation framing [48], types of products (frivolous vs. practical products) [61], and product price.

brand/cause fit effects on consumers purchasing intention to CRM:

Generally speaking, perceived fit is the degree of similarity or compatibility that consumers perceive exists between the cause and the brand. In various research streams in marketing such as brand extensions, co-marketing alliances, sponsorships, and brand alliances perceived fit generally leads to a positive effect on attitudes [1, 55, 59].

Bigne’-Alcal’iz et al. [5] found that the perceived motive of a CRM campaign is influenced by the cause-brand fit. Cause-brand fit, i.e., partners’ congruence and similarity with regard to a supported cause may impact the alliances success and may thus be used to differentiate CRM alliances [64, 41].

Studies have shown that a high perceived brand-cause fit can positively impact a consumer’s buying choice [54].

High perceived brand-cause fit has been found to enhance brand recall [14], corporate credibility, and consumer attitudes toward the cause sponsored [55]. On the other hand, low perceived brand-cause fit may result in backlash from consumers because they might perceive the motivation of such CRM campaigns as purely for the self-interest of the sponsoring company, with the objective of generating sales. As such, CRM campaigns with low perceived brand-cause fit might be viewed as an abusive marketing tool, instead of as the pure altruistic intention of contributing to society.
CRM is similar to these other domains in that brands are intentionally associating themselves with some other object in order to improve brand performance along some dimension. brand/cause fit has generally been found to facilitate transfer of positives from an object (celebrity, core brand, etc.) to the object-associated brand. That is, fit is necessary, but not sufficient for success. Generally when people donate to a specific cause that is not part of a cause–brand alliance, it is because the cause is personally relevant to them or is self-congruent [6].

Recently, research by Lafferty and Edmondson [39] assess the impact of visual elements on purchase intention. Their research indicates intention to purchase increases when a brand's photo versus a photo of the cause is present in a CRM campaign. Cause–brand fit research further reveals that a logical fit between the cause and the brand results in more positive consumer attitudes toward dependent measures [4,38,47,58]. Involvement level assessments are also on the rise.

In CRM, Strahilevitz and Meyers [61] had proposed that fit between brand and cause may impact the success of CRM. Aaker and Keller [1] considered fit between brand extensions and core brands could enhance the evaluation of the extension when the core brand is well liked.

Pacejus and Olsen [54] used experimental methods to explore the role of fit between brand and cause on choice and purchasing intention when the cause is well-liked, and found brand/cause fit substantially can amplify the CRM’s effect above. They also replicate and extend previous research findings using choice-based conjoint. Their two studies involving 329 respondents show that fit between brand and charity can impact choice.

Gwinner [31] distinguishes between two types of brand/cause fit:1. functional-based fit; and 2. image-based fit. Functional-based fit is determined by the degree to which the functional characteristics of the company’s product is related to the cause sponsored, while for image-based fit, some aspect of the company’s image, such as its corporate history, corresponds to the image of the sponsored cause [65].

Overall, brand/cause fit is defined as the “overall perceived relatedness of the brand and the cause with multiple cognitive bases” [47]. In other words, it is the degree of acceptance of the pairing of the brand and the cause, from the consumers’ point-of-view.

Based on the theories mentioned, it is proposed that the brand/cause fit cue communicated in a CRM campaign will influence consumers purchasing intention to CRM. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a significant correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

Cause’s participation effects on consumers purchasing intention to CRM:

Cause’s participation is defined in this research as the amount of effort the consumer can participate in the CRM program.

Folse et al. [26] demonstrated that the effects of purchase quantity on firm inferences and subsequent participation intentions are moderated by consumer participation effort where higher participation requirements (e.g., mail-in proof-of-purchase) yield more negative purchase quantity effects. They argued that higher than expected consumer participation effort may activate persuasion knowledge [27] that give rise to more consumer suspicion of the firm motives for the purchase quantity requirements [12,14,55].

Most research has determined propensity and intentions toward CRM but has not varied the amount of participation effort required from the consumer. For example, some campaigns simply ask the consumer to make the purchase and the donation is made by the company. Other campaigns (e.g. Yoplait’s Breast Cancer campaign) need the consumer to actively participate in the campaign, thus duplicating the amount of effort on the part of the consumer.

Yoplait is currently busy in a campaign that needs consumers to return tag from empty yogurt containers by mail. Yoplait then donates ten cents from each lid to breast cancer research. This program builds a heightened level of effort for the consumers.

Whilst there is ample evidence that CRM programmes require employee participation, there is little knowledge about the extent to which they are preoccupied in the decision-making phase of the CRM campaign.

Liu et al. argued that some firms allow for direct participation or ‘immediate personal involvement of organization members’ in CRM decisions whilst others restrict this involvement to ‘indirect participation’ which relies on employee representation (or filtered participation) and/or individual representation where employees apply for funds on behalf of a charity of their choice. They stated that that Individual participation appears to exert a less concentrated impact on corporate legitimacy but is used as a means of catering to diverse preferences that may not be accounted for by the general CRM strategy. Doing so allows firms to send the message that they are supporting the values of specific employees even when these may not be ‘mainstream’ and/or directly part of the CRM strategy [69] and heightens perceived organisational support triggering a sense of belongingness and a feeling that the company shares similar social values [2,22].

Ellen et al. [23] investigated the effect of the firm’s effort on consumers’ attributions of CSR. They defined effort as the amount of power put into a behavior. Using gift belleslettres, they retouched the level of effort as whether the company gives money, stating low levels of effort or products, indicating higher levels of effort. They hypothesized that donations need higher levels of effort were perceived more positively and found...
evidence to patronage this. Consumers feel more positive about higher levels of participation by the company than lower levels of participation.

Participation in cause-related marketing can be either inactive or active. Inactive participation is simply compliant to purchase the product whereby the company transits along the grant. This level need low levels of effort on the sector of the consumer. Active participation need a higher level of effort on the sector of the consumer. Consumers are required to mail something back to the firm, allegorically, in order to create the donation. Based on the earlier conversation of the interests accrued by consumers through the utilization of sales promotions, it should follow that consumers should have more affirmative feelings about the participating firm and about their purpose to purchase the product or participate in the CRM program if the situation is active compared to inactive.

Generally, different campaigns have created in the marketplace that needs increased effort on the part of the consumer (e.g. Kellogg’s and American Airlines Race for the 80 Cure).

All the studies that have been done each manipulated a various level of effort on the part of the consumer. Each study gave Different results, but interesting results. Active participation was hypothesized to yield positive results for attitudes and intentions due to the hedonic benefits often gained from shopping [13]. However, when compared along with dimension of complication, inactive participation should yield more positive tendency toward the firm due to a more detailed survey of the company’s motives.

Based on the theories mentioned, it is proposed that the cause’s participation will influence consumers purchasing intention to CRM. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** There is a significant correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

**The moderating role of gender:**

Because, it is not clear how gender influences the impact of cause’s participation on consumers purchasing intention toward CRM. Hence, survey the moderating effect of gender is important to realize how gender influences the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention to CRM. Generally, gender and cause’s participation discussed as determinants of consumer perceptions of CRM campaigns.

Gender influences have been largely discussed in consumer response to socially relevant marketing activities in general [44,49] and to CRM campaigns in particular [56].

Studies further indicate that some factors like gender and donation size, the type of non-profit cause and personal relationship with a cause can influence Consumers’ attitudes and purchase intention [25].

Research has found that differences are not biologically rooted but are relied more on diversities in socially ascribed gender roles. Men and Women differ in their value, attitude, and role behaviors. With regard to responses to CRM campaigns, prosocial behavior seems particularly suitable for explaining differences [7,17,52].

Moosmayer and Fuljahn [45] found that consumer perception of firm behavior, consumer attitude to product, and consumer goodwill toward the CRM campaign differ between gender groups. Moreover, they found that gender moderates the influence of CRM on consumers purchasing intention of firm behavior.

Langenm et al were analyzed the moderating role of gender on Cause-related Marketing. Their results showed that gender significantly influence consumers’ expectation and children under 18 significantly impact consumers’ request regarding CRM efficiency.

Empathy describes the competence to perceive (cognitively) and share (affectively) the emotional state of another person [70]. By arousing feelings of care for and interest in the wellbeing of another person, empathy has a direct prosocial function. Moreover, empathy is usually considered to be a key source of altruistic and prosocial behavior [21].

Past studies on sex roles suggest that females are more favorable toward self and other oriented appeals compared to males [46]. Hence, with regards to CRM, female as compared to male is expected to give more favorable response towards CRM regardless of the cause-related marketing. This is because with regards to prosocial behavior female is likely to respond to CRM campaigns more positively than male. Also Considering gender differences in empathy, diverse studies have consistently reported stronger empathic feelings for women than for men [60]. Owing to the link between empathy and prosocial behavior, women tend to behave more prosocially and are thus likely to respond to CRM campaigns more positively than men.

It is therefore expected that gender may moderates the impact of cause’s participation on consumers purchasing intention to CRM. Based on the theories mentioned and review of relevant literature the following hypothesis is therefore suggested:

**H3:** The impact of cause’s participation is not the same for male and female consumers in CRM.

**Methodology:**

In the present study we investigated the effects of brand/cause fit and cause’s participation on consumers purchasing intention in Cause-Related Marketing (CRM). Also, was examined the moderating role of
gender on the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention. In order to analyze the first hypothesis, (ie the relationship between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention in CRM) and analyze the second hypothesis, (ie the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention in CRM) inferential two-variable linear regression was used to determine the relationship between two variables - brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention (also, cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention) by means of distance scale in which the determination rate of criterion variance by means of predictor variable was identified by $R^2$ (coefficient of determination).

In order to analyze the Third hypothesis, (ie the moderating role of gender on the relationship between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention); Leven test was used to determine the equality of variance between the groups of women and men, then given equal variances between these two groups, inferential independent T-test was used to compare the average of cause-related marketing between the two groups of male and female.

The current study, according to its purpose, is an applied research and also is kind of descriptive surveys of the area of field studies considering the data collection method. To investigate the relationship between the variables and testing hypothesis, after collecting the needed data and information through questionnaires, statistical software SPSS20 was used.

All Iranian consumers form the Statistical population of this research. Due to the magnitude and distribution of these consumers, those who bought their needs from, Lale, Shahrvavd, Khane & Kashane, Refah and Artesh Chain Stores underwent this survey. In this study, simple random sampling has been used meaning that the researcher accidentally went to these stores and gave the questionnaire to the buyers to fill out the questionnaire and some of the completed questionnaires were chosen from each region according to the Cochran formula about the estimated sample.

The sample size is very important to generalize the results to the community. There are several methods for determining sample size which among them mathematical methods are the most accurate ones for calculating the sample size.

Cochran’s formula is used to obtain the sample size in this study based on which the number of sample is equal to 384, which shows the maximum sample size in cases we may not have the exact population of the study with 5% of error.

$$ n = \frac{z^2 \cdot \sigma^2 \cdot (1 - \rho)}{\alpha^2} = \frac{(0.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) 
\times (0.05)}{0.5} = 384 $$

In this study, the data collected in the field part was done by a questionnaire and the library method was used to collect information about the concepts and theories related to the topic of the research.

The questions are based on a Likert scale from very much agreement to very much disagreement that the grading is 1 to 5. In the present study, in order to more assurance a total number of 400 questionnaires were distributed among consumers in stores. Some of questionnaires were excluded due to wrong and incomplete responses and finally 384 questionnaires were analyzed for data analysis.

In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire and the reliability of the questionnaire is obtained Cronbach’s Alpha: 0.81.

Findings and Discussion:

In this part we have tried to examine each hypothesis by using inferential two-variable linear regression statistics to test the first and second hypothesis and independent T test to examine the Third hypothesis, and made a decision to approve or reject the hypotheses.

Test of the first hypothesis:

There is a significant correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

Our H0 is: There is not a significant correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

Our H1 is: There is a significant correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

A survey on the correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention is achieved by using an inferential two-variable linear regression statistics, based on which the calculated p-value (0.001) is less than significant level 0.01, therefore, at this level, H0 is rejected. So it is concluded that the linear regression model is significant and it means that there is a significant correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention. Correlation coefficient is $R^2 = 0.77$, which represents extent of correlation between brand/cause fit and consumers purchasing intention. Given that the value of $R^2$ (adjusted $R^2$) is equal to 0.54, it is concluded that the variable of brand/cause fit to consumers in this model, determine 0.54 of the variance of purchasing intention of a product by consumers (Table 1).
The results also indicate that the regression coefficient of brand/cause fit impact on consumers purchasing intention is 0.67 and the due to the P-value (significance) of 0.001 which is smaller than the significance level of $\alpha=0.05$, the $H_0$ is rejected in this level and thus it can be said that brand/cause fit has a significant positive impact on consumers purchasing intention.

**Test of the second hypothesis:**

There is a significant correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

Our $H_0$ is: There is not a significant correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

Our $H_1$ is: There is a significant correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention in CRM.

A survey on the correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention is achieved by using an inferential two-variable linear regression statistics, based on which the calculated p-value (0.001) is less than significant level 0.01, therefore, at this level, $H_0$ is rejected. So it is concluded that the linear regression model is significant and it means that there is a significant correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention. Correlation coefficient is $R=0.78$, which represents extend of correlation between cause’s participation and consumers purchasing intention. Given that the value of $R^2_{adj}$ (adjusted $R^2$) is equal to 0.56, it is concluded that the variable of consumers purchasing intention to consumers in this model, determine 0.56 of the variance of purchasing intention of a product by consumers (Table 1).

The results also indicate that the regression coefficient of cause’s participation impact on consumers purchasing intention is 0.57 and the due to the P-value (significance) of 0.001 which is smaller than the significance level of $\alpha=0.05$, the $H_0$ is rejected in this level and thus it can be said that cause’s participation has a significant positive impact on consumers purchasing intention. In other words, the results show that, the higher participation of a cause sponsored by a firm consumers perceive, the more likely its product is purchased.

**Test of the Third hypothesis:**

The Impact of cause’s participation is not the same for male and female consumers in CRM.

Our $H_0$ is: The Impact of cause’s participation is the same for male and female consumers.

Our $H_1$ is: The Impact of cause’s participation is not the same for male and female consumers.

Leven Test was used to examine the equality of variances and due to a p-value (significance) of 0.247 which is larger than the significant level of $\alpha=0.05$, $H_0$ is not rejected and as a result the variances of the two groups are said to be equivalent, so parameter one test is applicable. Comparison Impact of cause’s participation for male and female consumers is obtained via T-test and because the p-value (significance) equals 0.001 is smaller than the significance level of $\alpha=0.05$, so the $H_0$ hypothesis is rejected in this level. Thus it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in cause’s participation between the male and female consumers. According to the averages the cause’s participation for male consumers is more than that for female consumers (Table 3).
Conclusions:
The present study assesses impact of brand/cause fit, cause’s participation and gender on consumers purchasing intention to cause-related marketing. Using an experimental study on a total of 384 respondents among Customers of Iranian Chain Stores, the current study shows that brand/cause fit and cause’s participation have a significant positive impact on consumers purchasing intention. In different research currents in marketing such as brand extensions, co-marketing alliances, corporate social responsibility, sponsorships, and brand alliances perceived fit commonly leads to a positive impact on attitudes. The order of perceived fit is the level of similarity or opportuneness that consumers perceive exists between the cause and the brand. brand/cause fit play an important role in consumers’ attitudes and their purchasing intention towards CRM. In other words, the results show that, a high perceived brand-cause fit can positively impact a consumer’s purchasing intention to cause-related marketing. The higher brand-cause fit of a cause sponsored by a firm consumers perceive, the more likely its product is purchased. The overall, the results show that a good brand/cause fit would have a greater impact on purchase intention than a poor brand/cause fit. But this study fails to identify the distinctions made between both low and high congruence and fit, explore these differences need to be examined in further study.

Marketers are expanding CRM campaigns that need various levels of participation, essentially using implications from sales promotions strategies such as rebates and coupons. Contrary to simple intuition, Predicate that consumers prefer to hold a diverse standard of participation, there is a group of consumers who degust active participation in CRM campaign. The results of this study show that cause’s participation has a significant positive impact on consumers purchasing intention.

In addition, the current study examines The Impact of cause’s participation on male and female. With regards to the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between cause’s participation and purchasing intention towards CRM, the results shows that The Impact of purchasing intention towards is not the same for male and female consumers. Male response towards CRM is influenced by degree of cause’s participation. In other words, cause’s participation don’t effect on Response of female consumers towards CRM very much. on the contrary, cause’s participation impact attitudes towards CRM for male response much more than female. Overall, female have more favorable purchasing intention towards CRM than male and that male response towards CRM is influenced by cause’s participation.The findings of this study can be directly or indirectly used as guidelines for manufacturing companies or firms, service, advertising and commerce firms and can be used by managers in designing their CRM campaigns in the future.

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