ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 5| May 2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

A STUDY ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH CAUSE RELATED MARKETING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CORPORATE IMAGE OF THE CAUSE SUPPORTED FMCG BRANDS

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27510
DOI No: 10.36713/epra27510

ABSTRACT
This study investigates consumer purchase intentions toward fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands that implement cause-related marketing (CRM) and examines the link between CRM factors and corporate image. In a highly competitive environment, companies associate with social causes to enhance brand perception and strengthen customer relationships. The research aims to assess consumers' purchase intentions for FMCG brands engaged in CRM and to analyse how factors such as cause–brand fit, credibility, transparency, and perceived social impact influence corporate image. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical design, collecting primary data from consumers through a structured instrument. Statistical methods, including correlation and regression analysis, are used to test the hypothesis. The findings indicate that effective CRM initiatives positively influence purchase intentions and strengthen corporate image.

KEYWORDS: *Cause-Related Marketing (CRM), Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).*

INTRODUCTION
In today's competitive marketplace, consumer preferences are evolving beyond product quality and price. Modern consumers increasingly value the ethical and social responsibilities of the brands they engage with. This shift has led many Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies to adopt Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) strategies. CRM is a marketing approach where a brand aligns itself with a social cause, such as environmental sustainability, gender equality, education, or hunger relief, in order to create mutual benefits for the brand and the cause. In an age where consumers are more socially conscious and ethically driven than ever before, companies are increasingly expected to go beyond profit-making and contribute to societal well-being. This shift in consumer expectations has given rise to various socially responsible marketing strategies, one of the most prominent being Cause-Related Marketing (CRM). Cause-related marketing refers to a strategic collaboration between a business and a non-profit organization or social cause, where a company commits to supporting a cause in return for consumer engagement and loyalty. Thus, it is a form of marketing where a company ties its products, services, or brand identity to a social or charitable cause. Typically, this involves promising a donation or other form of support to a cause every time a customer makes a purchase. The aim is to build a mutually beneficial relationship where the company improves its image and sales, and the supported cause gains financial or promotional assistance. CRM should not be confused with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which refers to a company's broader commitment to ethical practices. CRM is more tactical and campaign-specific, often tied directly to sales and consumer participation.

CRM offers numerous benefits for both businesses and the causes they support. For companies, it serves as a powerful brand differentiation tool in competitive markets. By aligning with a meaningful cause, brands can create a positive emotional connection with consumers. This often translates into stronger customer loyalty, enhanced brand image, and even increased sales. Several brands have effectively used CRM to build stronger reputations and drive change. For example, TOMS Shoes became famous for its "One for One" model, where a pair of shoes was donated for every pair sold. Dove's Real Beauty Campaign by Unilever focused on building self-esteem among women and promoting realistic beauty standards, which resonated with millions globally. Lifebuoy, also by Unilever, ran handwashing awareness campaigns to reduce preventable diseases, directly tying the message to their soap products. These campaigns illustrate how CRM can be deeply integrated into a brand's identity while delivering tangible benefits to society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
In the highly competitive and brand-saturated FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) sector, companies are increasingly turning to Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) as a strategic tool to enhance their corporate image and connect with socially conscious consumers. While CRM has the potential to

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positively influence consumer perceptions, the effectiveness of such initiatives largely depends on several key determinants including authenticity, cause-brand fit, transparency, communication effectiveness, and perceived commitment to the cause. Despite the growing adoption of CRM in FMCG branding strategies, there remains a lack of clarity and consensus on how these determinants individually and collectively influence the corporate image of the brands that engage in such campaigns. Moreover, consumer scepticism regarding cause-washing or insincere marketing raises questions about whether CRM efforts genuinely enhance brand reputation or risk diminishing trust. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the relationship between the key determinants of cause-related marketing and the corporate image of cause-supported FMCG brands. Understanding this relationship is essential for marketers to design more impactful, credible, and sustainable CRM strategies that not only support social causes but also reinforce positive brand equity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the consumer purchase intention for choosing the FMCG brands that supports the cause related marketing campaigns.
2. To find out the relationship between the determinants of the cause related marketing and the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. Ho: Determinants of the cause related marketing have no relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is descriptive in nature in the context of measuring the consumers attitude towards the FMCG brands that supports the cause related marketing and also measure the determinants of the cause related marketing of the cause supported FMCG brands. The study also analyses the consumer purchase intention for choosing the FMCG brands that supports the cause related marketing campaigns. Finally, the study in causal in nature as it proves the relationship between the determinants of the cause related marketing and the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. Thus, the research design of the study is empirical and descriptive in nature.

For the purpose of the study, researcher plans to select top 10 FMCG brands who supplies the products with a motto of social reasonability through their marketing strategy called cause related marketing campaigns. The selected FMCG companies are Hindustan Unilever Limited, Colgate- Palmolive, ITC limited, Nestle, Parle Agro, Britannia Industries Limited, Marico Limited, Amul, Dabur and Tata consumer products. For the purpose of the study, researcher identified the consumers who purchases the cause related FMCG products of the selected 10 FMCG companies from the super markets and hypermarkets in Kottayam district in Kerala. Since, the study covers a universe with infinite population that is; the total number of consumers who purchases the cause related FMCG products through super markets and hypermarkets in Kottayam district in Kerala is unknown and infinite in nature, the sample size is calculated by using Cochran's formula. Assuming the maximum variability, which is equal to 50 percent (p=0.5 and q=0.5) and taking at 99% confidence level (z=2.58) with 10 percent (e=.1) desired level of precision. Cochran's formula for calculating the representative sample from the infinite population is: $n_0 = z^2 pq / e^2$; sample size = $(2.58)^2 (0.5) (0.5) / (0.1)^2 = 166.41$. Thus, the adequate sample size of the study at 99 percent confidence level and at 10 percent precision is 166. The researcher circulated the questionnaire to consumers who purchases the cause related FMCG products through super markets and hypermarkets in Kottayam district in Kerala. Out of the 166 questionnaires, 154 were complete in data collection and considered for further data analysis and the researcher eliminated 12 incomplete questionnaires. Thus, the sample response rate is 92.77 percent. Hence, the study adopts a convenient sampling method in identifying the determined sample size of 154 consumers who purchases the cause related FMCG products through super markets and hypermarkets in Kottayam district. The collected data was coded using MS Excel and done analysis using SPSS and various appropriate statistical tools were used for analysis such as Percentage Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, Mean Ranking and Correlation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table: 1 Consumers image towards the cause supported FMCG brands

Parameters	Mean
The FMCG brands that supports cause related marketing are of high quality	3.06
They are innovators rather than imitators, depending on FMCG, they modify their strategies to make the people follow them	3.18
I consider the cause supported FMCG brands as a trusted brand	3.88
Cause supported brands have a clear vision about the future of the company	3.96
Cause supported brands are economically sustainable	3.34
Cause supported brands are socially conscious	4.11
They are obvious in providing information to the public	3.62
I always have a good impression and better image on the cause supported FMCG brands	3.99
Average Score	**3.64**

Source: computed from primary data

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Figure:1 Consumers image towards the cause supported FMCG brands

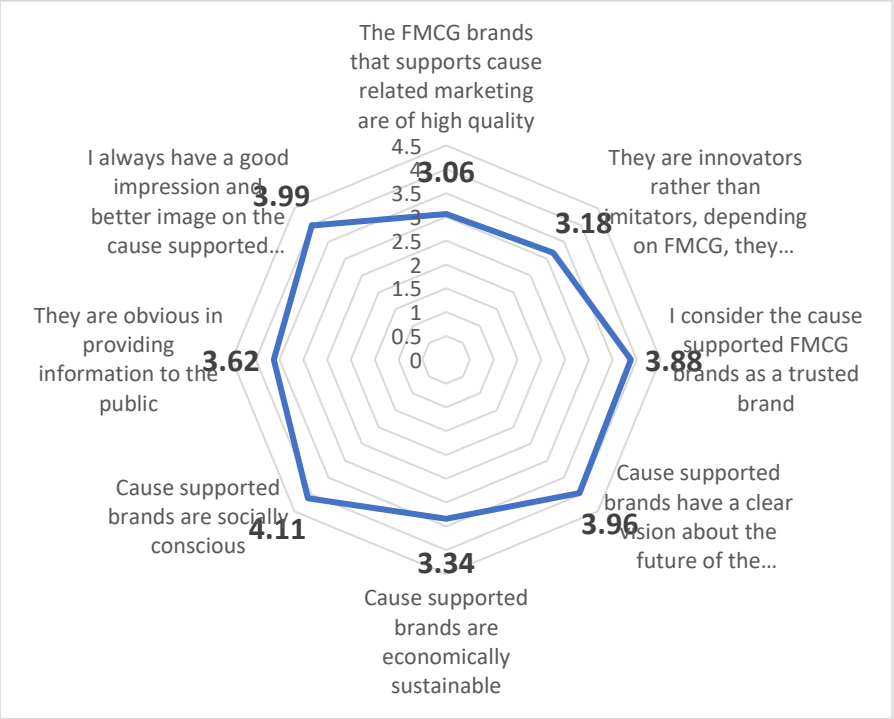


Table:1 deals with the consumer's image towards the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that the mean score of 'The FMCG brands that supports cause related marketing are of high quality' is 3.06, 'They are innovators rather than imitators, depending on FMCG, they modify their strategies to make the people follow them' is 3.18, 'I consider the cause supported FMCG brands as a trusted brand' is 3.88, 'Cause supported brands have a clear vision about the future of the company' is 3.96, 'Cause supported brands are economically sustainable' is 3.34, 'Cause supported brands are socially conscious' is 4.11, 'They are obvious in providing information to the public' is 3.62 and 'I always have a good impression and better image on the cause supported FMCG brands' is 3.99. Hence, the highest mean score among the responses is for 'Cause supported brands are socially conscious' and the least mean score belongs to 'The FMCG brands that supports cause related marketing are of high quality'.

Table: 2 Factors influencing the consumers for choosing the brands in FMCG products that supports the cause related marketing campaigns (Consumer purchase intention)

Choice Factor	Mean	Rank
Price of the product	3.95	7
Quality of the product	4.02	6
Nature of cause	4.49	2
Availability of the product	3.11	13
Brand familiarity	3.68	9
Previous experience	3.33	12
Contribution level to cause	4.52	1
Cause-Corporate-Brand fit	4.08	5
Discounts and offers	3.62	10
Associated Charity image	4.36	3
Cause related promotional activity	4.24	4
Value for money	3.74	8
Satisfaction in usage	3.59	11

Source: computed from primary data

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Figure:2 Consumer purchase intention



Table:2 deals with the factors influencing the consumers for choosing the brands in FMCG products that supports the cause related marketing campaigns (Consumer purchase intention). It is found that the mean score of 'Price of the product' is 3.95, 'Quality of the product' is 4.02, 'Nature of cause' is 4.49, 'Availability of the product' is 3.11, 'Brand familiarity' is 3.68, 'Previous experience' is 3.33, 'Contribution level to cause' is 4.52, 'Cause-corporate-Brand fit' is 4.08, 'Discounts and offers' is 3.62, 'Associated charity image' is 4.36, 'Cause related promotional activity' is 4.24, 'Value for money' is 3.74 and 'Satisfaction in usage' is 3.59. Hence, the highest mean score among the responses is for 'Contribution level to cause' and the least mean score belongs to 'Availability of the product'.

Ho: Determinants of the cause related marketing have no relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands.

Table 3 Correlation analysis

Determinants of the cause related marketing: Independent Variable	**Corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands: Dependent Variable**	
	PC	**Sig.**
Perceived Brand-Cause Fit	.757**	.000
Cause related advertisements	.685**	.000
Cause involvement	.626**	.000
Type of Cause	.761**	.000
Consumer Values	.589**	.000
***** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)***		

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The correlation result reveals the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and here it explains the relationship between the between the determinants of the cause related marketing and the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that perceived brand-cause fit has 75.7 percent positive significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that cause related advertisements have 68.5 percent positive significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that cause involvement has 62.6 percent positive significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that type of cause has 76.1 percent positive significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. It is found that consumer values have 58.9 percent positive significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected since the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is significant at 1 percent level of significance (P value .000 < 0.01). Thus, it is identified that the type of cause has the significant relationship with the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands. Hence, it is concluded that better type of cause, highly perceived brand-cause fit, highly influencing cause related advertisement, cause involvement and better consumer values creates high impact on the corporate image of the cause supported FMCG brands.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1 Creating awareness about cause-related marketing campaigns helps to improve favourable consumer attitude which in turn helps to achieve favourable consumer outcomes. More programmes are to be initiated to create the greater degree of awareness to a larger group of consumers. Innovative campaigns are to be organised to

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attract and motivate consumers of different walks of life to participate for the cause. The promotion of the cause has to be on a long-term basis preferably with an appropriate and true commitment by the organisation.

2 Selection of appropriate cause partner is essential for the success of cause-related marketing. The company core values should be aligned with the selected cause or charity organisation. Brand and cause should be complementary to each other especially in terms of brand image and corporate reputation.

3 The Cause Related Marketing Campaigns are associated with the product that are fast moving consumer goods, although strategically the campaigns should be associated with these products but during the research it was observed that the consumer buy these products even otherwise also, that is whether the brands are associated with some cause or not the consumer will buy such product. While selecting the cause or charity partner, companies must give priority to the cause consumers have involvement as consumer-cause involvement, increases consumer participation in cause-related marketing campaigns and increases consumer purchase intentions towards cause-related products.

4 The findings suggest that the purchase intention is related with the association of the products/ brands with cause but it does not reflect in actual buying, therefore the companies should make the complete campaign that the consumer should intentionally buy the product that are associated with some social cause. Adequate publicity and advertisements will help to minimize consumer scepticism towards cause-related marketing campaigns. Cause-related marketing advertisements should be appealing and likeable to consumers. Appropriate visual effects and brief note about the campaign would be efficient and sufficient.

5 Company should practice an open and transparent communication to reveal the image, integrity and honesty which in turn will reduce the consumer scepticism.

6 Cause-related marketing advertisements can be displayed in appropriate media platforms. However, over publicity can make the campaign look commercial. So excessive advertisements should be avoided.

7 Companies must provide the necessary information regarding donation amount, donation process, cause or charity partner etc. to consumers through proper media channels.

8 Education, environmental protection and helping the poor and underprivileged would be the best options for cause selection. Because in countries like India there is a need to meet the basic needs of the people like education and helping the poor.

CONCLUSION

Cause-Related Marketing represents a significant evolution in the relationship between businesses and society. It enables companies to connect with their customers on a deeper level while contributing to the betterment of the world. When executed with authenticity, transparency, and strategic alignment, CRM can enhance brand reputation, boost customer loyalty, and create real social impact. However, companies must be careful to avoid superficial or insincere campaigns, as modern consumers are highly aware and expect genuine commitments. As businesses continue to navigate the balance between profit and purpose, cause-related marketing will remain a vital strategy in building meaningful, long-term connections with consumers. As an element of CSR, Cause-related marketing tends to increase the brand loyalty and corporate image. As a part of corporate social responsibility more money has been invested in cause-related marketing. The number of companies engaged in this marketing strategy has been steadily growing, due to the fact that this is a win-win-win situation for business, non-profit organisations and consumers. Cause marketing has come a long way has become increasingly sophisticated, and includes long-term commitments to causes that eventually become part of their corporate identity, culture, and corporate social responsibility palette. The concept if properly nurtured and applied by the companies can be a strong tool for survival in the competitive landscape of today's corporate world. As a marketing strategy, cause-related marketing can be used to develop new levels of relationships with consumers adding value to the image of both the cause and the brand. Connecting cause-related marketing with consumer values increases the success rate of cause-related marketing. Consumer values of sense of belonging and sense of accomplishment increases consumers purchase intentions towards cause-related marketing. As the demand for ethical consumption grows, the success of CRM in the FMCG sector will largely depend on how sincerely and effectively brands commit to the causes they support.

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