

Consumers' Motivation for Participating in Cause Related Marketing : An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The paper investigated the consumers' perceptions of cause marketing efforts of companies by examining the real-life experiences of the customers. Cause marketing initiatives are increasingly becoming a prominent aspect of the marketing mix; a lot of companies are jumping onto the bandwagon, primarily to distinguish themselves in the homogeneous markets. However, it is only a recent phenomenon that the companies are beginning to appreciate how corporate giving can be adopted as an effective marketing strategy. The paper, by using a qualitative approach, attempted to understand the meaning of CRM from the consumers' perspective: As to what influences the decision making on the part of the consumers? It identified various motivational factors that drive the behavior of consumers exposed to a CRM initiative. The paper provides valuable insights to academicians and practitioners as to how to communicate and what to emphasize while designing cause marketing communication initiatives.

Keywords : cause marketing, consumer behavior, qualitative approach, marketing strategy, CRM

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The business houses and corporates these days, both globally and domestically, are embracing cause marketing as an effective marketing strategy primarily to distinguish themselves in the homogeneous markets. As per the IEG Report, cause marketing in the U.S. is predicted to reach \$1.84 billion in 2014, a projected estimated increase of 3.4% over 2013. In India, the trend is catching up in a big way too. Cause marketing is emerging as an ingenious way to make the companies act as socially responsible corporate citizens by supporting worthy causes, and at the same time, improve the bottom line through better sales. Though cause marketing has been the interest area of practitioners and academicians for quite some time, however, academic researchers are still exploring and are attempting to understand the fundamental question as to what really motivates the consumers to react the way they do to a cause marketing offering? The way the consumers perceive the offerings would perhaps further prompt them to buy or not buy the products as the case may be. Hence, there is a need for the marketers to know deeply as to what does the consumers truly feel about the offerings and what drives their behavior with respect to cause marketing per se. This research is an attempt to explore the same.

Review of Literature

Cause related marketing (CRM) is believed to have come in the limelight due to American Express in the year 1983 with the campaign aimed at restoring the Statue of Liberty. As per the campaign, the company took up the cause of

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restoring the Statue of Liberty by promising to give a penny each time the customer swiped the American Express card. It also donated a dollar for each of the new cards issued. As a result of the campaign, the usage of the card went up by 30% as compared to the previous year, and it was found that the company could donate \$1.7 million for the cause adopted (Andreasen, 1996). There is ample evidence in the literature suggesting that the consumer perception and image gets enhanced through cause marketing initiatives (Dahl & Lavack, 1995; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 1997, 2000; Lafferty, 1996; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

Moreover, there has been growing concern relating to social issues, which has, in turn, led the companies to adopt social causes so as to become attractive and to differentiate themselves in many businesses, primarily the ones involving consumer engagement (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000). Perhaps, companies have come to realize that in the context of the growing competitive scenario in the homogeneous markets, CRM can be used as an ingenious tool to differentiate oneself effectively (Pandey, 2007). Literature suggests that the associations with the causes have a significant impact on how consumers perceive the company and make their purchase decisions (Brown & Dacin, 1997). The companies that were perceived to be socially responsible were found to have a favorable image, and in turn, were also found to have better sales (Srinivasulu, 2006). Therefore, CRM is understood as a marketing strategy wherein the business aligns itself with a NPO (not for profit organization) for a good cause, which is mutually benefitting to the sponsoring company and the NPO (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1999). Right from early 1980s, there has been a constant increase in such alliances; the reasons can be attributed to the positive responses generated for the companies engaging in such campaigns.

There has been evidence where it has been found that CRM has been adopted as a strategy to enhance the reputation, improve the image of the company, improve employee relationships, and increase revenue and profits. However, a favorable attitude towards a company does not necessarily mean translation to actual purchase behavior by the consumer. There have been studies exploring this area. One such recent study in this regard by Gadhavi, Shukla, and Patel (2014) examined the relationship between the two, that is, attitude and purchase intention. These associations are seemingly mutually benefitting the sponsoring company and the NGOs. NGOs gain tremendously in terms of raising funds and increased awareness (Polonsky & Woods, 2001). Cause marketing programs are believed to generate free publicity and awareness about the causes as well. Literature suggests that the perceptions and the attitude of the consumers towards CRM campaigns are quite essential to ensure effective CRM implementation. There have been surveys to figure out how to increase brand loyalty and awareness from the consumers' perspective. It is quite imperative that such corporate initiatives are perceived favorably by the consumers to ensure the success of such programs (Endacott, 2004). Research has proven that the consumers' willingness to buy from the corporations that are socially responsible is significantly higher as compared to the corporations which are not (Maignan, 2001). Despite being referred to variously in the literature, the consumer centric understanding of CRM is still under researched and calls for further research.

There have been a plethora of studies, both academic and applied, related to cause marketing. There are studies indicating that CRM initiatives might lead to favorable consumer attitude towards the company and also impact the purchase behavior. These associations have suggested to significantly impact the way consumers feel about the company. There have been surveys indicating that consumers, given a choice, would prefer buying products associated with a cause over others (Cone, Feldman, & DaSilva, 2003). However, there have also been evidence in literature suggesting CRM initiatives to be a risky proposition for the company, if not done properly. One such risk is of the company being viewed as exploitative and being self-serving (Drumwright, 1996).

In summary, the literature suggests that when questioned, consumers generally express positive feelings and perceptions about CRM offerings and initiatives by the companies. What perhaps is not clearly shown in the research is the deeper understanding of what CRM actually means to the customer? Hence, there is a need for a thorough investigation of the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior with respect to CRM, with a view to examine what drives their behavior with respect to the same. The present study is an attempt to fill the gap in this direction by undertaking a research study at the micro - level by focusing on the individual components that constitute the CRM campaign, essentially the consumers.

Research Design and Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative approach was undertaken to delve into consumers' experiences with respect to CRM offerings. Data was primarily collected from the Delhi/NCR region using non probability sampling techniques, namely snowball and purposive sampling. The techniques thus provided the benefits of reaching out to the consumers who were familiar with the CRM campaigns. Sixteen interviews were conducted in local coffee shops/eating outlets in the study area. This included nine men and seven women between the ages of 19 to 45 years. The quality of information received from the respondents was the preference rather than the number of respondents who were interviewed. Since the idea was to let the consumers open up freely about what they thought about CRM, a semi structured interview framework was adopted for the purpose of this study (refer to Appendix 1). The time period of the study is from July 2013 to February 2014.

Analysis and Discussion

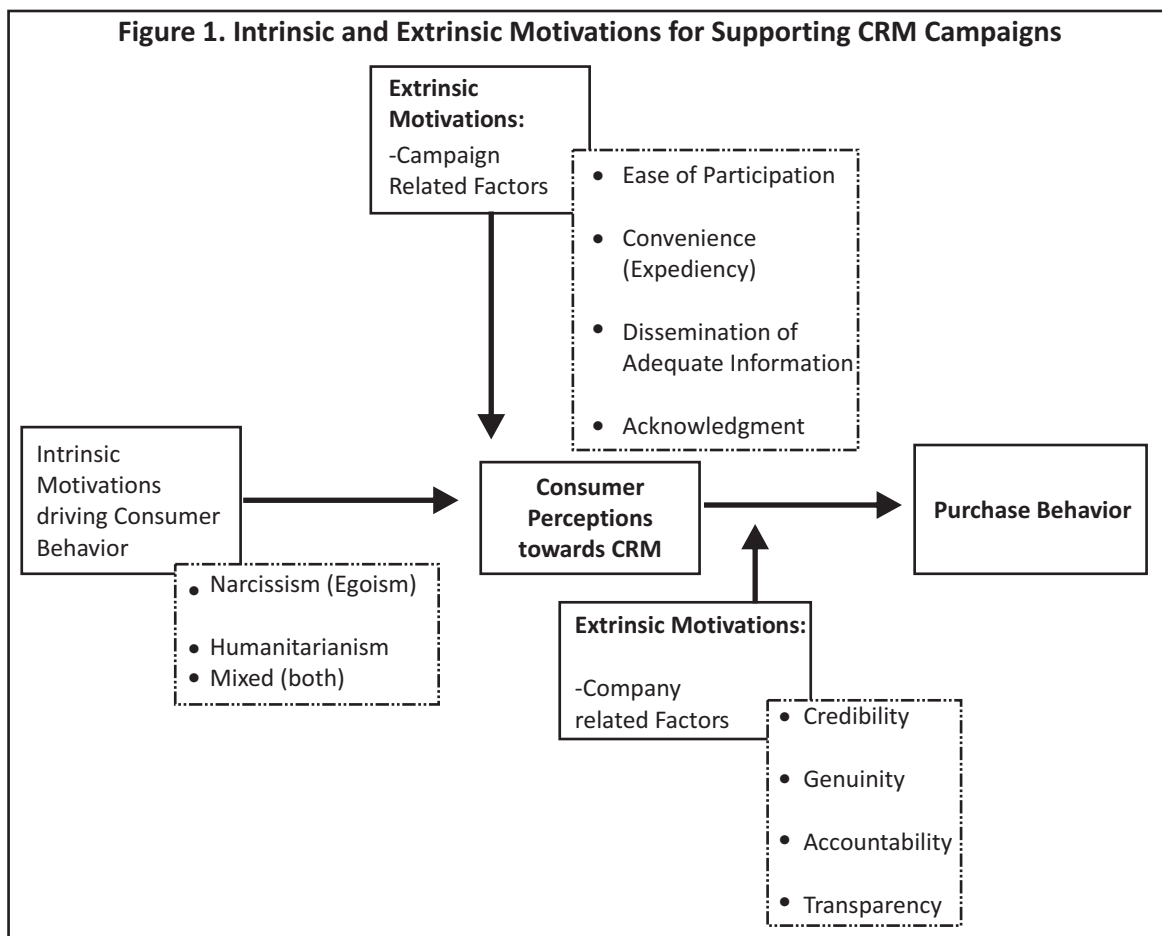
Previously, attempts have been made to understand and explore the perceptions and attitude of the consumers with respect to cause marketing. For instance, Webb and Mohr (1998) conducted a qualitative survey based study. The study brought forth and suggested four major consumer groups, that is, Skeptics, Balancers, Attribution Oriented, and Socially Concerned. The study was undertaken to understand the driving force behind the consumers so as to gain an in depth understanding of the reasons behind the same. Another study in a similar context was undertaken with a view to measure consumers' attitude towards the firm or a brand offering cause enjoined offerings (Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992 ; Smith & Alcorn, 1991). These studies highlighted the role of individual differences as a critical defining factor impacting consumers' response to CRM. Similarly, a study by Cui, Trent, Sullivan, and Matiru (2003) provided information as to how to effectively structure CRM promotions with a view to build an effective CRM strategy.

However, in all the previous studies, what has been missing is a comprehensive conceptualization of the consumer behavior from the consumers' point of view. This paper addresses the same area of research by undertaking a consumer centric approach to explore the fundamental driving force, which enhances knowledge, giving insights into the consumers' behavior that would help marketers' segment the market accordingly, and devise appropriate strategy about the same. The seminal study by Webb and Mohr (1998) is the only available typology in the literature so far. However, it lacks relevance in the current context, and this study thus highlights and adds to the current understanding by highlighting the different motivations that drive an individual to behave in a certain way, and the marketers need to be aware of the same so as to target the consumers effectively and appropriately.

The study suggests that the consumers have both positive and negative perceptions about CRM; though primarily, people held positive perceptions about the phenomenon. Based on the responses, as per the study, the CRM perceptions of the consumers are found to be categorized into two broad noticeable categories, namely intrinsic motivational factors and extrinsic motivational factors (Figure 1). Intrinsic factors being the consumer related motivational factors (i.e. prompted by narcissism (egoism), humanitarianism (social conscience), or both). Whereas, extrinsic factors are the campaign and company related motivational factors (the bulleted statements are the quotes given by various respondents pertaining to the study, corroborating the point of analysis).

Intrinsic Motivations Driving CRM Behaviour

↳ **Narcissism (Egoism) :** Interestingly, it was found that though the reason for CRM participation by the people may appear to be altruistic in nature ; however, it might not always be guided by the social streak in an individual. It was found to be sometimes guided by the innate sense of recognition one seeks from one's peers and the people around in return of having done something "good," as is evident by the following remarks made by the respondents of the study:



↳ “I think it is very easy to be selfish, so knowing that you are being selfless is good.”

↳ “I guess once we do participate in a socially accepted cause, it brings along a sense of self-worth, contentment, and eventually some peace of mind, which leads to happiness, which in turn brings me peace of mind. What goes around comes around.”

↳ “I do like myself to be viewed as a good person by my peers. I guess most of us, if not everybody, would like to be viewed as a good person. So helping a cause makes you come out as good person and not as a selfish being who simply does everything for himself.”

↳ “I think people respect that I am doing something good. I mean, to feel like you are helping, being sensitive to a cause, you are contributing to the society. In some way, knowing that you are perceived good feels good. It is good to be perceived by others in a good way always.”

↳ “Maybe, people will not perceive me as a selfish guy. It kind of changes your image instantly. I felt this when I shared the experience with my friends, and people view you differently. You are supporting a cause which will be benefitting somebody directly or indirectly. And people then think that okay, this guy is willing to put in for others. People then see you in a good way. It reaffirms that wow, I am a good person who could do something ... something not merely done for the sake of mere personal gain alone.”

↳ **Humanitarianism (Social Conscience) :** It was further noticed that the respondents' purchase of a CRM product was partly because of the genuine want to help, that is, because of social conscience and kindness.

Whereas for some, as mentioned earlier, it was prompted by the egoistic desire of accomplishment and achievement. However, in both the cases, the respondents felt good for having given back to society. Respondents felt good about having contributed to the welfare for the larger good of the society.

☞ “I think personally, you feel a sense of satisfaction of having done something for the society. Though one feels that one person cannot make much of a difference, but I think it always feels good and nice inside to know that you have somewhat contributed towards the change.”

Quite some respondents held the view that CRM initiatives by the companies in the form of events provided an excellent opportunity to connect with the community and the people around. It brought them together for a higher cause, and the sense of camaraderie was felt as they participated in the campaign, as is described below :

☞ “I think when an initiative is done at the collective level, it makes you feel connected and responsible for each other - like this “Raahgiri Day” initiative by Hindustan Times. I believe that together, the difference can be brought about, and it also instills a sense of self satisfaction that you are being a part of that collective.”

☞ “I think I am doing good to the kids when I go the events like “Dastakar”. I am not a rich person who can donate millions to a cause. But this provides me with an excellent opportunity to make them happy in my small little way.”

☞ “It is great to know that as a society, we are beginning to come together for causes which are other than your personal motive behind them alone. And it is like you have always stood for something within and when the right opportunity comes; we all unanimously become the part of that movement and go an extra mile to support the same... be it for a day, or a specific month, or a week. It seems like an inherent way of giving to the society.”

Generally, respondents with a genuine desire to support a cause spoke of CRM as a private experience, since the motivation was personal and internal.

☞ “To me, I don't really want to showcase to the whole world that I am involved in some sort of charity ; I do it because I feel for it. I don't feel the need that the people and the world should know that I have a good heart and I am supporting a cause.”

☞ “Well, though it is my personal value system, I think that it should not be spoken about much. The idea is that one gets rewarded in this life or the afterlife, you see. I mean, if it gets rewarded in this lifetime in terms of recognition and fame, then you might not get it later, in terms of good luck, as the result has already fructified. But well, as I said, it is my personal belief. I would do charity, or support a cause only if I internally and genuinely feel for it.”

☞ “I believe that people wouldn't even want to know about my participation...in fact, it might just boomerang since people might take it cynically, and think of me as a person who is rather showing off something, rather than appreciating my willingness to stand for a cause.”

Respondents expressed the importance of cause marketing as an effective opportunity for individuals who wished to positively impact change in the society, and it was also found that the respondents expressed that CRM is effective for the fact that any meaningful change can be brought about through a collective effort, which may not be possible for an individual to bring about on his own:

☞ “One may try and contribute within one's limited capacity; I know I am not so rich to make obscene donations for a cause for the fact that I am not a crorepati. But within my limitations, I can do what I can. And CRM gives that opportunity. So, it is like knowing where one is in life and then doing what one can do best and then feel good about it too. If you know that somewhere it is making a difference, if you donate to an organization that is sincere and will contribute the money to the specified cause, it is great.”

☞ “I have a history of cancer in my family and I have seen people close to me being affected by it at one point or the other, and I feel helpless about it. I am not a cancer researcher..Don't know the therapy about it..But when things are happening and you can't seem to do anything about it, it gives you that sense of powerlessness..So, there is a personal side to it. And I thus feel passionate about it. CRM gives me that opportunity to have contributed for the cause and I feel that sense of satisfaction to have done something about it.”

☞ “It feels good to have contributed and to have had made a difference in the little way I could.”

☞ “Immense satisfaction is the word. I feel satisfied that my buying the product has in a way helped people in need. So, it is satisfying to give back and contribute for a cause.”

☞ “I would personally describe it as..... self-fulfilling, feeling great about myself, feeling a certain sense of worth, being responsible towards others who benefit from me after buying this product. So, it is like doing something so simple which can make an impact, then why not do it. So, if it is easy, doable, and simple, why wouldn't I do it ? Infact, it would make me feel bad to not have done it..you see what I mean.”

☞ **Mixed (Humanitarianism and Narcissism) :** Some respondents expressed mixed feelings about the motivations pertaining to participation in cause marketing activities. They described altruism as a personal experience, and at the same time, expressed the desire to share it with others as well.

☞ “I think for me, it is important to share with people about such things as it may make them think about the cause, and they might be inspired to support the cause. So, it is a dual benefit - you feel good to share , and at the same time, people might just want to support the cause as well. It is a double satisfaction. It is not merely benefitting personally, but also helps the cause.”

☞ “I think, why not share. I mean, it demonstrates probably that you are not just another person, who like everybody else, is averagely spending the day....rather, you have done something, which goes in for the benefit a larger group of people. And so, sharing might just make the other person think that "oh why should I not buy the product too because it is for a good cause."....you know ..so it helps.”

Extrinsic Motivations Driving CRM Behaviour

Consumers' responses or choice behavior are not independent of the external factors affecting the choice. It was found that apart from the above enumerated intrinsic factors, there were various external factors which motivated the behavior of the consumers with respect to CRM. The sponsoring company plays a significant part in contributing to the motivation level of the consumers to participate (such as, intention of the company, perceived sincerity on the part of the company, credibility, accountability, and information sharing, that is, transparency on the part of the company). It was also found that along with the sponsoring company's related factors, there were campaign related factors such as convenience, added value, donation related factors, acknowledgment, ease of participation as well that contributed and drove the behavior of consumers with respect to CRM.

☞ **Sponsoring (For- Profit) Company's Related Factors :** The research suggests that the nature or the perceived sincerity on the part of the company influences the consumer's evaluation, and in turn, the motivation for the consumer to participate. The following will enumerate the respondent's perception about the nature of the company and how it drives the motivation to participate in the CRM campaign:

☞ **Credibility:** The perceived reliability and trustworthiness of the sponsoring company was found to play an important role in forming a positive attitude towards a brand. Though it is understood and largely recognized by people that companies are primarily guided by their self-serving motives, but the willingness to participate in a

CRM campaign gets established if the company turns out to be reliable on the whole.

☞ “See, I wouldn't just believe the company to be credible and feel good if it supports the cause, who has otherwise been indulging in malicious practices...say, for instance, Reliance coming up with a crusade against corruption would just not make sense. I think credibility and reliability on the part of the company is very important.”

☞ “The company must prove itself to be reliable, otherwise it would just be taken in as a gimmick to deceive people and extract money.”

➔ **Perceived Genuinity** : Some respondents asked for communication or demonstration by the company to validate if their genuinity would be quite useful in forming a positive impact about the company. One of the respondents elaborated that the willingness of the company to support the cause is primarily demonstrated by their amount of donation for the particular cause.

☞ “Well, I believe that a larger amount of profit contributed to the cause depicts greater willingness to support a cause, I mean if the company is donating ₹ 1 out of a ₹ 1000 item, it is not a good incentive. Whereas, you know things like if for a ₹ 10 item, ₹ 1 is being given or set aside for the cause, that is, which is 10% of the amount given, that's more of an incentive. I feel that my buying the product - ₹ 10 product as opposed to the ₹ 1000 product- has made some difference. And it also seems that the sponsoring company genuinely believes in the cause, and is less selfish.”

☞ “If more money is going towards the cause, it is always better, be it whatever cause. It will be such a big incentive to know that a major part goes to the cause and not merely to the sponsoring company.”

☞ “Like I mentioned before, I think it shouldn't be just the consumer making the contribution ; okay, if the company has chosen to take on the CRM campaign, then it should make some contributions itself too, right? I mean, if the consumers are shelling out for a cause, the company should contribute as well, it has to be a corroborative, joint effort! For me, I guess this is very important.”

Respondents pointed out that the companies should be willing to forego some of their profits by themselves and should not be covering out the entire costs of contribution by the consumers alone. This behavior seemingly somewhat explains the genuine desire and support from the company towards the cause, and makes it encouraging on the part of the consumers to participate in the CRM campaign.

☞ “The companies should not charge a premium for CRM campaigns. It is almost like you are being forced to pay up for what company chooses to support.”

☞ “Also, well everyone is trying hard to make money, it is not easy. So, if the company tells me that a good 20% or 25% of the proceeds from the product goes towards the cause, I will be satisfied of the company's intention that the company genuinely wants to help.”

☞ **Accountability** : Respondents expressed the need for the companies to be transparent. It was found that the respondents suggested the need for the company to be accountable for the money it raises for a particular cause.

☞ “I would definitely like to know where and how much money gets transferred to the cause. Does it really help the cause? This would definitely make me feel more satisfied.”

☞ “If the company is speaking of supporting a cause, then it is the company's responsibility to disclose the

information related to the amount and contribution made to the particular cause. I would prefer this.”

↳ **Transparency** : Similarly, respondents expressed that their intent to purchase would increase if the sponsoring company was transparent of the CRM activities it undertook. This is believed to increase the faith in the company and builds up a favorable attitude towards the company.

↳ “It is always better to have the company share out as to what all has been done with the money collected on the premise of the CRM programme. I mean, if Aircel is doing the Save Tiger Campaign, then it is quite imperative on the part of the company to tell the consumers how did it help the tigers? You know what I mean.”

The perceived responsibility, sincerity, genuinity of the companies involved in the CRM programs are determined by various factors. However, in the present study, the accountability and transparency about such campaigns seemed to play an important role in shaping up a favorable attitude towards the brand.

➡ **Campaign Related Factors:** In the study, it was further found that there are certain factors which are related to the campaign that influenced the consumers' participation in the CRM campaigns, enumerated as under :

↳ **Ease of Participation (Choice)** : Ease of participation was described by various respondents as a vital factor in motivating them to participate in the campaign. The likeliness of the participation increases if the campaign fits in their daily routine.

↳ "The Times of India Raahgiri campaign was running just outside my house. I cross that street every day. So, it just happened. I like what they are doing. And with my participation, I felt good. Honestly, if it was too far, I wouldn't have gone."

It was also observed that the participants pointed out that if the choice of making a donation was given to them, it was received more favorably. One of the respondents explained how the cashier in one of the leading stores gave her the option and the following was her response :

↳ “It makes more sense if I am given the option of whether to donate or how much to donate rather than having me donate without my permission to some cause which just doesn't make sense to me.”

Most often, in transaction based cause marketing, the donation gets made on its own by mere purchase of the product. For instance, as one buys the ITC Classmate notebook, the donation of ₹ 1 gets triggered on behalf of the consumer to the cause of educating underprivileged children. So, here, the consumer was not given the choice option of how much to donate, or to donate or not to donate.

↳ “I just don't appreciate this kind of cause marketing where I bought something and automatically a part of it gets donated. I mean I feel as if it is forced upon me at my cost. Why should I care?”

It was also found that some consumers preferred being asked about, instead of a forced donation. One respondent pointed out:

↳ “I went to Shoppers Stop recently (in MGF Gurgaon) to buy clothes for myself. So as I went to pay, the cashier asked me if I would like to donate ₹ 2 towards supporting the cause of underprivileged children. It made sense. It is much better than saying pay X amount more or this much amount would go for the cause on your behalf by the company, you know!”

Therefore, this option given to the consumer to participate is seemingly perceived very positively and was found to create a very positive impact on the consumers' mind. The respondents felt quite happy and much satisfied in such cases as against otherwise.

✚ **Convenience (Expediency) :** It was found that the respondents expressed that they normally found it difficult to take out time to support the causes, even if they felt for it strongly. One respondent said,

✚ "Sometimes, one needs that extra nudge to make him donate. Like asking, would you want to contribute? And if one doesn't even bother to ask, it is practically impossible to get one to donate ; everyone seems to be soaked in their lives, and the pace of life is also so fast these days , that it is difficult."

The inclination to participate in such campaigns depends upon the consumers' willingness to help and how much one has to adjust in terms of time, effort, or monetarily. To conclude, it can be said that consumers do the cost benefit analysis, that is, the cost of participation vs. the benefit one derives by participating in any such campaigns.

✚ "The biggest thing with CRM campaigns is that one doesn't have to go out of the way to help. Right? It gives such sense of satisfaction and is so easy."

✚ "It is such a small contribution on each person's head, it is great. Otherwise, who would take out time from their busy lives for any such thing? That's difficult."

✚ **Acknowledgment :** It was found that the respondents suggested the need for some sort of acknowledgment for their participation as a token of gratitude. For instance, many people described appreciation or some sort of recognizing gesture for their contribution as an important motivating factor.

✚ "You know how AIDS campaign has initiated this whole association of pink ribbon with the cause of supporting and spreading AIDS awareness. This is good. You know one can pin that ribbon on the shirt, or keep it in the bag. It is quite encouraging to keep the ribbon and share with the rest that I am a supporter of such and such cause and people recognize that. It feels good."

✚ "Being Human T shirts! This comes to my mind instantly. How ingeniously Salman has been able to do it. You know people wear it with pride saying that yes I support the cause of Salman Khan's foundation. This recognition is truly a motivator in itself."

It was suggested that receiving something in return as a token of participation really encourages people to participate more. A small gift can symbolically suggest that one has participated in the campaign and can, in turn, encourage and inspire others to participate as well.

✚ "I think it would be so nice if I receive a free gift along with my contribution to a cause ; it need not be a big thing. But probably, a small card or badge or something which I can keep with myself and share with my friends."

✚ **Dissemination of Adequate Information :** It was found that the respondents suggested that a mere advertisement speaking of the company's declaration of donating X amount towards the cause was not perceived to be sufficient by the respondents. Respondents stressed on the need for information to be shared by the company in an appropriate manner and on a timely basis. It was also found that the respondents suggested that if possible, the company should disclose information about how much contribution (monetarily) has been made by the company to the cause, that is, how much difference is made to the given cause. This would encourage the consumers to participate more.

✚ "If the cause campaign is an ongoing campaign, then the company must come out and also share what has been done with the funds collected last year, you see. I would be interested to know the impact. I would be more satisfied if I knew where exactly did my money go? Did it make a difference? Also, if I have not participated so far, I would

be motivated to do so because I would know the difference is getting created.”

Information sharing can also help to reduce the general disbelief and skepticism around the CRM campaign. Also, if the utilization of the funds collected through CRM is clearly shown by the company, it is believed to motivate them further to participate.

“I think we all are driven by results. We need to know where did the money go and what actually happened.”

“If the company is claiming that they stand for a cause and wish to help it, then it is their responsibility to tell us what they have been doing about the same. I mean, if it is an ongoing cause, then what were the contributions that were made last year? So if they come out and tell us that this is where the money got utilized, you feel wow! Some difference has been made, instead of wondering - was it worth it? This would encourage me more to participate further as well.”

It was found that the consumers looked for more information so as to make sense out of a campaign. A campaign saying, “Go Green” splashed all over the site of sale comes out more as a deception since consumers are not able to evaluate the CRM initiative properly. It was further observed that it is important to give out adequate information about the campaign as it can further trigger consumer interest and can induce the consumers to purchase the products.

Conclusion

In the light of the present study, it is safe to conclude that though there is no denying the fact that the traditional purchase criteria, that is, product, price, and so forth remain valid when it comes to buying any product; however, consumers are willing to buy for the cause, provided the important factors driving consumer participation are kept well in mind before rolling out any CRM campaign. The study enhances the current understanding by giving out meaningful insights into the various factors that shape up the perceptions about CRM campaigns, and by exploring the underlying motivations driving the same. The study suggests that consumers can either be driven by humanitarianism, egoism, or both. So, it becomes critical for the marketing manager to clearly understand the segment and design the CRM campaign accordingly. Humanistic motivations are primarily driven by the genuine desire to help; whereas, the narcissistic motivation is driven by the desire for self-satisfaction and other egoistic motivations. It was also found that a company's genuinity and credibility played an important role in shaping up the perception about the campaign. Transparency on the part of the company was another factor that was highlighted to be an important factor in the evaluation of the CRM campaign by the consumers.

Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of this study are, quite clearly, to build the communication strategy of the CRM campaign keeping the discussed factors in mind to make the same more effective. It was also found that consumers somehow felt the need of getting something in return for their participation - a token of appreciation of having done something good, as one respondent clearly mentioned appreciatively about getting a pink ribbon as an acknowledgment of buying a good that promised to contribute to the cause of AIDS. This is perhaps an important cue for a marketer aiming to successfully carry out a CRM campaign. Furthermore, the study challenges the underlying assumption that the success of a CRM campaign is driven primarily by the elements of the CRM campaign alone, and not by the intrinsic motivations of the consumers. Hence, it is suggested that ignoring the underlying motivations would be detrimental to the success of the CRM campaign. If the marketers take this into account, then they can lower down the unexplained lack of participation or the varied behavior displayed by the consumers in the marketplace with respect to the CRM offerings. Hence, the consumer-driven strategy alone can give a sustainable competitive advantage in the current context of businesses.

Correct assessment of the motives of the target consumer segment should assist in guiding the marketers to

devise an appropriate CRM strategy. Marketers can further segment the market and can expand by tapping into new market opportunities. The study suggests that communication needs to be adjusted for the underlying motivations of the segment. For instance, one of the respondents suggested the need to receive something in return for pro-social behavior, whereas another respondent, who was primarily driven by pure altruism, stressed the need of complete disclosure and information about the cause and the difference that was created. Thus, the study highlights these nuances relevant for the marketers wishing to adopt CRM as an effective business strategy.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The present research study is restricted by some limiting factors. While interviewing the respondents, we observed that the respondents might have moderated their responses to say something that they felt was more socially acceptable. Furthermore, the desire to conform to the “good” may have prompted them to react favorably as CRM primarily has a positive connotation. Therefore, truthfulness on their part cannot be guaranteed. The study lacked investigators' triangulation; however, care was taken to avoid the investigators' bias.

The study has brought forth valuable information pertaining to the various motivations and their respective drivers that can be incorporated while designing a CRM campaign. For additional insights, further studies with increased demographic and geographic scope can be undertaken, and validation of the variables can be sought by using quantitative methods of research. Studies to clearly identify the consumer groups belonging to different segments (as pointed out in the study) may also be undertaken in the future. Also, cross-cultural studies to assess the differences / similarities across various sub groups can be attempted as well.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

↳ Interview Schedule:

(1) Are you aware of the marketing campaigns where the companies commit to contribute a certain amount of sales price to a cause or NPO? Can you recall any such campaign?

↳ If the respondent gives a reasonable example, go to the next question.

↳ If the respondent gives an unclear answer, ask: what was the campaign about? How did it work?

↳ If the respondent cannot give any example, then probe: for instance, sometimes the local kirana store promises that it will give a certain percentage of the price you pay to buy grocery to the nonprofit organization or the cause.

(2) Can you please share any other recent CRM experience or any specific CRM campaign you recently participated or came across?

↳ What was your initial reaction to it? And what made you participate in the same?

↳ What benefits do you associate for participating in such campaigns?

↳ What motivated you to participate? What were the other benefits? (The respondent will be asked to elaborate on each benefit or motivating factor till he/she cannot think of any.)

(3) What in your opinion should be offered to the consumer as an incentive in the CRM promotion to motivate the participation?

(4) What do you think about the sponsoring company doing CRM promotion?

(5) What do you think is the motivation for the NPO to engage in such campaigns ?

(6) Did you find any change in the perception about the company because of the CRM campaign?

(7) Do you believe you are viewed differently for participating in such campaigns? If yes, how?

(8) Would you be willing to take part in more of such campaigns in the future?