

PUBLIC COGNIZANCE ON CAUSE ASSORTMENT IN CAUSE AFFILIATED CAMPAIGNS

DR. C. KATHIRAVAN*; R. KANTHIAH ALIAS DEEPAK**

*ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY
CHIDAMBARAM, CUDDALORE DISTRICT
TAMILNADU, INDIA

**DOCTORAL RESEARCH SCHOLAR (FULL TIME)
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY
CHIDAMBARAM, CUDDALORE DISTRICT
TAMILNADU, INDIA

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is state the predominant causes exist in India and also which needs to be addressed on priority. Further the research aim is to find and analyse the cause influencing variables in cause supportive decision on predominant cause. The data was collected from 240 residents working in various sectors and 160 students from different B-schools and colleges in Chennai, India by using convenient sampling method. The predominant causes taken for the study has elaborated in research. The research outcome reveals that Cause Influencing Variables are positively and significantly influence the Consumers' Cause Supportive Decision on Predominant Causes.

KEY WORDS: Cause selection, Predominant Causes, Social Causes, Economic Cause, and Environmental Causes.

1. Introduction

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is an increasingly common form of promotion. CRM has become a staple in the arsenal of strategic tools used by marketers. More and more businesses recognize the need to improve their relationships with their key stakeholder groups and the wider community by adopting and implementing CRM. Over the last decade, the number of enterprises embracing and implementing CRM has been increasing, and CRM is gaining in popularity as a marketers and fundraisers' promotional tool. CRM is a means of addressing current social problems and issues through the provision of funding and resources and achievement of marketing objectives. Adkins posits that CRM is an integral part of a portfolio of methods that firms can use to demonstrate their responsiveness to society 's heightened expectations and demands for responsible corporate behaviour. Pringle and Thompson view CRM as an activity by which a company with an image, product or service to market builds a relationship with a ' cause ' or a number of ' causes ' for mutual benefit.

2. Cause – Related Marketing

Kotler and Levy, (1969).CRM allows the marketer to reach the publics and help consumers differentiate one company from the other by tying a company's "economic activity to a higher social purpose". Varadarajan and Menon, (1988) CRM is defined as the contribution

to a designated cause by a firm, in which the specified contribution is conditional on “customers’ engaging in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives”. Caudron (1994) Benezra (1996), to reach the higher consumer expectations of corporate social responsibility, adding social dimension to marketing communication and promotion has become the main stream. Hajjat (2003) describes cause-related marketing as marketing activities and funding programs that enable an identification of a profit organization’s identity with a non-profit organization, good cause or important social issue. Nan and Heo, (2007) 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”. Cone Roper Report (1999) Cause marketing campaign helps in enhancing financial performance because it appeals to sophisticate consumers. For instance, Influential, who is actively involved in giving opinions on social and political issues, they can shape the attitudes of public. This highly educated and white collar job holder segment of market will support organization involved with social causes, they are ready to pay more for product from these companies. IEG Sponsorship Reports, (2006) CRM has become an increasingly common form of promotion. Expenditures on this form of communicating with customers are expected to reach \$1.08 billion in North America in 2005, a 9 per cent increase over the \$988 million spent in 2004.

3. Predominant Causes in India

Predominant Causes: Social Causes, Economic Causes, Environmental Causes

Social Causes: Domestic Violence, Drug Abuse, Child Labour, Female Infanticide, Gender, Inequality, Disease, Child Hunger, Children Education, Old age care

Economic Causes: Poverty, Sanitation, Economic Inequality

Environmental Causes: Pollution, Deforestation, Wildlife Refuge, Drinking Water Scarcity

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Cause Familiarity

According to Fazio, Powell, and Williams (1989), familiarity can moderate the attitude behaviour relationship. Attitude accessibility theory suggests that the stronger the attitude, the more easily it is accessed from memory. Therefore, it can be inferred that the more familiar the cause, the easier and quicker it will be retrieved from memory when the cause–brand alliance cue is presented. This, in turn, could bias information processing in the direction implied by the valence of those attitudes (Fazio et al., 1989). The brand literature has assessed the moderating effect of familiarity extensively. Broadly defined, familiarity is knowledge about a product that has been accumulated by the consumer either through direct or indirect experience with that product (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Bettman & Sujan, 1987; Holden & Vanhuele, 1999). Thus, it seems likely that the familiarity of the cause will have a moderating effect on consumer’s support. Cause familiarity is typically measured in the donor literature in terms of general awareness of the charity based on whether the cause or charity has a high or low visibility in the media (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996). When familiarity is low for either the brand or the cause, attitudes are unformed or weakly formed making them less accessible and producing a weaker effect. Therefore, the degree of

familiarity can bias information processing and have a differential effect on the attitude towards the alliance.

4.2 Cause scope

Geographic scope, which in this case refers to the location of the cause supported by the cause-related marketing campaign (Cui et al. 2003), reflects its physical proximity to the consumer. Previous research reports that U.S. citizens are more likely to support causes that have a local focus than those that are national or international in scope (Ross et al. 1990–1991); similar results also emerge from China (Hou et al. 2008). Yet other research indicates no significant differences due to cause scope (Ross et al. 1992) or even less support for local causes (Cui et al. 2003). According to social exchange theory, people attempt to maximize their self-interest (Bagozzi 1979), so consumers should identify with organizations that satisfy their basic, self-definitional needs, such as self-enhancement (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). We thus propose that identification is more likely when causes are proximate to consumers, because they perceive that they may get something in return (e.g., see the impact of their donation to a local cause; benefit from improved conditions). Consumers should identify more with a local or national cause than with an international cause, though their actual behaviour may depend on cultural norms about the role of the state and corporations (Meijs and Van der Voort 2003). This positive impact on identification suggests that corporate image also should be more positive for cause-related marketing campaigns that involve local or national causes. Burnett and Wood (1988) indicate that pro-social behaviour is generally considered to "designate helping, sharing, and other seemingly intentional and voluntary positive behaviour for which the motive is unspecified, unknown, or not altruistic." One of the situational variables studied in pro-social behaviour research concerns the physical distance between the donor and the recipient (Bar-Tal 1976; Staub and Baer 1974). In general, the physically closer the recipient to the potential donor, the more likely the potential donor will engage in some form of pro-social behaviour rather than escape behaviour. However, much of the research on pro-social behaviour is experimental, with subjects in relatively close proximity. In a CRM campaign proximity may be differentiated as local, regional or national. Since proximity may influence consumers' affective and behavioural responses to a CRM campaign, its effects need to be investigated (Varadarajan and Menon 1988).

4.3 Consumer's Involvement

Berger et al. (1996) found that when a strong cause (a cause relevant to the audience that is associated with a credible organization) is presented in an advertisement, consumer interest and involvement with the advertisement are increased. This increased interest and involvement also facilitates the development of a positive attitude toward the company. Similar findings were not found for advertisements associated with a weak cause. The salience or importance of a cause to the audience is likely to influence consumer cognitive response to cause-related marketing messages.

4.4 Consumer's Attitude

Several interesting observations emerge from a synthesis of the growing body of the literature. First, attitudes towards CRM vary by the structural elements of a CRM offer such as the type of cause and cause distance, which represents the relative geographic proximity of

the cause or the organisation supporting cause (Varadarajan and Menon 1988; Ross Patterson and Stutts 1992; Cui, Trent, Sullivan and Matiru 2003). Second, attitudes towards the cause impact on attitudes towards the brand (Aaker 1996; Webb and Mohr 1998; Lafferty and Matulich 2002; Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005). Third, attitudes towards the cause have a positive impact on attitudes towards the CRM advertisement (Ross, Patterson and Stutts 1992; Berger, Cunningham and Kozinets 1996; Dacin and Brown 1997). Fourth, attitudes towards the CRM advertisement impact favourably on attitudes towards the brand (Ross, Patterson and Stutts 1992; Sameer and Hitchon 2002).

4.5 Gender Differences

Research into donation behaviour, pro-social behaviour, and sex roles provides guidance as to personality and demographic variables that may influence CRM purchase behaviour. The research on pro-social behaviour and gender suggests predisposition and the extent of assistance one individual is willing to provide to another is related to perceived sex roles (Bar-Tal 1976). One of the basic elements of the female sex role in the United States is an emphasis on nurturance and life-preserving activities (Schaffer 1981; Smith & Midlarsky 1985). Studies of sex roles also suggest that females are more favourable toward self and other oriented appeals than are their male counterparts (Meyers- Levy 1988). Given a CRM campaign that promotes products targeted toward females and a strong symbolic nurturance cause, women would be expected to assign a higher valence to the cause than men, along with a greater intention to purchase the product and thus support the cause. Previous research in CRM has noted differences in acceptance of CRM strategies by sex of the participant. Women were found to be more accepting of CRM campaigns than men (Ross et al., 1992; Berger et al., 1999). The findings suggest that the nurturing personalities of women (Ross et al., 1992) or a need to assuage guilt (Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998) might be parts of the process that allows cause-related marketing to influence consumers, but these assertions have not been directly tested. This suggests the possibility that measures of credibility and attitude as well as the types and number of thoughts generated could differ by sex as well as by experimental condition.

4.6 Demographic characteristics

People differ in their fundamental characteristics, including gender, age, income, and education, which may cause them to react differently to causes. According to previous research, gender (Berger et al. 1996; Valor 2005), age (Bennett 2003; Kottasz 2004), income (Kottasz 2004; Mohr et al. 2001), and education (Linke 2002; Mohr et al. 2001) explain consumer responses to cause-related marketing campaigns. In addition, cause related marketing is much more common in the United States than in Europe and arguably has reached a higher level of sophistication in this market (Kooijmans 2004).

5. Problem of the study

CRM became a successful marketing strategy for developed countries and the same has been widely accepted. This study has been initiated with the aim of understanding the behaviour, attitude, involvement of consumer while choose and support the cause. In India, Chennai has most diversified consumers and to understand their attitude towards cause is challenging activity.

6. Variables

Cause familiarity, Cause scope, Consumer's involvement, Consumer's attitude, Gender differences and Demographic variables

7. Objectives

1. Role of Cause familiarity while consumer deciding to support a specific cause
2. Analyse the influence of cause scope and while consumer deciding to support a specific cause
3. Elucidate the extent to which consumer feels that the need for help is considered to be important
4. Establish the consumers' attitude towards the cause which adopted
5. Discover the gender impact on cause electing decision

8. Research Methodology

8.1 Sample Size

We have given our questionnaire to 482 people consists of 300 residents and 182 students from various colleges in Chennai. We have received back the 240 filled questionnaire from the residents and 160 from students.

8.2 Participants

All 240 public participants are working in various sectors and residing in Chennai and all 160 students are from top exclusive B-Schools and Department of Business Administration comes under Engineering Colleges which are situated in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

8.3 Sample Selection Procedure

Samples were selected by using Chunk Sampling method. This method of sampling involves using convenient method without going through the rigor of sampling method. Samples were selected while they were doing shopping in malls and while there was an external Job fair in Chennai. The residents and students selected from Chennai because it has high level of diversity of the respondents hailing from different areas of India.

8.4 Tools

The items were developed from Prior attitude towards a cause Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005; cause Familiarity Bendaputti et al. 1996; Lafferty and Edmondson 2009; Lefferty et al. 2004; Singh et al. 2009; Cause scope Cui et al. 2003; Consumers' involvement Zaichkowsky JL. 1994; Gender difference Ross et al. 1992; Berger et al. 1999

8.5 Hypothesis

1. Consumers will respond more positively to the cause when they are more familiar about the cause.
2. Consumer involvement with a cause will be based on the their perceived need for help
3. Women will have a significantly more positive attitude toward the cause
4. Cause scope fetches a specific attention of consumers on the specified cause

9. Results

9.1 Demographic Analysis

Table: 1 Profile of Participants

Profile of Participants

Variables	Frequency	%
Age of Respondents		
20 - 25	160	40
26 - 30	61	15.25
31 - 40	111	27.75
41 - 50	45	11.25
51 & Above	23	5.75
Income Level		
10000 - 15000	56	14
16000 - 20000	64	16
21000 - 30000	87	21.75
31000 - 50000	112	28
51000 & Above	81	20.25
Occupation		
Student	160	40
Public Sector	19	4.75
Private Sector	112	28
Business	86	21.5
Professionals	23	5.75

The above mentioned table framed on the basis of three variables those are age, income and occupations. In that their frequency has been identified and also mentioned in terms of percentage. Here income level of student group has been assessed on the basis of their parents' income.

9.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table: 2 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the study variables

Variables	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
CF	5.20	1.04
CS	4.70	1.04
CI	5.00	1.02
CA	4.47	1.06
GD	4.21	0.97
CSD	4.86	0.79
SC	5.10	0.94
EC	5.05	0.89
ENC	5.23	0.94

With reference to Table: 2, the participants judged Environmental cause (M = 5.23, SD = 0.94), Social causes (M = 5.10, SD = 0.94), Economic causes (M = 5.05, SD = 0.89) to be relatively high. The level Cause familiarity (M = 5.20, SD = 1.04) was found to be slightly higher than Cause involvement (M = 5.00, SD = 1.02), Cause scope (M = 4.70, SD = 1.04), Cause Attitude (M = 4.47, SD = 1.06), Gender differences (M = 4.21, SD = 0.97), Cause supportive decisions (M = 4.86, SD = 0.79).

9.3 Correlation Analysis

Table: 3 Inter Correlation Matrix

		CF	CS	CI	CA	GD	CSD	SC	EC	ENC
1	CF	1.00								
2	CS	0.471**	1.00							
3	CI	0.535**	0.552**	1.00						
4	CA	0.283**	0.264**	0.466**	1.00					
5	GD	0.265**	0.297**	0.455**	0.648**	1.00				
6	CSD	0.352**	0.362**	0.487**	0.585**	0.660**	1.00			
7	SC	0.060	0.240**	0.345**	0.603**	0.570**	0.555**	1.00		
8	EC	0.140**	0.112	0.316**	0.444**	0.628**	0.468**	0.480**	1.00	
9	ENC	0.417**	0.443**	0.625**	0.563**	0.652**	0.663**	0.445**	0.514**	1.00
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1 - tailed)										
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 - tailed)										

Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviations, reliabilities and inter correlations of the study variables are shown in Table 2 and 3 respectively. As shown in table 2, 34 out of 36 inter correlations are statistically significant from $r = 0.44$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.66$ ($p < 0.01$). The correlations between Cause influencing variable and Predominant cause are found to be significant ranging from $r = 0.14$ ($p < 0.05$) to $r = 0.49$ ($p < 0.01$). Correlation between Consumer's Attitude and Social Causes $r = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$, and Gender Differences and Economic Causes ($r = 0.11$, $p > 0.05$), however, are low and insignificant. Correlation among Predominant cause dimensions are statistically significant, ranging from $r = 0.47$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.55$ ($p < 0.01$). All correlations between Cause supportive decision with Cause influencing variables, and also predominant causes are significant and positive. The correlation between Cause influencing variables and Cause supportive decision ranges from $r = 0.45$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.66$ ($p < 0.1$). Besides, the correlation between Cause supportive decision and predominant cause ranged from $r = 0.42$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.63$ ($p < 0.1$).

9.4 Regression Analysis

Table: 4 Results of Regression analysis: Effect of Demographic variables on Predominant causes.

Predictors	Social Causes Std. β	Economic Causes Std. β	Environmental Causes Std. β
Demographic Variables			
Age	0.12	0.11	0.11
Income	0.09	0.15	0.07
Occupation	0.62**	0.21**	0.29**
Gender	0.68**	0.17**	0.08
Educational Qualification	0.52**	0.31**	0.1
R^2	0.76	0.19	0.29
Adjusted R^2	0.75	0.15	0.26
ΔR^2	0.76	0.18	0.28
F - Value	70.32**	5.32**	8.28**
ΔF - Value	98.21**	6.93**	10.62**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Hierarchical regression was conducted to test the hypothesis. There are five demographic variables has been entered as control variables. From table 4 we are able to understand that occupation has a strong impact on social (0.62), economic (0.21) and environmental (0.29) causes. Occupation is a phenomenon which helps the people to understand about the socio-economic environmental tragedy. The Gender (0.68) and Educational qualification (0.31) are has strong impact only on social cause rather than economic and environment. In this the gender variable shows that female respondents also had a better image of the company of this CRM related product. In addition female respondents felt more strongly than men that companies engage in this activity. Educational qualification indicates their level awareness and understanding about the causes. In this case respondents are understands well about socio-economic cause. Since their awareness on environmental cause is relatively low. So the occupation, gender, educational qualification has a direct effect on prominent causes whereas age and income does not have any direct effect though it may have impact on predominant causes to some extend which not reflected in statistics.

Table: 5 Results of Regression analysis: Effect of Cause influencing variables on Predominant causes.

Predictors	Social Causes Std. β	Economic Causes Std. β	Environmental Causes Std. β
Cause Influencing Variables			
Cause Familiarity	0.76**	0.08	0.19
Cause Scope	0.12	0.28**	0.16
Consumers' Involvement	0.36**	0.29**	0.30**
Consumers' Attitude	0.28**	0.03	0.03
Gender Differences	0.33**	0.25**	0.08
R^2	0.2	0.19	0.31
Adjusted R^2	0.16	0.15	0.28
ΔR^2	0.18	0.18	0.3
F - Value	5.72**	5.32**	10.37**
ΔF - Value	7.12**	6.93**	14.26**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

There are five causes influencing variables has been entered as control variables. Cause familiarity has a strong impact on social causes (0.76). This denotes that the social cause needs familiarity among the public groups in order to get addressed. Consumers' involvement significantly influences on predominant causes of social (0.36), economic (0.29) and environmental causes (0.30). Even the cause is familiar among the public, consumers' involvement is significant and it fetches the impact on predominant causes. Consumers' attitude (0.28) on social cause is relatively high. General attitude of the people on social problems are notable than economic and environment. As impacted in demographic variable gender difference has a strong impact on social (0.33) and economic causes (0.25) rather than environmental causes. Since the women are well aware of socio-economic problems and they felt this must be addressed than environmental causes. To conclude cause familiarity positively and significantly related to social causes ($\beta = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$), cause scope positively and significantly related to economic causes ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), consumers' involvement strongly related social cause ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$), economic cause ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), environment cause ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), consumers' attitude positively related to social cause ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and gender differences are significantly related to social ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) and economic causes ($\beta = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$). So the results provided strong support for hypothesis.

10. Limitations

In the present study the data has been collected from only one city of India (Chennai). The respondents are only few residents and students. The research was covered social, economic and environmental causes in India. There is a wide to miss the other predominant causes in India. This research dealt only with consumers 'end about choice and support causes. Whereas study not reveal the scenario of corporates in cause related marketing. This study has been restricted by duration which misses the close observation and in-depth study. The attitude of the participants may change from time to time; hence the result of the project may

be applicable only at present. There is no measure to check out whether the information provided by the participants is correct or not.

11. Suggestions for future research

Research could be carried out in other cities of India in order to increase the value of results. The research can be extended to other variables. Further research can be carried out in other developing countries in order to do comparative study. The research was covered only consumers' mind on choose and support causes which tangled in cause related marketing. Another end there is scope to do research on the corporates stand while choosing causes and NGO and also continual variables in cause related marketing. Future research can be carry out also in particular causes like either on social, economic or in environmental causes.

12. Conclusion

The research outcome reveals that the cause influencing variables are significantly influence the cause supportive decision of consumers. There should be wide range of socio-economic and environmental causes to be addressed by corporates and consumers. The researcher feels that the corporates should consider the cause influencing variables while adopt and support a cause in order to get a wide coverage and mass support from the consumer group.

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