

# The Influence of Cause-Related Marketing on Millennials' Purchase Intentions: Evidence of CSR from an Emerging Economy

*Swapna J Shetty<sup>a</sup>, Molly Sanjay Chaudhuri<sup>b</sup>, Ankitha Shetty<sup>c</sup>*

<sup>a</sup>A.J. Institute of Management, India

<sup>b</sup>Manel Srinivas Nayak Institute of Management, India

<sup>c</sup>Department of Commerce, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India

**Abstract:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been implemented through sponsorships, philanthropy, and cause-related marketing (CRM), amongst which CRM has aroused the interest of many academicians and stakeholders. The study aims to examine the antecedents of cause-related marketing while considering attitude as a mediator to test its relationship with the purchase intention. The snowball sampling technique for data collection was administered to Indian millennial consumers from the regions of Karnataka and Kerala. A total of 313 valid cases were selected for the analysis, which employed partial least squares (PLS) based on structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings have shown that a positive relationship exists between cause participation and purchase intention. Further, product/cause congruence & consumer/cause identification had a positive impact on attitude, while attitude, in turn, showed a favorable association with the purchase intention. This study disclosed the relative importance of the compatibility between the social causes supported by the company with its engaged business while adopting CRM campaigns, and highlighted the need for the involvement of consumers in the CRM programs for their effectiveness.

**Keywords:** cause-related marketing, product/cause congruence, consumer/cause identification, cause participation, purchase intention

**JEL Classification:** M14, M31

## Introduction

Organizations face many challenges to survive and sustain in today's marketplace, as there is acute competition, characterized by the number of products of similar quality and service (Benezra, 1996). Differentiating the products with conventional attributes by cost, quality, and value will not suffice to compete successfully (Aaker, 2005). Adding to this, consumers are becoming more erudite and demanding ethical and altruistic behavior from companies (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012; Singh & Verma, 2017). To surmount these problems posed by the market and the consumers, most businesses have adopted corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a marketing tool (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001) to leverage financial benefits and fame (Skarmas & Leonidou, 2013). An important dimension of CSR, which raises a company's social impact and exposure, is by linking its product with a cause, which is strategically known as cause-related marketing (CRM) (Chang, 2008). As stated by Varadarajan and Menon (1988), CRM is a horizontal co-operative promotion, involving a company's contribution to a cause that is "linked to customers' engaging in revenue-generating transactions with the company." Companies embrace CRM (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), as it serves to achieve the twin objectives of improving corporate performance and supporting a worthy cause (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988).

A primitive form of CRM was employed by American Card in 1983 for a restoration project for the Statue of Liberty (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), yielding a 27 percent increase in card usage and a 45 percent rise in new applicants, compared to the preceding year (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Following this,

many companies in the West adopted CRM as a marketing tool to ameliorate their reputations and augment their emotional bond with their consumers, as this often creates improved customer loyalty (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001). Besides, conscious consumerism and the pressing importance of societal issues led to the widespread use of CRM. This trend soon caught on in the Asian market, with companies such as Procter & Gamble (P&G), Nestle and Coca-Cola engaging in successful CRM campaigns (Cause-driven marketing engages Asia, 2016). CRM campaigns donate a specific amount toward a supported cause by contributing a portion of the revenue from sales toward these initiatives, using sales promotion concepts such as coupons, rebates or purchase-based donations (Hou et al., 2008). For example, in India, Indian Tobacco Company's (ITC) social initiative was undertaken through classmate notebook donating one rupee toward the cause of education for every four books sold. Similarly, P&G contributed toward its initiative of "Padega India, Badega India" (translated as "Educate India to progress India") in its "Shiksha" (translated as "educate") campaign when a consumer purchased any P&G product (For a Worthwhile Cause, 2007). Adding such social dimensions to marketing, these brands give consumers an additional reason to buy, stay loyal or to switch to CSR practising companies. However, consumers reciprocate positively toward these campaigns when they identify with the cause and view it like the ones they support, specifically termed as consumer/cause identification (Zdravkovic et al., 2010). Notwithstanding CRM's growing importance, there is still a void in consumer/cause identification studies and its consequences (Duarte & Silva, 2018). Further, consumers need to find

congruence between a company's product and the supported cause, which can affect the success of a CRM program (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). It is not just in the past studies (File & Prince, 1998), even the recent studies (Patel, Gadhavi & Shukla, 2017) have revealed that over 50 percent of the companies engage in CRM initiatives with the aim of increasing their customers' purchase intentions. Only a few studies have examined the relationship between consumer/cause identification, attitude, and the intention to purchase (Lafferty et al., 2016).

Even the past literature provides evidence that CRM has reached the mature stage in the American and European markets (Webb & Mohr, 1998) and significant studies have been conducted (Hou et al., 2008) in those developed economies; while very little research has been conducted on the application of CRM as a tool for marketing in developing economies (Shree et al., 2017). Even though CRM has been rapidly growing in the Asian region, there is still a dearth of research (Chattananon et al., 2008; Shabbir et al., 2010; Subrahmanyam, 2004). This lack of empirical evidence and the mounting prominence of CRM demand an extensive study of CRM in India. Further, understanding the gap in the existing literature, the prime objective of this study is to contribute further to the former research by examining the influence of consumer/cause identification, cause/participation and product/cause congruence on the purchase intention. The results can assist businesses to understand the dynamics behind consumer behavior toward CRM campaigns linked to a cause, which can help them to execute their strategy more effectively.

## Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

### *Corporate Social Responsibility and Cause-Related Marketing*

CSR as defined by Kotler and Nancy (2002) "is a commitment to improving the well-being of the community through monetary or non-monetary contributions and discretionary business practices." They classified CSR as corporate cause promotions, cause-related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices. Singh and Malla (2017) demonstrated that consumers prioritize CSR over price; hence, companies should concentrate on socially responsible actions to reach their major customer markets. While purchasing any products or services, customers view CSR as one of the deciding factors. Therefore, when CSR is performed systematically, it can be a "silver bullet" for an organization. Companies adopt various methods, including providing financial help, making sponsorship through promotions, involving employees, and paid advertisements to support CSR, but the most prevalent form of CSR is cause-related marketing (Lafferty & Edmonson, 2009; Nan & Heo, 2007).

### *Consumer Responses to CRM*

Consumers' beliefs about, and attitudes toward, a product can be influenced by their perception of CSR (Brown & Dacin, 1997). This has led organizations to add social dimensions to their marketing communications and promotions (Drumwright, 1996). CRM campaigns provide an outstanding context for exploring consumers' understanding of

socially relevant promotions and their behavioral reactions to commercial goods (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Further, their study, based on the interview method, found that most respondents appreciated CRM campaigns as they support and donate to noteworthy causes. The feel-good factor associated while contributing to a cause makes the consumers purchase the product. In this context, the study conducted by Cone (2010) revealed that 81 percent of the respondents had shown a willingness to buy a company's cause-related products. On the other hand, CRM is more likely to be viewed with scepticism as it is connected to a firm's profit-generating activities (Barone et al., 2007).

### *Cause Participation*

A CRM campaign's success is heavily based on consumer participation in the cause (Ellen et al., 2006; Ladero et al., 2014). The degree of cause participation is described as the quantum of effort put in by a customer to engage in the CRM program. Marketers are creating CRM campaigns that involve different levels of involvement, mainly using tactics such as coupons and rebates from sales promotion ideas (Hou et al., 2008). CRM participation mainly depends on the message-alluring factor involved in the marketing campaign (Hyllegard et al., 2010). Thus, message framing can significantly affect the CSR perspective of a consumer and further affect his/her allegiance and buying intentions. Hajjat (2003) studied the impact of CRM on customers' attitudes and found that if the product's advertisement included a CRM offer or message, the user had a favorable attitude toward the advertisement. Furthermore, Hyllegard et al., (2010) in their study related to Gen Y, pointed out that the participants involved in social causes tend to have a more

favorable attitude toward the brand and a greater purchase intention. Thus, as CRM is one method of sales promotion, it can cajole the consumers to purchase the product by contributing to their favorite cause (Hou et al., 2008). This leads to the development of the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1</sub>: Cause participation positively affects purchase intention.

H<sub>2</sub>: Cause participation positively affects the consumer's attitudes toward the cause.

### *Congruence between the Firms Product and the Cause*

Marketers can gain superlative results from current and potential customers' if the companies engage in a social activity that is related to their primary goods and services (Hill, 2017). A firm engaged in the hospitality industry may find it appropriate to contribute to the cause of nutrition and well-being. It makes more sense and is more effective for a company to donate goods in line with its core business. Haley (1996) suggested that consumers feign that companies were altruistic when the social issues addressed by them were logically related to their business activities. Nonetheless, customers are likely to be less cynical (Gray, 2000), and the initiative is more likely to be considered successful, if the cause is compatible or matches with the firm. Similar evidence was found in the studies by Samu and Wymer (2009), whereby a greater congruence led to a more favorable attitude; which positively impacted consumer's behavioral intentions. When a CRM campaign displays a good fit between the product and the cause, customers believe that the message of the campaign will improve the company's sustainability and find it reasonable to support the cause. Because of this evidence, the

major effect of congruence should be on the attitudes of the consumers toward the cause and further, on their willingness to buy the product (Hou et al., 2008). Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H<sub>3</sub>: Congruence between the firm's product and the cause positively influences purchase intention.

H<sub>4</sub>: Congruence between the firm's product and the cause has a positive impact on the consumer's attitude toward the cause.

### *Consumer/Cause Identification*

When consumers find congruence with a cause, they would donate to the cause even when the cause is not part of the CRM alliance (Bendapudi et al., 1996; Chowdhury & Khare, 2011). This implies that the cause affects the person directly (Lafferty & Edmondson, 2013), for instance, a person may participate in a marathon supporting breast cancer awareness, if he/she is closely associated with a person who suffered from breast cancer; hence, the cause has directly affected the person. A similar consumer/cause affinity can be identified in the context of CRM and is defined as the convergence of a con-

sumer's self-concept and their perception of the cause (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Vanhamme et al., 2012). Therefore, while designing CRM campaigns, companies must choose a cause that could be recognized by the customers' (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Being able to get the customers to identify with the cause is a significant indicator of an effective CRM campaign (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006) and leads to its success (Berger et al., 2006). The theory of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) suggested that if the customer feels an emotional link with the cause, they will be motivated to support the cause, particularly if they can identify with the company's goals and mission (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). As suggested by Zdravkovic et al., (2010), when a customer associates with a cause, there is a predisposition to patronize CRM programs and buy the products associated with them. Therefore, this study proposed that:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between consumer/cause identification and the purchase intention.

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between consumer/cause identification and consumers' attitudes toward the cause.

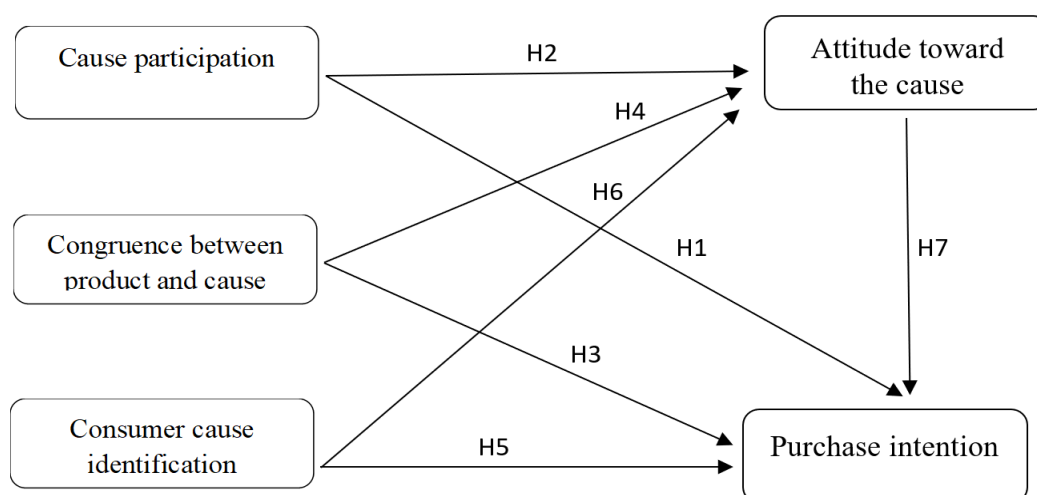


Figure 1. Research framework

## *Impact of Attitude on Intention*

Fishbein (1963) suggested that an individual's attitude toward an object or phenomenon is directly related to his or her acts or subsequent behavior. Sheik and Beise-Zee (2011) proposed that businesses will benefit from the favorable attitudes that a certain segment of society has toward a cause. This phenomenon can be effectively seen in cause-related marketing campaigns, whereby a customer involved in a cause appears to show a positive response toward the campaign, benefiting the sponsoring company and its non-profit organization. (Hajjat, 2003; Tangari et al., 2010). Based on the findings, we propose that:

H<sub>7</sub>: The consumer's attitude toward the cause has a positive, direct, and significant impact on their purchase intention toward the products associated with the cause.

A research framework (Figure 1) was developed to illustrate the antecedents of cause-related-marketing influencing millennial's attitudes toward a cause, which in turn influences their purchase intention.

## **Method**

### *Pilot Test*

An unstructured informal interview was conducted with five academicians to arrive at a fictitious scenario and the product to be used in the study. Since millennials were the targeted subjects, a pilot study was performed before the formal survey using 30 university students to measure the validity of the questionnaire and to minimize any bias before the actual survey through face validity. As many millennials fall within the age range in which they engage in some form of

study (Jonas-Dwyer and Pospisil 2004), this research considered students to be a suitable representative sample for the pilot test.

### *Research Setting*

The respondents were presented with a stimulus comprising of an advertisement for CRM using a hypothetical business and a fictitious social cause. A hypothetical company avoids consumers' prejudice toward a known company, which may arise out of previous knowledge (Bigne Alcaniz et al., 2009; Hammad et al., 2014). Hence, a fictitious scenario was created for a footwear company supporting a social cause of "Fit India." The social cause of "Fit India" was chosen for the study for two reasons. First, the "Fit India" campaign is the most recent initiative toward a healthier future, launched nation-wide, and second, as the millennials are the target group for the study, there would be a more positive approach toward the campaign. The CRM stimuli which was presented notified the respondents that with every item of footwear sold, five percent of the sale amount would be contributed toward the "Fit India" campaign, whereby the company plans to provide basic fitness infrastructure in rural schools.

### *Target Population*

The target population of this study was millennials in the age range of 18 to 37 years old, who are often referred to as the iGens, Generation Me, the Post-Millennials (Twenge, 2006), or digital natives (Prensky, 2001). A projection by the World Bank states that millennials would comprise about 34.1 percent of the population in India by 2021 (Youth in India, 2017) hence it is important to consider this group of young consumers as they represent more than one-third of the population.

## *Data collection*

A virtual snowball and convenience sampling method was adopted by the study, as they can increase the number of participants and the representativeness (Baltar and Brunet, 2012; Creswell, 2014). As the target respondents were millennials, the study considered the virtual method as the best and most feasible medium for data collection, as they were the first to be raised on the internet and are much more familiar with communications, media, and digital technology than any previous generation (Eurostat, 2009; Twenge, 2006). A self-administered questionnaire was prepared using Google Forms. An e-mail along with the Google Forms web link was sent to the researcher's millennial network (professional and social) with a request to complete the questionnaire and forward the e-mail to their network. The survey was conducted from Sep 2019 to Nov 2019.

## *Measures*

A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure all the constructs in the questionnaire. Cause participation was evaluated by adopting a four-item scale proposed by Hou et al., (2008). A three-item scale assessed the congruence between the product and cause, of which two items were adopted from Hou et al., (2008) and the remaining one from Hammad et al., (2014). The consumer-cause identification was adopted from Vanhamme et al., (2012) using four semantic differential items. Attitude toward causes was derived from Samu and Wymer (2009) using four semantic differential items, and the finally purchase intention, comprising four items was measured using the scales of Hou et al., (2008).

## **Data Analysis and Results**

### *Demographic Information*

The sample comprised 324 individuals, which, after eliminating the outliers, was decreased to 313 valid cases. In terms of gender, 51 percent of the millennials in the sample were women. The sample had a slightly lower proportion of men than women (the census report of 2011 depicts 51.47 percent of men in the youth population). Regarding their age, 74.4 percent of the respondents were aged 22 to 25 years, 14.1 percent were aged 26 to 29 years, 6.1 percent were aged 30 to 33 years and 5.4 percent were aged 34 to 37 years. We established three groups by the level of education: below a bachelor's degree (5.5 percent), completed a bachelor's degree (39 percent), and greater than or equal to a master's degree (55.5 percent). Respondents living in urban areas accounted for 44.7 percent. Of the respondents, 59.4 percent had voluntarily participated in a social cause, while a further 84.3 percent of them stated that they had supported a social cause by contributing either in cash or kind.

### *Measurement Model*

To analyze the data, the study applied the partial least squares (PLS) – structured equation modeling (SEM) analysis technique using SMARTPLS (Ringle et al., 2015). Apart from PLS-SEM, average variance extracted, factor loadings and composite reliability were measured, to regulate the reliability and convergent validity. The study applied a dual fold analytical procedure, having a measurement model and a structural model as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). To assess the reliability and validity, the measurement model was used, and to test

the hypothesized relationship, the structural model was applied (Hair et al., 2014).

The premises of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were verified using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Index (0.864) followed by the Bartlett sphericity check (chi-square [ $\pi^2$ ] = 2,406.131; the degree of freedom [df] = 153;  $p = 0.000$ ) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). The assumptions for the applica-

participation (CP4), removing it resulted in a positive model fit. All the constructs have AVE exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Hulland, 1999), CR above 0.70, and AVE is less than CR, as shown in Table 2. Since the factor loadings and AVE exceeded the threshold, the convergent validity of the measures is confirmed. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) as shown by the test, was higher than the suggested rate of

**Table 1.** Result summary for Reflective Measurement Models

Latent Variable	Indicator	Loading	Internal consistency	CR	AVE
Test Criterion		$\geq 0.70$	$\geq 0.70$	$\geq 0.70$	$\geq 0.50$
Cause participation	CP1	0.849	0.715	0.775	0.587
	CP2	0.775			
	CP3	0.817			
Congruence between product and cause	CPC1	0.789	0.782	0.824	0.610
	CPC2	0.832			
	CPC3	0.717			
Consumer cause identification	CCI1	0.745	0.730	0.831	0.553
	CCI2	0.780			
	CCI3	0.835			
	CCI4	0.750			
Attitude towards the cause	ATT1	0.751	0.828	0.888	0.668
	ATT2	0.876			
	ATT3	0.845			
	ATT4	0.876			
Purchase intention	PI1	0.760	0.792	0.865	0.616
	PI2	0.800			
	PI3	0.797			
	PI4	0.782			

**Note:** AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability.

tion of factor analysis were not violated as the results met the criteria (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

All measurement items had a significant factor loading ranging from 0.717 to 0.876, surpassing the recommended threshold criterion of 0.50 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006), except for one item of cause/

0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), further communality and redundancy showed positive results.

Discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker criterion was performed to check if the square root values of the average variance derived from all the constructs exceeded the inter-construct correlations (Table 2). The research model, therefore, represented the strong validity and reliability of the con-



struct (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelwieser, 2014). The reliability and validity results for the measurements obtained through the evaluation of the reflective measurement models are demonstrated in tables 2 and 3.

post methods to avoid any common method bias. Initially, ambiguity in the questionnaire's items was minimized with the assistance of an expert review, similar to the study of Shetty and Basri (2019), through which the reliabil-

**Table 2.** Discriminant Validity Assessment (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Predictors	ATT	CPC	CCI	CP	PI
ATT	0.817	-	-	-	-
CPC	0.438	0.781	-	-	-
CCI	0.707	0.390	0.743	-	-
CP	0.420	0.498	0.372	0.698	-
PI	0.435	0.347	0.352	0.413	0.785

Note: \*Square roots of AVE shown on diagonal

### Structural Model

The primary evaluation criteria are the R<sup>2</sup> measures and the level and significance of the path coefficients (Lohmöller, 1989). Since the goal of the prediction-oriented PLS-SEM approach is to explain the variance of the endogenous latent variables, the level of R<sup>2</sup> should be high for the key target constructs (Lohmöller, 1989). Nonetheless, determining the level for R<sup>2</sup> greatly depends on the specific discipline under study (Hair et al., 2011), whereas R<sup>2</sup> results of 0.20 are considered high in disciplines such as consumer behavior (Hair et al., 2011). The R<sup>2</sup> value of the attitude toward the cause was 0.541 and purchase intention was 0.261, which met the criteria suggested.

The analysis combined ex-ante and ex-

ity of the content was assessed (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Lee, 2003). The study did not collect any sensitive information from the respondents to prevent their bias, and ensured their responses were kept confidential. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is also one of the best ex-post approaches for crosschecking common method variance (CMV), which showed no significant bias in the present study (Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009). The research examined the variable inflation factor (VIF) values for multicollinearity evaluation as multicollinearity can affect the results (Kline, 1998). No values exceeded the threshold of 5.0 (CP = 1.419; CPC = 1.449; CCI = 1.999; ATT = 2.208; PI = 1.277) showing no multicollinearity between the independent variables (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004).

**Table 3.** Evaluation

Hypothesis	T-Statistics	p-value	Decision
CP -> ATT	2.394**	0.017	Supported
CPC -> ATT	2.688***	0.007	Supported
CCI -> ATT	11.812***	0.000	Supported
ATT -> PI	3.539***	0.000	Supported
CP -> PI	3.112***	0.002	Supported
CPC -> PI	1.091	0.275	Not Supported
CCI -> PI	0.487	0.627	Not Supported

\*p < 0.1, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

## Discussion

A partial least squares (PLS) approach was used to test the related relationships using SmartPLS 2.0 which offers more detail like t-statistics for data inference (Chin, 2001). For all the relationships in the model, the standardized path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-statistics, and related significance rates are shown in Table 3. The proposed relationships among the paths were significantly supported except on two paths, i.e., on consumer/cause identification and purchase intention, and the congruence between product/cause and the purchase intention. Cause participation ( $\beta = 0.125$ ;  $t = 2.395$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), congruence between product/cause ( $\beta = 0.140$ ;  $t = 2.688$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and consumer/cause identification ( $\beta = 0.606$ ;  $t = 11.812$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly influenced attitude; attitude toward the cause also had a significant influence on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.264$ ;  $t = 3.539$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Further, cause participation had a positive significant influence on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.239$ ;  $t = 3.112$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) as shown in Figure 2.

Our goal in this study was to uncover the relevant CRM attributes influencing attitude and purchase intention. The findings of this study reveal that cause participation, consumer/cause identification and the congruence between product/cause positively affect the consumers' attitudes toward the cause. Hence, the study showed that the choice of the cause supported by the organization and its fit with its products was crucial for the credibility and success of CRM. The results are in line with Sheik and Beise-Zee (2011), and Durate and Silva (2018), indicating that the familiarity between consumers and the cause is often measured by the attitude toward the specific cause. Attitude acts as a significant attribute in explaining intention (Luna et al., 2017; Ting et al., 2015); the results from the present study affirm that attitude significantly affected purchase intention. A positive attitude toward the CRM programs can only be generated if the consumers are not sceptical about the claims of the CRM campaigns (Chang & Cheng, 2015). This study discovered that consumer's participation in the cause could lead to a purchas-

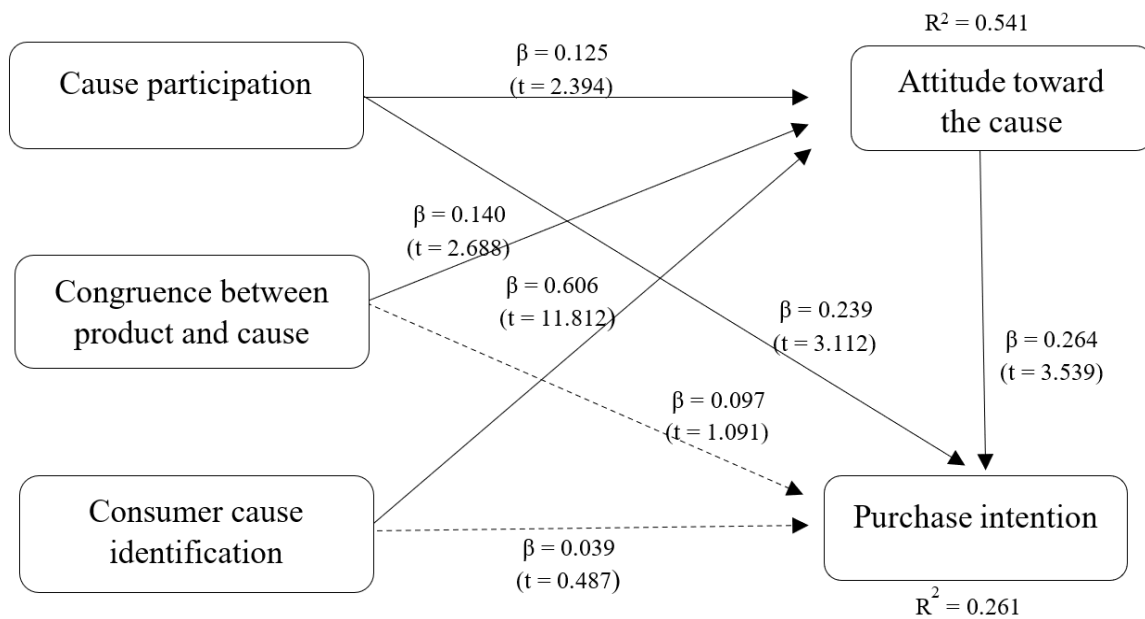


Figure 2. Structural model

ing intention. Hence, the companies should design and communicate their CRM campaigns to bring out the positive motivational attribution of consumers.

Though congruence between the product/cause and consumer/cause identification had positively affected attitude, but it did not lead to a purchase intention in this study. Consumers will purchase the products promoted by CRM campaigns only if they find the company has a strong altruistic motive and it possesses and exhibits strong civic behavior.

## Practical Implications

In this information age, consumers are more aware of companies' social responsibilities and want to contribute to companies' genuine CSR initiatives. The social cause considered in the study is the most recent and widely publicized; hence, the response toward this cause of "Fit India" was more favorable. The cause selected for a CRM campaign must comprise emotional cues (Paulin et al., 2014) and information cues (Sciulli & Bebko, 2005) as these two combined cues can build a stronger attitudinal effect (Bae 2016). Thus, the organizations practising CRM should focus on the choice of the cause to support, as this may be a major determinant of the purchase intention of consumers. The literature suggests that when the amount to be donated is specifically known to the consumers, CRM will be more effective (Human & Terblanche, 2012; Hyllegard et al., 2010; Kim & Lee, 2009) rather than describing that a portion of sales would be donated. Consumers' participation in a cause can significantly influence their attitudes toward the cause, and it may well lead to their purchasing the company's product.

The study highlighted the gap in attitude-behavior, similar to the research by Hyllegard et al., (2010) where participants' perception of CRM predicted their attitude, but failed to influence the purchase intention. Our findings forecast the attitude when there is a congruence between the product and the cause, but it did not translate into a purchase intention, contradicting with the results of Trimble and Holmes (2013) and Eastman et al., (2019) which signified the importance of the cause/brand alliance in millennials purchase intentions. The inconsistency in results arises because CRM is still in the growth stage in developing economies. Thus, multi-national companies need to frame their CRM strategies, depending on the countries they operate in, as a single CRM campaign may not be equally effective in every country.

The study reveals that the fit between an organization's products/services with the cause supported can build a positive attitude toward the cause, but may not influence the purchase decision. This finding is consistent with the results of Shree et al (2017), who found that Indian consumers were supportive of CRM, but failed to reveal if the support translated to any actual purchases, while a study done in Pakistan affirmed that consumers failed to recollect the brand, even when they were positive about the initiatives (Shabbir et al., 2010). This indicates that consumers in developing nations still place importance on the conventional purchase factors in their decision making, while CSR / CRM are factors that can affect the consumer's attitude, which in turn can act as a savior during negative publicity.

This article contributes theoretically and in practical terms to CRM and consumers' purchasing decision making. The organizations need to understand the changing expect-

tations of the consumers. While it is essential to understand the interplay between the three factors of the cause's attributes: the cause participation, congruence between product and cause, and consumer/cause identification, as the impact of each on attitude and purchase intention differs amongst different generations and can also differ based on geographical boundaries. Marketers should frame their CRM strategies by carefully considering their target market, area of operation and the type of cause to be supported.

## Limitations and Directions For Future Research

Although this study provided relevant and interesting insights toward the attributes of CRM campaigns in the Indian context, it is essential to identify the limitations of this study. First, the sample was collected through the snowball and convenience sam-

pling method, so it cannot be generalized to a large audience. Hence, future research should be more vigilant toward the sample number and its representation. Second, the study was limited only to millennials; hence, other generations' perceptions of CSR and CRM might be different. Though the reach of the internet is very vast, and information is readily available for millennials, their orientation toward CSR or social responsibility may be different. Hence, a comparative study to understand the differences should be undertaken. Penultimately, the study was undertaken in the Indian context, so we cannot generalize the results to other countries with distinct cultures, lifestyles, and a different economic status. Finally, the study considered only attitude as the mediator, future research in this direction may consider consumers' civic behavior, CSR support, and brand image as mediators.

## References

- Aaker, David A. 2005. *Strategic Market Management* (7th ed.). New York: John Wiley.
- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review & recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411–423.
- Ankitha, S. and Basri, S. (2019), "The effect of relational selling on life insurance decision making in India", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 7, pp. 1505-1524.
- Anuar, Marhana Mohamed, and Osman Mohamad. (2012). Effects of skepticism on consumer response toward cause-related marketing in Malaysia. *International Business Research*, 5 (9):98-105.
- Anupam Singh & Priyanka Verma (2017). Driving brand value through CSR initiatives: An empirical study in Indian perspective. *Global Business Review*, Vol 19, iss. 1, pp. 85-98.
- Bae, M. (2016). Effects of various types of cause-related marketing (CRM) ad appeals on consumers' visual attention, perceptions, and purchase intentions. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 22(6), 810–834.
- Barone, M. J., Norman, A. T., & Miyazaki, A. D. (2007). Consumer response to retailer use of cause-related marketing: is more fit better? *Journal of Retailing*, 83(4), 437–445.
- Barone, Michael & Miyazaki, Anthony & Taylor, Kimberly. (2000). The Influence of Cause-Related Marketing on Consumer Choice: Does One Good Turn Deserve Another? *Jour-*

- nal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28, 248-262.
- Baltar, F. and Brunet, I. (2012). Social research 2.0: virtual snowball sampling method using Facebook. *Internet Research*, Vol. 22No. 1, pp. 57-74.
- Bendapudi, N., Singh, S. N., & Bendapudi, V. (1996). Enhancing helping behavior: An integrative framework for promotion planning. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(3), 33-49.
- Benezra, K. (1996). Cause & effects marketing. *Brand week*, Vol. 22, pp. 38-40.
- Berger, I.E., Cunningham, P.H. & Drumwright, M.E. (2006). Identity, identification, & relationship through social alliances. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 128-137.
- Bhattacharya, C.B. & Sen, S. (2003). Consumer-company identification: a framework for understanding consumers' relationships with companies. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 2, pp. 76-88.
- Bigne-Alcaniz, E., Curras-Perez, R. and Sanchez-Garcia, I. (2009). Brand credibility in cause-related marketing: the moderating role of consumer values. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 437-447.
- Bronn, P. & A. Vrioni. (2001). Corporate Social Responsibility & Cause Related Marketing: An Overview. *International Journal of Advertising*, 20(2), 205-222.
- Brown, Tom J. & Peter A. Dacin. (1997). The Company & the Product: Corporate Associations & Consumer Product Responses. *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (January), 68-84.
- Cause-driven marketing engages Asia*. (2016, July 25). WARC. Accessed on 07 July-2020, URL [https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/news/causedriven\\_marketing\\_engages\\_asia/37128](https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/news/causedriven_marketing_engages_asia/37128)
- Chang, C.-T. (2008). To Donate or Not to Donate? Product Characteristics and Framing Effects of Cause-Related Marketing on Consumer Purchase Behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 25(12), 1089-1110.
- Chang, C.T. and Cheng, Z.H. (2015). Tugging on heartstrings: shopping orientation, mindset, and consumer responses to cause-related marketing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 127 No. 2, pp. 337-350.
- Chattananon, A., Lawley, M., Supparerkchaisakul, N., & Leelayouthayothin, L. (2008). Impacts of Thai cause-related marketing on corporate image. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, Vol. 3(4), pp. 348-63.
- Chin, W. (2001). *PLS—Graph user's guide. PLS-graph user's guide version 3.0*. Houston, TX: Soft Modeling Inc.
- Chowdhury, T. G. & Khare, A. (2011). Matching a cause with self-schema: the moderating effect on brand preference. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(8), 825-842.
- Cone (2010). 2010 cause evolution study. Retrieved from <https://www.conecomm.com/research-blog/2010-cause-evolution-study>
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 4th Ed., Pearson Education Limited, UK.
- Drumwright, Minette E. (1996). Company Advertising with a Social Dimension: The Role of Noneconomic Criteria. *Journal of Marketing*, 60 (October), 71-87.
- Duarte, Paulo Alexandre de Oliveira Silva, Susana Costa e. (2018). The role of consumer-cause identification & attitude in the intention to purchase cause-related products. *International Marketing Review*.

- Eastman, J. K., Smalley, K. B., & Warren, J. C. (2019). The Impact of Cause-Related Marketing on Millennials' Product Attitudes and Purchase Intentions. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 25(6), 799–826.
- Ellen, P. S., Webb, D. J., & Mohr, L. A. (2006). Building corporate associations: Consumer attributions for corporate socially responsible programs. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34, 147-157.
- Eurostat (2009). Youth in Europe: A Statistical Portrait. Brussels: European Commission.
- Eurostat (2015). Being Young in Europe Today. Brussels: European Commission.
- File, K.M. & Prince, R.A. (1998). Cause related marketing & corporate philanthropy in the privately held enterprise. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 17 No. 14, pp. 1529-1539.
- For a Worthwhile Cause. (2007, May 5). Financial Express. Retrieved from <https://www.financialexpress.com/archive/for-a-worthwhile-cause/198440/>
- Gray, R. (2000). Developing a tight fit is crucial to CRM. *Marketing*, No. 4, pp. 37-8.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.), Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson Prentice-Hall.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Anderson, E. R., Tatham, L. R., & Black, C. W. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis* (5th ed.), London, UK: Prentice-Hall.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2014). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM)*, Los Angeles: Sage Publication.
- Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Hopkins, L., & Kuppelwieser, V. G. (2014). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM): An emerging tool for business research. *European Business Review*, 26, 106–121.
- Hair, J.F., Ringle, C.M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice*, 19(2), 139–151.
- Hajjat, M. (2003). Effect of cause-related marketing on attitudes and purchase intentions: The moderating role of cause involvement and donation size. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*, 11, no. 1: 93–109.
- Haley, E. (1996). Exploring the construct of organization as source: consumers' understandings of organizational sponsorship of advocacy advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 19-35.
- Hammad, H., El-Bassiouny, N., Paul, P., & Mukhopadhyay, K. (2014). Antecedents and consequences of consumers' attitudinal dispositions toward cause-related marketing in Egypt. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 5(3), 414–445.
- Hill, R.P. (2017). Essay on Moral Marketer Behaviour: Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility. *Global Business Review*, 18(3\_suppl), S70-S74.
- Hoefler, S. & Keller, K.L. (2002). Building brand equity through corporate societal marketing. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 78-89.
- Hou, J., Du, L. & Li, J. (2008). Cause's attributes influencing consumer's purchasing intention: empirical evidence from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing & Logistics*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 363-380.
- Hulland, J. (1999). Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20(2), 195–204.
- Human, D., & Terblanche, N. S. (2012). Who receives what? The influence of the donation mag-

- nitude and donation recipient in cause-related marketing. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 24(2), 141–160.
- Hyllegard, K., Yan, R., Ogle, J. & Attmann, J. (2010). The influence of gender, social cause, charitable support, & message appeal on Gen Y's responses to cause-related marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(1-2), 100-123.
- Joe Vanhamme, Adam Lindgreen, Jon Reast & Nathalie van Popering (2011). To Do Well by Doing Good: Improving Corporate Image Through Cause-Related Marketing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 109 No 3, pp. 259-274g.
- Jonas-Dwyer, D., & Pospisil, R. (2004). *The Millennial effect: Implications for academic development*. Report for HERDSA, Australia.
- Kim, Y. J., & Lee, W.-N. (2009). Overcoming consumer skepticism in cause-related marketing: The effects of corporate social responsibility and donation size claim objectivity. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 15(4), 465–483.
- Kline, R. B. (1998). *Principles & practice of structural equation modeling*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2012). *L. (2006) Marketing management*
- Kotler, L., & Nancy, L. (2002). *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most for Your Company & Your Cause*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Ladero, M., Casquet, C. & Singh, J. (2015). Understanding factors influencing consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing. *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 20, 52-70.
- Lafferty, B. A., & Edmonson, D. R. (2009). Portraying the cause instead of the brand in cause-related marketing ads: Does it matter? *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 17(2), pp. 129-43.
- Lafferty, B. and Edmondson, D. (2013). A note on the role of cause type in cause-related marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 7, pp. 1455-1460.
- Lafferty, B.A., Lueth, A.K. & McCafferty, R. (2016). An evolutionary process model of cause-related marketing & systematic review of the empirical literature. *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 11, pp. 951-970.
- Lichtenstein, D. R., Drumwright, M. E., and Braig, B. M. (2004). The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Donations to Corporate-Supported Non-profits. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 16-32.
- Lohmöller, J.B. (1989). *Latent variable path modeling with partial least squares*. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag.
- Luna, I. R. D., Montoro-Ríos, F., Liébana-Cabanillas, F., & Luna, J. G. D. (2017). NFC technology acceptance for mobile payments: *A Brazilian Perspective*. *Review of Business Management*, 19(63), 82-103.
- Marhana Mohamed Anuar and Osman Mohamad (2012). Consumer Response to Cause-related Marketing: A Case of Malaysia. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 71-76.
- Nan, X., & Heo, K. (2007). Consumer response to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives: examining the role of brand-cause fit in cause-related marketing. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 36(2), pp. 63-74.
- Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Office, C. S., & Implementation, P. (2017). *Youth in India 2017*.
- Pandey, S., Chawla, D., Jeong, L. S., Bautista, R., & Santos, J. E. (2020). An Experimental Approach to Examine the Antecedents of Attitude, Intention, and Loyalty Towards Cause-related Marketing: The Case of India and the Philippines. *Global Business Review*.
- Patel, J.D., Gadhavi, D.D. & Shukla, Y.S. (2017). Consumers' responses to cause related marketing: moderating influence of cause involvement & skepticism on attitude and purchase intention. *International Review on Public & Nonprofit Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 1-18.
- Petrenko, O. V., Aime, F., Ridge, J., & Hill, A. (2016). Corporate Social Responsibility or CEO Narcissism? CSR Motivations and Organizational Performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 37(2), 262-279.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, N. P., & Lee, J. Y. (2003). The mismeasure of management & its implications for leadership research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 615–656.
- Prensky M (2001). *Digital natives, digital immigrants'* part 1. *On the Horizon* 9(5): 2–6.
- Richardson, H. A., Simmering, M. J., & Sturman, M. C. (2009). A tale of three perspectives: Examining post hoc statistical techniques for detection & correction of common method variance. *Organizational Research Methods*, 12(4), 762–800.
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Becker, J-M. (2015). "SmartPLS 3," [www.smartpls.com](http://www.smartpls.com)
- Samu, S., & Wymer, W. (2009). The effect of fit & dominance in cause marketing communications. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(4), 432-440.
- Sciulli, L. M., & Bebeko, C. (2005). Social cause versus profit-oriented advertisements: An analysis of information content and emotional appeals. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 11(2–3), 17–36.
- Sen, S. and Bhattacharya, C.B. (2001). Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 225-243.
- Shabbir, S., Kaufmann, H. R., Ahmad, I., & M. Qureshi, I. (2010). Cause-related marketing and consumers purchase intention: the moderating role of brand awareness and corporate image. *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 4(6), pp. 1229-35.
- Sheikh, S.-R. & Beise-Zee, R. (2011). Corporate social responsibility or cause-related marketing? The role of cause specificity of CSR. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 27-39.
- Shree, D., Gupta, A., & Sagar, M. (2017). Effectiveness of cause-related marketing for differential positioning of market entrant in developing market: An exploratory study in Indian context. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 22(2), 1–13.
- Shruti Gupta and Julie Pirsch. (2006). The company-cause-customer fit decision in cause-related marketing Shruti. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol.6, pp. 314–326.
- Skarmeas, D. and Leonidou, C.N. (2013). When consumers doubt, watch out! The role of CSR skepticism. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 10, pp. 1831-1838.
- Strahilevitz, M., & Myers, J. G. (1998). Donations to charity as purchase incentives. How well they work may depend on what you are trying to sell. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 434–446.
- Subrahmanyam, S. (2004). Effects of price premium & product type on the choice of cause-re-



- lated brands: a Singapore perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 13(2), pp. 116-24.
- Sweta Srivastava Malla & Ruhee Singh (2017). Does Corporate Social Responsibility Matter in Buying Behaviour? —A Study of Indian Consumers. *Global Business Review*, 18(3) 781–794.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. (1985). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior, in S. Worcehl and W.G. Austin (eds.). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. 2nd ed., (Nelson-Hall, Chicago IL), pp. 7-24.
- Tangari, A.H., Folse, J.A.G., Burton, S. and Kees, J. (2010). The moderating influence of consumers' temporal orientation on the framing of societal needs and corporate responses in cause-related marketing campaigns. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 35-50.
- Ting, H., Cyril de Run, E., & Thurasamy, R. (2015). Young Adults' Attitude Towards Advertising: a multi-group analysis by ethnicity. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão e Negócio* 17(54), 769-787.
- Twenge JM (2006). *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – & More Miserable than Ever before*. New York: Free Press.
- Vanhamme, J., Lindgreen, A., Reast, J., & van Popering, N. (2012). To do well by doing good: Improving corporate image through cause-related marketing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(3), 259–274.
- Varadarajan, P.R. & Menon, A. (1988). Cause-related marketing: a coalignment of marketing strategy & corporate philanthropy. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 58-74.
- Webb, Deborah J. & Lois A. Möhr. 1998. A Typology of Consumer Responses to Cause-Related Marketing: From Skeptics to Socially Concerned. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 17, 2: 226-238.
- Zdravkovic, S., Magnusson, P. & Stanley, S.M. (2010). Dimensions of fit between a brand and a social cause and their influence on attitudes. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 151-160.

## Appendix

### *Measurement Items*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Indictors</b>	<b>Items</b>
Cause Participation	CP1	I prefer to choose the products of company X, as it supports the social cause of “Fit India” in which I can participate.
	CP2	I will pay more for the products of company X if I can participate in their social cause of “Fit India.”
	CP3	I prefer to choose the products company X if it frequently participates in the social cause of “Fit India.”
	CP4	If company X has not made any contribution to society this year, I will still choose them if they have participated in causes in the past
Congruence between Product and Cause	CPC1	I think it is valuable for company X to participate in the social cause of “Fit India.”
	CPC2	I think more improvements will be made to society if company X participates in “Fit India” as it relates more to its operations.
	CPC3	I think there is compatibility between the product type (footwear) and cause supported (Fit India) by company X.
Consumer Cause Identification	CCI1	Not at all appealing - - - Very Appealing
	CCI2	Not important - - - Important
	CCI3	Worthless - - - Valuable
	CCI4	Meaningless - - - Meaningful
Attitude towards the cause	ATT1	Unfavorable - - - Favorable
	ATT2	Negative - - - Positive
	ATT3	Weak - - - Strong
	ATT4	Bad - - - Good
Purchase Intention	PI1	I am eager to learn more about the product of company X related to its campaign.
	PI2	I will likely participate in the campaign by purchasing the product of company X.
	PI3	I would be willing to purchase the product of company X, which serves the social cause of “Fit India.”
	PI4	I would consider purchasing from company X to help it donate to a cause.