

An Empirical Study of Cause Related Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decision: Evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract: The framework presented in this paper suggests two major mediators that predict the Cause Related Marketing and purchase decision relationship; corporate image and brand attractiveness. A study of 278 students from universities and colleges of Pakistan provide basis for empirically defining the key role of above mentioned two mediators between Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision. By studying the proposed framework, clear and real understanding of Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision will help future researchers to further add new knowledge to the current understanding. For the proposed study, self-administered questionnaires developed on five-point Likert scale have been distributed in selected colleges and universities of Pakistan. To test the hypothesized relationships presented in theoretical model AMOS-18 (Analysis of Moment Structures) has been used. In the end, the important sections as conclusion, limitations and recommendations are provided. This study provides empirical results specifying the relation of Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision and extents the findings to get to the mediating role of corporate image and brand attractiveness. All the findings of the paper show the significant results of the relationship among Cause Related Marketing and purchase decision of the consumer mediated by corporate image and brand attractiveness.

Key words: Cause Related Marketing • Brand Attractiveness • Corporate Image • Consumer purchase decision • Pakistan • AMOS

INTRODUCTION

Cause-related marketing is a marketing activity in which a firm engages itself in an activity that donates a designated amount to a specific cause on which customers subsequently go for revenue producing exchange [1]. Cause Related Marketing is a corporate term in USA where it means to have a link of a company and the products it produces to a cause [2]. According to Stewart [3], Cause Related Marketing is the latest concept emerged in European markets where marketers came to know that Cause Related Marketing can bring loyalty from customers side and grow market share. Cause-related marketing has helped marketers to get to know what public actually wants as Cause Related Marketing is considered to be more sensitive and close to what public wants [4]. Duncan [5] argues that Cause Related

Marketing is actually a “mission marketing” in which a firm integrates a non-profit cause to firm’s business plans and transactions. This Cause Related Marketing campaigns all started during 1983 when American Express started promoting to donate a designated amount for a cause. This results in the collection of about 1.7 million dollars for the restoration of the statue of liberty. This made the use of card increased by 28% [6]. A lot of research work has been done in developed countries such as UK, America, New Zealand that resulted in bringing new facets regarding the Cause Related Marketing programs; the results have helped the companies to develop such campaigns that help to increase the sales and also to build positive brand image [7]. There is dearth of study conducted on this topic in developing countries [7]. The relation of Cause Related Marketing with other variables have been studied in the past; as Cause Related

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Marketing helps to enhance the corporate [4]. Brand awareness is one of the most important mediating variables in the Cause Related Marketing campaign and the purchase of the product [7].

Cause Related Marketing is such an emerging buzz word among marketers that adopting it as a strategic tool has become essential. The Cone [8] study revealed that about 85% of consumers would like to go for the brand that supports a cause, whereas; 79% would switch to a brand that supports a cause. In developing countries like Pakistan Cause Related Marketing has been now in practice. Multinationals like Procter and gamble, Unilever, in hospitals category Shaukat Khanam and in telecom sector Warid has used Cause Related Marketing as a strategic tool in Pakistan [7]. Despite of real time examples of Cause Related Marketing, there is lack of research on this topic. The present paper is an endeavor towards finding the implications of Cause Related Marketing. It examines the impact of Cause Related Marketing on consumer purchase decision.

The subsequent sections of paper have been organized by first providing a basis of literature on Cause Related Marketing, its antecedents and consequences. The very next sections present theoretical background, hypotheses followed by methodology and empirical results and their analysis. For this purpose, literature has been developed with the goal of providing the answers of two following research questions:

- Do Cause Related Marketing campaigns have a direct positive impact on consumer purchase decision?
- Whether the relation between Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision is direct or mediated by corporate image and brand attractiveness?.

Literature Review: According to Varadarajan and Menon [9], Cause-related marketing is a promotional tool that works when a sponsoring firm donates money by linking itself with a charity work. The money for donation is received from customers when they go for transaction generating revenue activity with the firm. Cause-related marketing was first defined as by Varadarajan and Menon[9] 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 is known as Cause Related Marketing”.

The history of Cause Related Marketing can be traced back to the early years of decade 80s, where American express bank planned to donate 5 cents to the arts in san Francisco on the use of American express card and if someone gets a new card then 2 dollars will be donated. This was a huge success and it made up to 108,000 US dollars [10]. This pilot project was such a huge success that later on American express bank started various Cause Related Marketing programs such as restoration of statue of liberty [11].

According to Sorribas [12] in the prior researches, the example of Cause Related Marketing resides far before this American express initiative; in 1942 the general director of Austin motor Co., sent a letter to royal national lifeboat institution in which it was written that this British company would donate a certain amount of money to each manufacturing of life saving boat to royal national life boat institution. This was thought to the “the earliest” example of the Cause Related Marketing [13].

It actually refers to the Cause Related Marketing campaign where a sponsoring company is related to a campaign which is not related to its activity [12]. In this campaign Ikea Iberica started with selling at its Spanish stores, the stuffed toys and donated an amount to UNICEF for the cause “save the child”. It was a huge success and then the amount gathered was spent on the health, enrolment at schools for the cause of ending the child labor [12].

Due to intense competition in the market, it has become difficult for the companies to differentiate their brands from of the competitors through traditional means such as manipulation of price and quality [14]. Having this stance in mind, corporate social responsibility has become very important for corporations [15]. Tsai *et al.* [16] states that Cause Related Marketing has achieved a great popularity among the marketers as it is known to have a great contribution in increasing purchase intention among the costumers. Therefore; Cause related marketing has emerged as a strategic marketing tool for social cause in return of mutual benefit among concerned parties. Cause related marketing is a mutual link between business, cause and the Cause Related Marketing campaign [17]. According to Adkins [6], Cause Related Marketing campaigns are flourishing day by day with the fastest growth in the North America and Europe. Strahilevitz[18] says that it is evident from growing acceptance of Cause Related Marketing that it is a proficient marketing

technique. When there is fit of popular cause and a brand, it reveals that value is added to the brand [19].

There are so many examples of Cause Related Marketing practiced by multinationals. One example of it is provided by Procter and Gamble. Procter and Gamble donates 10% of its profit to a cause on purchase of each of its bottle of head and shoulder/Pantene [7]. Besides this, TESCO and AVON have also seen in running Cause Related Marketing campaigns. TESCO run “computers for school program” campaign which was intended to increase computer literacy in schools; moreover, AVON rose more than ten million dollars for breast cancer program [20]. The local example of Pakistan resides with Shaikat Khanam memorial hospital that does Cause Related Marketing for its poor patients [7].

The impact of Cause Related Marketing has been studied on various factors such as consumer attitudes towards the Cause, consumer purchase decision, along with the companies who are involved in such marketing campaigns [21]. Marketing since then, a substantial body of research has emerged investigating the effects of Cause Related Marketing on a variety of factors including consumer choice, consumer purchase and consumer attitudes towards Cause Related Marketing itself as well as towards companies that engage in such marketing programs [21]. According to Lafferty and Glodsmith [22], the widely researched concept of fit between Cause Related Marketing and the company has been discussed with the moderating variables such as the acquaintance of consumers with the cause being promoted, the kind of the product which is being advertised for promotion and also importantly the situation in which the donation is being gathered.

Brand loyalty is very important factor in raising any company’s financial situation and because of this factor companies are able to charge high/premium prices from its customers [23]. According to Aaker [24] and Kapferer [25], the customers who are loyal to certain brand are more tilted towards spending more on a product/service; they are very useful asset for the company as loyal customers act as a positive word of mouth for the company. Keeping this in mind, brand loyalty is considered as an important in contribution towards Cause Related Marketing [26]. Shabbir *et al.* [7] concluded that brand awareness and corporate image have the mediating role between Cause Related Marketing and purchase intentions.

A study conducted by File and Prince [27] states that most of the companies who go for Cause Related

Marketing campaigns are actually in pursuit of increasing purchase intention of the customers. The response of consumers is positive towards the Cause Related Marketing as it is surveyed that more than 80% of consumers are tilted towards the firm which support a cause than those that do not [28].

The research done by Ross *et al.* [29] suggests that Cause Related Marketing programs help the brand to improve its image and the attitude of consumers towards it; it also helps the brand to differentiate itself from the clutter [4]. The other roles of Cause Related Marketing can be to increase the value of the brand [30] and also to make the brand personality in the minds of the consumers.

Research on Cause Related Marketing has revealed that such campaigns are related to greater purchase intention of consumers [31]. The other benefits of such campaigns include increasing the brand awareness among the people [9]. Customer satisfaction is also positively influenced by Cause Related Marketing activities [32].

As Cause Related Marketing helps to have positive image of the firm it also leads to eliminate the negative publicity as there is an example in the past that American express got a boycott from British hotels and restaurants, in response to this American express thought of donating an amount to duke of Edinburgh award every time when the transaction was made by the card holder. This promotional campaign helped American express to have this boycott ended [33]. Cause Related Marketing campaigns help to pacify the customers’ dissatisfaction.

The demographic profile of consumers has a great impact on attitude towards a cause. This profile includes the nationality, educational level, the gender of a person and also the age [28]. Further Hou *et al.* [28] states that women are more positive towards Cause Related Marketing campaigns than men are. Keeping the regional perspective, believe that consumers with different backgrounds respond to Cause Related Marketing differently.

Cone [8] says that the Cause Related Marketing campaigns are supported by the consumers and eventually influencing the investment options, the employment of the company. According to Babu and Mohiuddin [10], Cause Related Marketing campaigns are becoming greatly popular because of its two way benefit; it’s beneficial for both the profit making firm and also the non-profit organization.

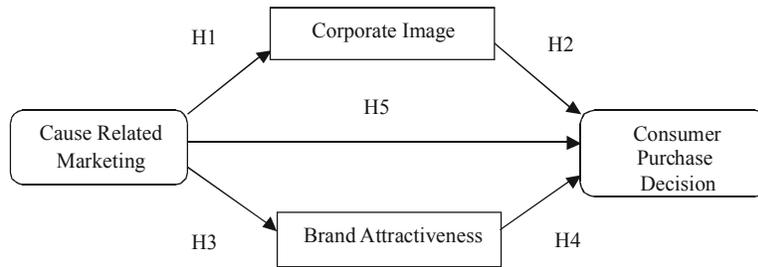


Fig. 1: Proposed Model for the study

The donation that can be given for a cause be of two types; monetary donating and payment in kind [12]. According to Recio and Ortiz [34] monetary donations is the fixed amount that can be donated from every sale for the cause. Whereas, the payment in kind is the donation of something that is related to the activity of the company such as donating something that is already produced by the company [12].

Theoretical Framework: The motive of this research is to find impact of cause related marketing on consumer purchase decision with the mediating effect of corporate image and brand attractiveness.

Figure 1 shows the direct relationship between the causes related marketing and consumer purchase decision and shows their relationship by having a mediating variable corporate image and brand awareness.

Firms have been promoting their acts of altruism and philanthropy to add to their corporate image and make a positive attitude in the mind of consumers about the firm [9]. Corporate image is defined by Tsai *et al.* [16] as a multidimensional concept which contains four dimensions; corporate product image, corporate service image, corporate citizenship image and corporate credibility image. According to previous researches, corporate image is individual's shared perception of given organization [35, 36]. Cause related has many advantages from impressing shareholders [37] to enhancing the corporate image and reputation [38]. According to research conducted by Bennett [39], results showed that respondents believed that Cause Related Marketing helps companies to enhance corporate image, brand equity, market share and overall competitive position. Webb and Mohr [21] state that corporate image of companies involved in consumer purchase behavior influences consumer's purchase decision. So the relation between cause related marketing-corporate image-consumer

purchase decision has been established prior in researches. Supporting a cause develops positive image of the firm [40]. On the basis of the above discussion the study hypothesizes that:

H1: Cause related marketing campaigns have a positive impact on the corporate image in the FMCG sector of Pakistan.

H2: Good corporate image leads the customer to purchase the product in the FMCG sector of Pakistan.

CSR associations positively influence brand attractiveness for the Consumer [41]. CSR campaigns are useful tools to influence the trust of the costumers and eventually increasing the brand attractiveness for the consumers [42]. In addition to consumers, employees also perceive companies more attractive that sponsor a cause [43]. Marin and Ruiz [14] suggest CSR directly impacts the attractiveness of the company, when talk about attractiveness it is more strongly linked to the awareness of the brand [42]. Attractiveness is strongly affiliated with the awareness of a brand. Trust matters a lot in order to satisfy the needs of the individual which subsequently impacts the brand attractiveness [44]. The brand names and images attract the costumers and influence their purchasing behavior [45]. So brand attractiveness influences the purchase decision of consumers. On the basis of the above discussion the study hypothesizes that:

H3: Cause related marketing campaigns have a positive impact on the brand attractiveness in the FMCG sector of Pakistan.

H4: Higher level of Brand attractiveness is associated with the higher level of customer purchase intention in the FMCG sector of Pakistan.

Cause-related marketing is a marketing activity in which a firm engages itself in a activity that donates a designated amount to a specific cause on which customers subsequently go for revenue producing exchange [1]. Cause Related Marketing is used as tactical tool to attract consumers towards the cause which eventually would lead to increase of sales [7]. According to Alcheva *et al.* [46], Cause Related Marketing is a marketing tool that affects the purchase decision of the consumers through three stages that are:

- Perception,
- Attitude and
- Behavior.

A study conducted by File and Prince [27] state that most of the companies who go for Cause Related Marketing campaigns are actually in pursuit of increasing purchase intention of the customers. Research on Cause Related Marketing has revealed that such campaigns are related to greater purchase intention of consumers [31]. On the basis of the above discussion the study hypothesizes that:

H5: Cause related marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase decision in the FMCG sector of Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is quantitative nature and based on positivism paradigm. The purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision with the mediating effect of corporate image and brand attractiveness.

The present study employed survey methods and 278 students from universities and colleges of Pakistan provide basis for empirically defining the key role of above mentioned two mediators between Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision. By studying the proposed framework, clear and real understanding of Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision will help future researchers to further add new knowledge to the current understanding.

Measures: As the study consists of 4 variables; Cause related marketing, brand attractiveness, corporate image

and consumer purchase decision, all the data collection instruments are taken from previous studies keeping in mind the marketing perspective. The whole questionnaire consisted of 16 items.

For the measurement of impact of Cause Related Marketing on Consumer purchase decision, a questionnaire is adapted from the study of [7]. Similarly to measure the corporate image, an instrument developed by Nguyen and Leblanc [47] is used. Furthermore, to study brand attractiveness, instrument is adapted from the study conducted by Babu and Mohiuddin [10]. Finally, instrument for studying Consumer purchase decision in adapted from the research conducted by [28]. All the above adapted measures are closed ended and statements were analyzed on five point Likert scale. To test the hypothesized relationships presented in theoretical model AMOS-18 has been used. The study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique for data analysis. For the proposed study, self-administered questionnaire developed on five-point Likert scale are distributed in selected colleges and universities of Pakistan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The observation of 278 samples has been used in this study and data is collected from different universities and colleges of Lahore city. Eventually collected data was analyzed by using Structural Equation Modeling. According to Haghigi *et al.* [48] Structural Equation Modeling technique main concern is on latent variables that are defined using measurable parameters and observable variables. In the structural model, study try to find out the relationships between latent traits mine theoretically & will include dependent, independent and mediating variables. By using SEM techniques study checked out the effects of independent variables on dependent through mediating variables. Figure 2 shows the empirical findings of the study.

Research hypotheses were tested with SEM; regression weights are obtained of which details are shown in Table 1.

H1: Stating that Cause related marketing campaigns have a positive impact on the corporate image in the FMCG sector of Pakistan. The estimated value is 0.968 with p-value< 0.01 shows that there is significant positive relation between Cause Related Marketing and brand attractiveness.

Table 1: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Corporate Image	<---	Cause Related Marketing	0.968	0.028	34.583	***
Consumer Purchase Decision	<---	Corporate Image	0.295	0.051	5.758	***
Brand Attractiveness	<---	Cause Related Marketing	0.258	0.052	4.961	***
Consumer Purchase Decision	<---	Brand Attractiveness	0.317	0.028	11.499	***
Consumer Purchase Decision	<---	Cause Related Marketing	0.257	0.056	4.625	***

***: p<0.01

Table 2: Model Fit

RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	RFI	CFI	IFI
.008	.994	.941	.099	.996	.97	.997	.997

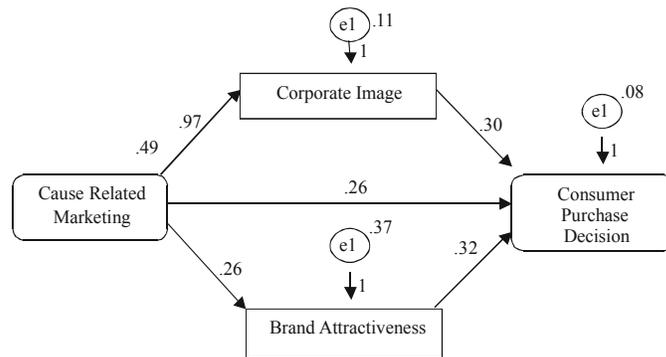


Fig. 2: SEM Results

H2: It was hypothesized that Good corporate image leads the customer to purchase the product in the FMCG sector of Pakistan. From the Table 1 it can be inferred that corporate image has a significant positive relation with consumer purchase decision with estimate 0.295 and p<1%.

H3: States that Cause related marketing campaigns have a positive impact on the brand attractiveness. The estimate value is 0.258 at 0.01 level, showing there is positive significant relation between Cause Related Marketing and brand attractiveness.

H4: Stated that higher brand attractiveness results in higher customer purchase 0.137 is the estimate value at 1% showing that significant positive relation exists.

H5: Hypothesizes that Cause related marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase decision in the FMCG sector of Pakistan. The estimate value of 0.257 at 1% shows that significant positive impact of Cause Related Marketing on consumer purchase decision exists. The standard error exists in the last relationship between consumer purchase decision and cause related marketing is high comparatively with others which is 0.056.

From the above hypothesized results, it can be inferred that Independent variable (Cause Related Marketing), mediators (corporate image, brand attractiveness) have important role in impacting the dependent variable (consumer purchase decision) in FMCG sector with reference to Pakistani context. The estimate values of Cause Related Marketing with corporate image and brand attractiveness are all positive with p<1% and of mediators (corporate image, brand attractiveness) with consumer purchase decision having significant positive relationship at 1% level confirm that the 5 mentioned hypotheses are valid. It can be inferred that Cause Related Marketing has a significant positive relation with consumer purchase decision which is enhanced by corporate image and brand attractiveness.

Table 2 shows the fit indices of SEM. As cited in Hameed [49], the threshold of fit indices suggested by Ryu *et al.*, (2003) are; GFI >0.90; RMR <0.05 or 0.08, NFI >0.90, AGFI >0.90, CFI >0.90, PGFI, The higher, the better. In the present study the RMR value 0.008 < 0.05, which is acceptable. The Goodness of Fit Index is 0.994, greater than the minimum threshold value, shows that it is significant. AGFI is adjusted GFI, as stated by Hameed (2013) [49] its value is adjusted for the number of parameters present in the model, if the value of parameters

are less than AGFI value will be closer to GFI. In the present case GFI (0.994) and AGFI (0.941) are closer to each other. As AGFI value 0.941 is greater than 0.90 it means it is significant. NFI (0.996) is greater than threshold value 0.90 which is quite good. CFI which is comparative fit index is $0.997 > 0.90$ shows good fit.

CONCLUSION

Cause Related Marketing is considered most important factor in the success of any organization. The results show strong evidence that Cause Related Marketing impacts the consumer purchase decision, with corporate image, brand attractiveness having major mediating role. This study provides strong basis for Cause Related Marketing activities to FMCG sector working in developing country like Pakistan. Like previous studies the findings of this study depicted that Cause Related Marketing has positive impact on consumer purchase decisions, meanwhile brand attractiveness and corporate image has mediating affect on the positive relationship of Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decisions. The results call for greater emphasis by organizations on increasing attractiveness of brand and enhancing the corporate image with the help of Cause Related Marketing activities. It can very well be inferred that Cause Related Marketing campaigns help to enhance the brand attractiveness, when consumers are attracted by the brand, it is more likely that they would go for the purchase of that product. So this signifies the mediating role of brand attractiveness between the Cause Related Marketing and consumer purchase decision. Corporate image is also the variable that is being enhanced by conducting Cause Related Marketing. Corporations that have good corporate image make consumers to make the purchase decisions for the products of that particular corporation. All the results of the relationships show the positive significant impact on the dependent variable. On the basis of findings study give some recommendations to organizations that could be useful to develop and maintain long lasting relationship with customers as well as sustainable growth in competitive market. The organizations should participate in these kinds of activities to attract the customers and earn the profits.

Limitation and Suggestions for Future research: The rationale of the study was to find the impact of cause related marketing on consumer purchase decision mediated by corporate image and brand attractiveness.

The findings of the study observes the impact of Cause Related Marketing on consumer purchase decision and contributes to the existing literature by showing the mediating roles of corporate image and brand attractiveness. In order to answer the research questions, data from colleges and universities of Lahore have been collected. It is suggested to collect data from other cities of Pakistan also. Other limitation is that only Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector has been selected for present research. Researchers who want to add to the present study are suggested to conduct study in other sectors such as service sector also in order to increase generalizability of the research. Moreover, review of literature shows that other variables such as brand loyalty, attitude of customers [29], brand awareness [9] and customer satisfaction [32] are also being affected by Cause Related Marketing; therefore future research can also include it in their study. Further researches can increase the sample size also in order to make results more generalizable. This research can also be done from the perspective of organization who are actively engaged in Cause Related Marketing. The influence of demographic profile of consumers as mediators can also be studied to validate the results.

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Appendix A: Instrument of the Study

Cause Related Marketing:

The company has selected an appropriate organization with a worthy cause [7]
The company is perceived as more democratic and humanistic
The company can build long term customer relationships with Cause Related Marketing.
With Cause Related Marketing the company can achieve its commercial objectives

Corporate Image:

I have always had a good impression of (company). [45]
In my opinion (company) has a good image in the minds of consumers
I believe that (company) has a better image than its competitors

Brand Attractiveness:

I like what (brand) represents [10]
I think that (brand)r is an attractive brand
I like what (brand) symbolizes

Consumer Purchase Decision:

I am eager to learn more about this product related to cause campaign. [28]

I would be willing to pay a higher price for the product of the firm which offer cause campaign than that of others.

It is likely that I will participate in cause campaign by purchasing the product.

I would be willing to influence others to purchase the product related to a cause.

I would be willing to purchase the product related to a cause.

I would consider purchasing from this firm which donates for a cause in order to provide help to it