

IMPACT OF CAUSE PROXIMITY AND CAUSE-BRAND CONGRUENCE ON PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND ATTITUDE AND MODERATING EFFECT OF PERSONAL VALUES IN PAKISTAN'S TELECOM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Cause-related marketing (CRM) has developed as a noteworthy domain of corporate social responsibility strategy, allowing firms to align business objectives with various social causes while shaping consumer behaviors and attitudes. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of CRM on consumer purchase intention within the telecom sector of Pakistan, considering the key determinants including cause proximity and cause congruence. Further, it investigates the mediating role of attitude towards brand and the moderating effect of personal values on a consumer's purchase intention. Deploying a quantitative research approach, and using a structured questionnaire, data was collected from 600 literate, university students and working professionals (18 years and above), residing in the urban areas of Pakistan, such as Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been used for data analysis to assess relationships between variables, with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) ensuring measurement reliability of constructs.

Findings reveal that cause proximity and cause congruence significantly impact consumer attitudes towards brands actively involved in CRM initiatives. Additionally, personal values strengthen or weaken the relationship between attitude towards brand and consumer purchase intention, indicating that consumers who possess stronger altruistic values are more likely to respond favorably to CRM efforts of the brands than the ones who are self-enhancement driven. This research contributes to the existing literature by incorporating personal values into cause-related market effectiveness models, especially in emerging economies like Pakistan, where socio-cultural and religious elements often influence consumer perceptions. The study provides practical implications for telecom service providers, focusing on the need for deliberate alignment between brand's core values and social cause to boost consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) takes place when an organization donates a predetermined amount to a social cause subject to sales of a particular product (Sindhu, 2020). This type of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a marketing technique, and it is centered around building partnerships between firms and non-profit/social organizations to support a welfare cause (Harben & Forsythe, 2011). CRM is a win-win situation for both parties involved as it funds social campaigns and enhances public awareness of these initiatives (Bhatti et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2020). It also provides contentment to consumers as their altruistic desires are fulfilled when they purchase from the brand and participate in social causes and contributing to societal betterment, reinforcing their prosocial behavior (Lafferty et al., 2016; Terblanche et al., 2022).

1.1. Problem Statement

Pakistan's telecom sector is highly competitive, and companies are rapidly adopting cause-related marketing (CRM) strategies to foster customer loyalty and build deeper connections with them. While CRM has been previously studied in product-based industries like FMCG, its relevance in the telecom sector is underexplored. Considering the long-term involvement of customer relationships in this industry, unlike one-time transactions in other sectors, understanding how CRM influences consumer perceptions and in turn, impacts purchase intention is crucial.

The effectiveness of CRM campaigns is contingent on multiple factors, such as geographical proximity of the cause being supported and its congruence with the brand. Although these antecedents shape consumer purchase intention, they are often mediated through consumers' attitude towards the brand and moderated by variations in personal values. Failing to account for these factors may result in irrelevant or ineffective campaigns, which consequently reduce customer trust, brand loyalty, and limit the impact of cause-related marketing programs.

Despite the noteworthy potential of cause-related marketing to elicit strong consumer-brand relationships, there is a significant risk of failure

when companies do not focus on the underlying factors. A CRM initiative which is weakly designed, incongruent with brand's core values, or does not resonate with the audience may lead to perceptions of insincerity.

Due to lack of robust understanding of these dynamics, CRM campaigns are susceptible to being perceived as superficial marketing ploys rather than legitimate efforts to address environment or social issues. This not only limits the success of CRM initiatives but also results in long-term detrimental impact on the company's reputation. Therefore, addressing the said challenges require greater evidence in the form of mediating and moderating factors that influence the effectiveness and authenticity of the CRM efforts, ensuring that campaigns are aligned with the company's core business and resonate with consumers.

In Pakistan, there is a diverse socio-economic landscape with varying customer expectations. Telecom companies urgently need to develop CRM strategies which are contextually pertinent and culturally sensitive.

1.2. Research Gap

Existing literature has vastly examined the impact of CRM on consumer attitudes and purchase intention (Pandey et al., 2023). However, they have mainly explored the relationships between factors like geographical proximity and cause congruence (cause-company or cause-product fit) on consumer purchase intention, or their attitude towards the brand often serving as a mediating variable. Such studies offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of CRM strategies as a way of influencing consumer behavior. Nonetheless, despite these advancements, a significant gap exists in understanding the role of personal values in decision making, which often impact the effectiveness of cause-related marketing campaigns (Wu & Wang, 2024).

Furthermore, a study by Saktiana and Prakosa (2023) highlights that though CRM campaigns positively influence brand attitudes and purchase intention, these factors are primarily assessed in FMCG sectors, leaving a gap in the telecom industry. Their research revealed that attributes such as campaign duration, cause proximity, and cause-brand congruence

significantly impact consumer attitudes towards brands and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, Saktiana and Prakosa (2023) recommended exploration of the moderating role of personal values in CRM initiatives.

Pakistani telecom sector presents a unique opportunity for such investigation. Unlike FMCG or retail, where cause-related marketing research has already been conducted, the telecom sector operates in a highly competitive and dynamic environment. It entails prolonged consumer interactions, subscription-based services, and a critical need for trust and emotional connection. These distinct factors make it paramount to examine how CRM strategies are perceived among telecom users and how the variation in personal values impact effectiveness of campaigns.

Furthermore, the studies conducted previously also take a generalized or global perspective, failing to account for the socio-cultural elements existing in emerging economies like Pakistan. Here, consumer values are in themselves influenced by cultural, religious, and social norms, which play an important role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors. Cultural uniqueness, when aligned with CRM campaigns, or conflicting with deeply rooted values, may become a cause of variation in responses, as compared to other markets.

1.3. Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the effect of cause proximity and cause congruence on consumer evaluation of telecom brands in Pakistan.
- 2) To investigate the mediating role of consumer attitude towards brand in the relationship between CRM antecedents and purchase intention.
- 3) To analyze whether personal values moderate the relationship between consumer attitude towards brand and purchase intention.

1.4. Significance of the Research

The study is significant both in terms of theoretical and practical perspectives. As for the former, it has led to advancement in literature in cause-related marketing by incorporating variations in consumers' personal values as a moderating factor, thereby extending the existing frameworks which have

primarily emphasized on cause proximity, cause duration, and cause congruence with the brand (and its product) in influencing the purchase decisions, mediated by attitude towards the brand. It also provided a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and aimed to address a critical research gap. Moreover, the study has contributed to the underexplored context of cause-related marketing in emerging economies like Pakistan, offering insights into a competitive and culturally nuanced telecom industry. By bridging CRM across different industries, that is, the social/environment development and telecom sector, it sets the foundation for broader application in other service-oriented markets.

From a practical viewpoint, the research enabled telecom companies of Pakistan with actionable insights which will aid them in designing more effective and targeted cause-related marketing campaigns that resonate well with their diverse consumer segments, such as those in the remote areas of the country. Considering the element of variation in personal values, these telecom service providers can tailor and enhance relevance, as well as building a stronger emotional connection and trust in a market with cut-throat competition. Additionally, the findings from this study are intended to help in resource allocation by guiding companies towards those initiatives which align with their target audience's values, therefore avoiding any setbacks of ineffective campaigns. In the context of cultural sensitivity, telecom operators will develop strategies that are impactful and consistent with values of their customer base.

Last but not the least, beyond academic and corporate significant, this has broader societal implications. The role of cause-related marketing in engaging consumers with meaningful and impactful social and environmental causes has encouraged more companies to adopt socially responsible marketing practices. This not only enhances business outcomes but also contributes to the welfare of society and promoting cause engagement.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1.1. Cause Related Marketing

Cause related marketing is a strategic initiative in which companies align their marketing efforts with

environmental and/or social causes, often through building partnerships with non-profit organizations to support their charitable goals (Sindhu, 2020). There are many different types of CRM techniques, one of them is a transaction-based CRM, which involves consumers engaging in the purchase of a product, and a certain percentage of price is donated to a social cause (Lee & Johnson 2019). It results in social value for a cause and generates revenue for the company alongside, which fulfills sales objectives and responds to consumers' altruistic needs (Ferraris et al., 2020; Pandey et al., 2023).

Theoretical Foundation

This study draws upon two primary theories from the literature to explain the mechanisms prompting consumer responses to Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) efforts: the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Prosocial Behavior.

1.1.2. Theory of Planned Behavior as a Foundation for Cause-Related Marketing

One of the most widely used frameworks in previous studies is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which extends the preceding Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) by incorporating behavioral control as a key determinant of behavioral intention. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) states that a person's behavior is directly influenced by their intention to perform the behavior, followed by three components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of cause-related marketing, TPB helps elaborate on how a consumer's attitude toward a brand—formed by perceptions of the brand's social responsibility initiatives – can impact their purchase intention.

1.1.3. Theory of Prosocial Behavior

The Theory of Prosocial Behaviour assesses the motivations behind actions intended to benefit other individuals or society. Within cause-related Marketing, this theory offers insight into reasons why personal values, such as altruism or self-enhancement, can moderate the effectiveness and success of CRM initiatives. Consumers having altruistic values respond positively to these campaigns, as they are aligned with their intrinsic motivations to contribute

to societal welfare. On the other hand, consumers with self-enhancement values may need additional incentives to participate in CRM campaigns. Understanding these motivational factors is crucial for designing and implementing CRM strategies that resonate with the target segments. Previous studies have established that individual's personal values have a direct and indirect impact on their attitudes toward brand's CRM efforts, emphasizing upon the importance of designing campaigns which resonate with the target audience's value system (Thomas et al., 2024).

By incorporating TPB and the Theory of Prosocial Behaviour, this research aims to comprehensively understand how consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and personal values jointly shape responses to CRM initiatives, therefore informing more effective cause-related marketing strategies.

1.1.4. Cause Congruence and its Impact on Attitude Towards Brand and Purchase Intention

CRM programs' success significantly depends on the fit between brand's core values and the supported cause. It is further strengthened by a strong relationship between the organization and its corporate sponsor (Du et al., 2008). This cause-brand fit affects consumer perception of the associated brand and cause itself. According to previous research, consumers are more likely to support causes if they are aligned with brand products and provide value to them. The preference is elicited from consumers sharing similar beliefs and values as the brand which positively shapes their opinions and fosters brand loyalty when the products it promotes are congruent to its CRM initiatives. On the contrary, organizations that rarely initiate programs or are selective may not be deemed socially responsible. Constant support for social initiatives and ensuring consistency with company's core values lead to customer loyalty and trust.

A high degree of congruence fortifies consumer trust and gives credit to brand authenticity, as consumers perceive such initiatives genuine instead of mere marketing gimmicks (Schamp et al., 2023). When a brand supports a cause that is aligned with its core values as well as business operations, consumers tend

to develop positive attitudes towards the brand and are eager to engage in CRM initiatives (van Esch et al., 2021). Additionally, moral emotions mediate this relationship when consumers experience emotional resonance as they perceive a natural connection with the brand and its supported cause (Kim & Kim, 2021). On the other hand, low cause-brand fit or congruence can lead to consumer skepticism as they may question or doubt brand's motives and perceive them as opportunistic.

Studies have found that when a business's CRM efforts, operations, and core values are aligned, it leads to positive brand attitudes and in turn increases purchase intention. Dagyte-Kavoliune et al. (2021) suggested that factors such as relationship visibility and local relevance significantly impact consumer response, with high congruence, encouraging stronger emotional connections and brand loyalty. Similarly, Pandey et al. (2024) studied cause-related marketing in FMCG sector and concluded that a well-aligned cause earns consumer trust, strengthens emotional bond with the brand, and increases the number of repeat purchases.

1.1.5. Cause Proximity and its Impact on Attitude Towards Brand and Purchase Intention

Consumers often assess the perception of CRM programs based on the perceived relevance of the supported cause, with geographically closer initiatives prompting stronger emotional engagement and brand loyalty. Cause proximity arguably has the greatest impact on how consumers respond to marketing. For example, it has been shown that consumers' attitude towards CRM initiatives improves when the supported cause is within their vicinity. Amran And Tan (2015) show that cause proximity has a positive integration with purchase intention arguing that consumers are willing to support a cause if they perceive it as being helping the local community. The emotional attachment with a cause that impacts their community greatly increases their level of interaction with the brand supporting it. Anuar and Adam (2017) argue that CRM initiatives linked to domestic causes get more favorable responses than those relating to international ones because there is a greater external sense of responsibility. The findings highlight the significant influence of proximity on consumer

psychology, enhancing emotional and cognitive engagement with CRM initiatives. Physical distance affects how consumers view CRM programs. Studies suggest that consumers from regions that are close to a company's office are likely to have a more favorable disposition towards the program and feel more attached to the brand.

Studies state that cause proximity plays a vital role in influencing consumer perceptions, as individuals show more willingness to engage with causes that are geographically or socially relevant and close to them. When the supported cause is closer to a target audience's immediate environment, it fosters stronger emotional connections, thus leading to a more favorable brand attitude, which consequently enhances purchase intention (Dwivedi & Waddell, 2023; Pandey, Bajpai, & Tiwari, 2024). Moreover, research indicates that consumers opt for supporting local causes over international ones as the former feels more relevant and impactful, building trust and recognition with the brand (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2023). Additionally, cause involvement significantly affects purchase intention; consumers feel emotionally connected to a cause and are more likely to favor brands associated with it (Dwivedi & Waddell, 2023).

1.2. Attitude Towards Brand as a Mediator Between CRM Determinants and Purchase Intention

It is defined as consumers' perceived knowledge acquired from previous direct and indirect encounters with the brand's CRM efforts. It is a unidimensional cognitive construct pertinent to information processing that enhances the likelihood of brand's presence evoked in consumer preferences (Campbell & Keller, 2003). Familiarity with cause-related associations is an important variable for guiding consumer brand attitudes (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). It enhances favorable consumer attitudes, even in the case of lesser-known brands (Harben & Forsythe, 2011). Moreover, familiarity with non-profit organizations is a marker of intention towards supporting a charity (García-Madariaga et al., 2023; Ha et al., 2022), and familiarity with corporate brands result in CRM effectiveness (Fan et al., 2022), albeit this is subject to brand-cause fit and consumer-cause identification (Pandey et al., 2023; Zogaj et al.,

2021). Thus, this research analyses consumers' familiarity with CRM to evaluate its direct and indirect effects on consumer-brand engagement regarding emotional and functional brands.

Recent studies underscore the essential role of attitudes toward brand in mediating the relationship between cause-related marketing initiatives and purchase intentions. For example, a systematic review by Kurian, Thomas, and Thomas (2024) features that CRM strategies significantly affect consumers' cognitive, affective, and conative responses, thereby enhancing brand attitude and purchase intention. Similarly, another study by Pandey, Bajpai, and Tiwari (2024) demonstrates that a positive attitude toward CRM efforts of a brand triggers intensified purchase intention among Indian consumers in the FMCG sector. These findings indicate that effective CRM campaigns, especially those adopting emotional and rational appeals, can promote positive brand attitudes, which result in elevated purchase intention.

1.3. Personal Values as a Moderator Between Attitude Towards Brand and Purchase Intention

Variations in personal values tend to play a significant role in impacting consumer responses to CRM campaigns. Personal values, as defined by Lee and Kim (2016), are enduring beliefs that direct behavior and judgements, which subsequently impact how individuals perceive and react to cause-related marketing initiatives. Lee and Kim (2016) found that consumers who strongly associate themselves with altruistic values like compassion and social responsibility, are more inclined to support CRM initiatives, resulting in higher engagement and purchase intention. For instance, consumers who have stronger orientation towards universalism and benevolence demonstrate a positive attitude toward cause-related marketing campaigns.

Consumers with varying personal values respond differently to CRM campaigns subject to the perceived fit between cause and the brand. A strong alignment of cause with brand values indicates a higher chance of consumers developing a positive attitude towards brand and getting involved as well. Al Homssi et al. (2023) found that a strong brand-cause congruence signifies the effectiveness of CRM

campaigns, especially if consumer's personal values are aligned with the brand image and the cause being advocated. In these instances, consumers are likely to develop trust and view CRM efforts as impactful and genuine.

Personal values significantly influence the effectiveness of CRM initiatives, especially in moderating the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention. Consumers with high altruistic values are more likely to have a positive response to CRM efforts, as these campaigns align with their intrinsic motivation to contribute to social causes (Kim & Johnson, 2023). Conversely, individuals with strong self-enhancement values may demand additional incentives, such as tangible benefits or exclusivity, to participate in brand's CRM initiatives (Wang & Kim, 2024). Furthermore, cultural and religious factors play a key role in shaping consumer perceptions of CRM. This is mostly the case in emerging economies like Pakistan, where CRM effectiveness may be subject to level of skepticism toward corporate motives Shahzad and Sarwar (2024). Understanding these moderating effects is critical for brands aiming to design CRM strategies that resonate with diverse consumer segments and effectively engage both altruistic and self-enhancement-oriented consumers.

1.4. Purchase Intention in Cause-Related Marketing

Despite the existing literature on cause-related marketing, several gaps persist. While the subject has been widely studied in product-based sectors, there is limited investigation in the telecom sector, which relies on long-term customer-brand relationships. In addition to this, previous studies lack a comprehensive understanding of how an individual's values influence CRM perceptions, particularly in emerging markets where purchase decisions are often contingent on cultural and ethical considerations. Earlier research has predominantly taken a Western perspective, neglecting the socio-cultural factors that shape consumer responses to CRM in economies like Pakistan. Considering that consumer behavior is influenced by religious and ethical values, further investigation is required to tailor CRM strategies to these markets. Drawing on the given literature, this study aims to test the following hypotheses:

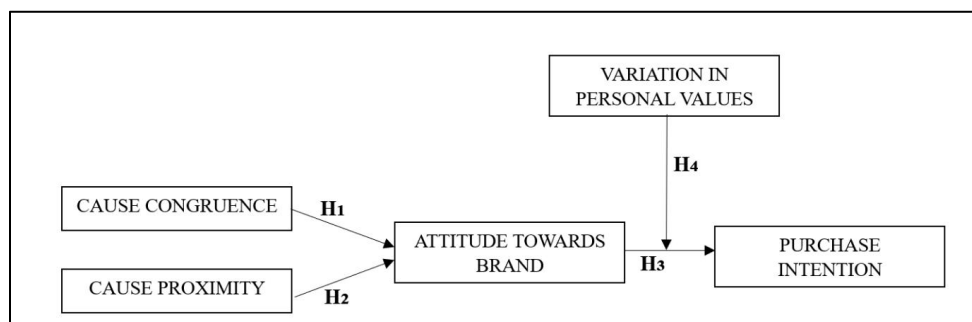
H₁: Cause congruence influences consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing, with higher congruence generating stronger positive responses.

H₂: Cause proximity affects consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing, with causes located closer to the brand eliciting stronger positive responses.

H₃: A positive attitude toward brands engaged in cause-related marketing significantly increases consumer purchase intention.

H₄: Personal values moderate the relationship between attitude toward brand and purchase intention, such that the strength of this relationship varies based on individual value orientations.

The given hypotheses aim to empirically examine how consumer attitudes, values, and brand engagement impact purchase decisions in CRM initiatives. By addressing these relationships, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on effective cause related marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behavior.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This study follows the research approach introduced by Saundar's Research Onion, which offers a structured framework for methodological research. It has adopted a positivist research philosophy and employed a deductive approach to test the hypotheses. Quantitative research design has been used, creating a structured survey to collect primary data. This method ensures objectivity and statistical generalization.

2.2. Research Design

The research utilizes a descriptive and causal design to examine consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in cause-related marketing campaigns. A one-time cross-sectional survey method was used to gather information from participants. This design is effective in identifying relationships among constructs and testing hypotheses pertaining to the effect of cause related marketing strategies on consumer attitudes.

2.3. Research Population and Sample Size

According to National Mobile Tele density Statistics, the existing telecom network consumer base is

approximately 3.56 million subscribers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as reported by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The number of telecom network users in Pakistan have reached 193.8 million, with a mobile tele density of 79.40%. Given this information, the estimated target population for this study is between 1.5 to 1.8 million, which comprises of literate working professionals and university students (18 years or above) residing in the twin cities. Considering the above, a sample of 600 respondents was selected to carry out a survey questionnaire designed on Google Forms. The study followed a non-probability, convenience sampling technique, allowing more efficient and greater reach through online and offline distribution channels.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

2.4.1. Data Collection Method

The data for this survey was collected by distributing the survey questionnaire both online and physically. It was conducted between the months of January and February 2025, by sharing the Google Forms link on social media platforms, WhatsApp messages, WhatsApp status, Instagram stories, and in-person scanning of QR code to open the survey link.

Due to the online nature of data collection, the survey respondents were not only limited to Islamabad and Rawalpindi, but also from other regions of country, such as Multan, Abbottabad, DG Khan, etc. It also included internationally based participants from Dubai, Sweden, and the UK, who were originally from Pakistan. While the primary focus of this study remained on telecom users within Pakistan, these respondents were also included as they may still hold active local network sim cards or have relevant insights into cause-related marketing initiatives of telecom networks. The inclusion of such a diverse audience enhances generalizability of the findings, simultaneously ensuring that the core target population; literate working professionals and university students within the twin cities remain central to the study.

The study aimed to collect responses from university students enrolled in various institutions across Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Data collection was mainly conducted online due to time and resource constraints, with responses gathered from students at major universities such as Bahria University, NUST, and FAST. In total, 1300 questionnaires were disseminated through both online and offline channels.

2.4.2. Measurement Scale and Instrumentation

This section outlines the key variables, items, and scales used in the study. The survey questionnaire was adapted from various established scales to ensure reliability and validity.

Variable (Construct)	Number of Items	Items	Scale
Purchase Intention	1	I am eager to learn more about this product related to the cause campaign.	Adopted from Bower & Landreth (2001) and used by Landreth (2002)
	2	I would be willing to pay a higher price for the product of the firm which offer cause campaign than that of others.	
	3	It is likely that I will participate in cause campaign by purchasing the product.	
	4	I would be willing to purchase the product related to a cause.	
Variation in Personal Values	1	It is important to me to protect the environment.	E-SVS scale (Stern et al., 1998; De Groot & Steg, 2008; Perlaviciute & Steg, 2014). (Stern et al., 1998)
	2	It is important to [him/her] that every person has equal opportunities.	
	3	It is important to me to be helpful to others.	
	4	It is important to [him/her] to enjoy the life's pleasures.	
	5	It is important to [him/her] to have control over others' actions.	
	6	I will be perceived by others as "outdated" if I do not support environmental protection	Kumar, P., & Ghodeswar, B. M. (2015).
	7	Supporting environmental issues makes me more socially attractive	

Attitude towards the brand	1	My overall impression of the company is..... - Bad/good - Unfavorable/favorable - Negative/positive - Disliked/liked - Insincere/ Sincere - Bad corporate citizen/ good corporate citizen	Adopted from Bower & Landreth (2001) and used by Landreth (2002)
	2	I feel good about buying brands which are less damaging to the environment	Kumar, P., & Ghodeswar, B. M. (2015).
	3	I refuse to buy products from companies accused of being polluters	
Cause Congruence	1	The type of cause that is supported by (company X) is very much in line with its core Business	Developed by Keller & Aaker (1992), and was modified by Van den Brink et al., (2006)
	2	Supporting this cause is very appropriate as it "fits" very well with (company X) core Business	
	3	Taking into account (company X) core business, it is very logical for (company X) to support this type of cause.	
Social Cause Involvement (Cause Proximity -Social Involvement)	1	For you, a [type of NPO] promotes a social cause...	Mittal's (1995)
	2	Irrelevant-Relevant	
	3	Of little interest-very interesting	
	4	Means nothing to me - Means a lot to me	
	5	Does matter to me - Doesn't matter to me	

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Data Analysis

3.1.1. Validity Testing (Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA) Interpretation:

The above tables for Validity Testing using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) assess construct validity through factor loadings. The results given illustrate that all remaining items exhibit acceptable to strong factor loadings, which confirms validity. For Cause Proximity (CP), factor loadings range

between 0.671 to 0.749, while Cause Congruence (CC) has a relatively higher reliability with factor loadings ranging from 0.833 to 0.896.

For the mediating variable, Attitude Towards Brand (AB), one item showed a lower factor loading (0.425), representing moderate strength, while the other two items indicated higher reliability, that is 0.623 and 0.740. In Personal Values (PV) – moderating variable, initially included 7 items, however, PV5, PV6, and PV7, were excluded from further analysis due to low

factor loadings. After deletion and reconducting the analysis, the remaining four PV items displayed improved factor loadings (0.507 – 0.829), thus confirming construct reliability. Lastly, Purchase Intention (PI) revealed strong factor loadings (0.619 – 0.855), therefore supporting the validity of the adapted scale.

3.1.2. Reliability Testing

In business management research, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) is mostly used for the assessment of reliability. The acceptable value for CA is 0.70 or greater than 0.70.

Reliability Testing (Cronbach's Alpha - CA) Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha (CA) for each item evaluated the internal consistency of constructs. The given results show that except for Attitude Towards Brand (AB), all constructs have strong reliability.

- Cause Proximity - CP and Cause Congruence - CC have excellent reliability with 0.830 and 0.890 CA values respectively.
- Personal Values - PV (0.799) and Purchase Intention - PI (0.838) also display a strong internal consistency.
- For Attitude Towards Brand - AB, the CA value (0.603) falls lower than the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating moderate reliability. The results suggest that scale for the said construct could be refined by improving item(s) consistency in future research.

3.1.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		CP	CC	AB	PV	PI
CP	Pearson Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	431				
CC	Pearson Correlation	.294**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	431				
AB	Pearson Correlation	.322**	.366**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	431	431	431		
PV	Pearson Correlation	.327**	.164**	.252**		.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000		
	N	431	431	431		
PI	Pearson Correlation	.541**	.223**	.445**	.259**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	431	431	431	431	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation Analysis assesses the relationship between variables. The strongest correlation is reflected in Cause Proximity (CP) and Purchase Intention (PI) (0.541, $p < 0.01$), indicating that when the cause is closer to the consumer, they have a high propensity to purchase from the brand.

Conversely, Cause Congruence (CC) and Attitude towards Brand (AB) are moderately correlated (0.366, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that consumers perceive brands more positively when there is a strong alignment between cause and the brand. Moreover, a strong positive correlation exists between AB and

Purchase Intention (PI) (0.445, $p < 0.01$), thus confirming that a favorable attitude towards the brand increases Purchase Intention.

Personal Values (PV) and Purchase Intention (PI) have moderate correlation (0.259, $p < 0.01$), the results indicate that consumer values influence their likelihood to purchase from the brand when it is involved in cause-related marketing initiatives. Ultimately, all correlations are statistically significant, supporting the theoretical model of the study.

3.1.4. Hypotheses Testing

Regression analysis was used for hypotheses testing.

Impact of CP and CC on AB (H1 and H2)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.467 ^a	.218	.214	.53383

a. Predictors: (Constant), CC, CP

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	33.929	2	16.964	59.530	.000 ^b
Residual	121.969	428	.285		
Total	155.898	430			

a. Dependent Variable: AB

b. Predictors: (Constant), CC, CP

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.640	.182		9.014	.000
CP	.264	.039	.291	6.768	.000
CC	.272	.034	.339	7.887	.000

a. Dependent Variable: AB

Impact of AB on PI (H3)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.445 ^a	.198	.196	.68921

a. Predictors: (Constant), AB

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	50.219	1	50.219	105.722	.000 ^b
Residual	203.778	429	.475		
Total	253.997	430			

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), AB

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.377	.199		6.907	.000
AB	.568	.055	.445	10.282	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Regression Analysis (Hypothesis Testing for H1, H2, H3) Interpretation

The above tables examine the influence of Cause Proximity (CP) and Cause Congruence (CC) on Attitude Towards Brand (AB), and AB's impact on Purchase Intention (PI).

- The model depicts 21.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.218$) in AB, confirming a significant influence of CP and CC on consumers' Attitude Towards Brand.
- CP ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$) and CC ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.001$) are both statistically significant, supporting H1 and H2.

- In the impact of AB on PI, that is, H3, there is 19.8% of variance ($R^2 = 0.198$).
- Therefore, Attitude Towards Brand (AB) significantly predicts Purchase Intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3.

These findings suggest that brands or telecom service providers with stronger brand-cause alignment and local cause proximity are more likely to influence consumer attitudes in a positive manner, consequently boosting purchase intention.

Moderation Analysis**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.470 ^a	.221	.217	.68002
2	.481 ^b	.231	.226	.67624

a. Predictors: (Constant), PV, AB

b. Predictors: (Constant), PV, AB, Interaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.080	2	28.040	60.637	.000 ^b
	Residual	197.917	428	.462		
	Total	253.997	430			
2	Regression	58.730	3	19.577	42.809	.000 ^c
	Residual	195.267	427	.457		
	Total	253.997	430			

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), PV, AB

c. Predictors: (Constant), PV, AB, Interaction

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.705	.273		2.583	.010
AB	.517	.056	.405	9.189	.000
PV	.197	.055	.157	3.560	.000
2 (Constant)	.557	.278		2.001	.046
AB	.517	.056	.405	9.229	.000
PV	.228	.057	.181	4.028	.000
Interaction	.074	.031	.105	2.407	.006

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Interaction is ABxPV

The results show that all the hypotheses have been accepted.

Moderation Analysis (H4 - Personal Values as a Moderator) Interpretation

The above tables examine whether Personal Values Moderate the effect of Attitude Towards (AB) on Purchase Intention (PI).

- The base model shows 22.1% of variance ($R^2 = 0.221$).
- With the addition of the interaction term ($AB \times PV$), variance increases to 23.1% ($R^2 = 0.231$), confirming the moderating effect.
- H4 is supported as the interaction term is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.006$).

ANOVA Results

The ANOVA table shows that Model 1 is statistically significant as $F(2, 428) = 60.637$, $p < 0.001$, confirming that AB and PV significantly predict Purchase Intention (PI). When adding the interaction in Model 2, the model remains significant $F(3, 427) = 42.809$, $p < 0.001$, and the F-change ($\Delta F = 2.172$, $p = 0.006$). This confirms that an interaction term significantly enhances the model.

Coefficients Table

This table offers further insights into the relationships among given variables.

Model 1 (Main Effects)

- $AB \rightarrow PI$ ($\beta = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$) \rightarrow AB has a significant positive effect on PI.

- $PV \rightarrow PI$ ($\beta = 0.157$, $p < 0.001$) \rightarrow PV significantly impacts PI, proposing that individuals with stronger personal values have enhanced purchase intention.

Model 2 (Adding Interaction Term)

- $AB \rightarrow PI$ ($\beta = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$) \rightarrow Remains significant.
- $PV \rightarrow PI$ ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.001$) \rightarrow Strengthened effect.
- $AB \times PV \rightarrow PI$ ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.006$) \rightarrow Statistically significant, supporting H4.

The results indicate that the influence of brand attitude on purchase intention is subject to individual's personal values. The positive and significant interaction term ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.006$) suggests that consumers possessing higher altruistic values are more likely to act positively if their attitude towards brand is favorable. On the other hand, for individuals with lower personal values, the relationship between AB and PI is weaker, and they may not be influenced by cause-related marketing efforts of the brand.

The findings of data collection and analysis confirm that Cause Proximity and Cause Congruence significantly influence consumer Attitude Towards Brand engaged in CRM initiatives, which ultimately impacts Purchase Intention. Additionally, Variation

in Personal Values moderates the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention, suggesting that brands should target segments based on their value orientations.

3.2. Discussion of Results

3.2.1. Cause Proximity and Consumer Attitudes

The results obtained indicate that consumer attitudes are often shaped by cause proximity when a brand is engaged in CRM. The significant positive relationship between cause proximity and attitude towards brand ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$) explains that consumers have a higher tendency to perceive brands more favorably when the supported cause is geographically close to them. This also aligns with previous studies, which suggest that consumers experience a stronger sense of responsibility to support causes that are directly relevant to their environment.

These results emphasize that selecting causes in CRM which are more relevant to the target audience is paramount. Brands operating in local markets must leverage from aligning their cause-related marketing efforts to social and environmental issues that hold more importance in local communities. Brands which support international causes can benefit from message framing that can help bridge the psychological and geographical distance and in perceived relevance.

3.2.2. Cause-Brand Congruence and Consumer Attitudes

Cause Congruence or cause-brand alignment also contributed significantly towards predicting consumer attitudes ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.001$). The relevant findings confirm that as consumers feel a strong alignment between the supported cause and brand's core identity, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the brand. This is also coherent with the concept of brand authenticity, which states that perceived congruence strengthens brand trust and lowers skepticism towards CRM efforts.

The findings help understand that brands should deliberately select causes that match their values, products, corporate mission, and vision. Misaligned cause-related marketing initiatives and irrelevant causes may increase consumer skepticism, reducing

the effectiveness of such campaigns. Therefore, brands must ensure that CRM efforts are perceived by target audience as genuine and linked to brand's identity to achieve positive responses and engagement.

3.2.3. Attitude Towards the Brand and Purchase Intention

The study results showed a significant relationship between attitudes towards brand and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$). Consumers holding favorable attitudes are more engaged in CRM campaigns and translate their positive attitudes into actual purchase from the brand. These findings are also backed by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TBP), which postulates that attitudes are significant indicators of behavioral intention.

Considering these insights, it is imperative for brands to positively influence consumer attitudes through ensuring transparency, credibility and consistency in CRM efforts. Remote association with the cause does not suffice, and brands must actively show their commitment and dedication to ensure their campaigns are impactful.

3.2.4. The Moderating Role of Personal Values

Lastly, the study investigated the moderating effect on personal values on the relationship between consumer attitudes towards brand and purchase intention. The results of the data analyzed show a significant moderate impact ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.006$). The strength of said relationship varies subject to consumer value orientations. Consumers having strong altruistic values are likely to convert their positive attitude into actual purchase behavior, whereas individuals with lower altruistic tendencies may not favorably respond to CRM initiatives and display weaker association with the brand.

This finding underscores the significance of audience segmentation in cause-related marketing campaigns. Brands must tailor their communication strategies to target only those consumers who can resonate with the brand's efforts. Highlighting the substantial impact of CRM may be more effective for those individuals whose personal values include altruism. Conversely, emphasizing personal benefits of participation in the campaign may entice self-enhancement-oriented consumers.

The study findings are consistent with existing research in the domain of cause-related marketing, thus reinforcing the validity of results. The positive impact of cause proximity on consumer attitude towards brand is highlighted in the earlier studies, which suggest that consumers are inclined to support causes which are geographically close, as it boosts personal relevance and perceived impact (Tangari et al., 2020). Moreover, cause congruence plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions, with previous literature indicating that strong alignment between brand and the cause increases authenticity, builds credibility, and reduces skepticism (Chang & Cheng, 2022). Moreover, the significant relationship between consumer attitude towards brand and purchase intention is coherent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which supports the argument that positive attitudes drive behavioral intention (Ajzen, 2021). Lastly, the moderating role of personal values underlines the significance of target audience segmentation in CRM campaigns, as consumers with higher altruistic tendencies display stronger purchase intention, however those with self-enhancement values may want additional incentives to participate (Lee & Johnson, 2023). These insights are fundamental for brands to strategically align their CRM initiatives with relevant causes and tailor communication to resonate with diverse consumer value orientations, safeguarding greater effectiveness and engagement.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the existing literature on cause-related marketing by highlighting the role of attitude towards brand, cause proximity, cause congruence, and personal values in shaping purchase intentions. The findings of the data analysis provide empirical evidence supporting the hypotheses that cause-related marketing campaigns are more effective when they align with the target market's local environment, demonstrate strong cause-brand congruence, and resonate with consumers' personal values. These insights add to the theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in socially responsible marketing efforts, further enhancing

prior research in cause-related marketing effectiveness.

4.2. Managerial Implications

From a managerial point of view, brands are responsible for ensuring that their CRM initiatives are perceived as authentic, consistent, and transparent. Companies should clearly communicate how consumer contributions in CRM campaigns will be utilized, thereby reducing any doubts, fostering trust, and brand loyalty. Additionally, the causes selected for CRM must resonate with target audience's values to increase engagement, which would subsequently impact purchase intention. Lastly, businesses can strengthen their cause campaigns by collaborating with credible non-profit firms, thus ensuring alignment between core values of the company and supported cause.

4.3. Research Limitations

Despite numerous contributions, this study has some limitations. First, the research deploys a one-time, cross-sectional research design, thus limiting the ability to track consumer attitudes over a period. A longitudinal study, on the other hand, could provide more in-depth information on evolving consumer behaviors. Secondly, the study was conducted using self-reported data, therefore increasing the likelihood of social desirability bias. This means that the respondents may fill out survey forms favorably rather than stating their true opinions on cause-related marketing efforts. Additionally, the use of a non-probability, convenience sampling method limited the generalizability of the findings to a broader population within the country, as it allowed participation from individuals residing abroad, despite the study being focused on telecom consumers in Pakistan.

4.4. Future Recommendations

From the findings, it is evident that several brands that desire to implement CRM initiatives have numerous actionable recommendations at their disposal. Future research should explore the effectiveness of cause-related marketing in diverse sectors beyond telecom, especially in industries where consumer-brand relationships are less service-oriented yet impacted by social responsibility

initiatives. Additionally, cross-cultural studies could offer deeper insights into how socio-cultural factors shape consumer attitudes toward CRM, particularly in emerging economies like Pakistan, where trust and authenticity in corporate motives varies. Lastly, longitudinal studies assessing shifts in consumer attitudes and behaviors over time would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of CRM's lasting impact.

4.5. Conclusions

This study focused on analyzing the effect of marketing relationships that integrate social causes on telecommunications brands in Pakistan, as a function of cause proximity (social and geographical distance) and cause congruence (branding relevance). It also measured the impact of brand perception on purchasing behavior, along with the impact of personal values as a moderating variable. To accomplish these objectives, a quantitative strategy was devised which relied on data from an online questionnaire administered to 600 university students and professionals across large cities of Pakistan (and abroad). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to study the interrelations among the primary constructs of the study. The data proved that both cause proximity and cause congruence significantly enhance the attitudes consumers have towards brands' cause-related marketing initiatives. Moreover, favorable brand attitudes strongly predicted their purchase intention. Personal values had a moderating effect showing that people with pro-social tendencies were more inclined to act in response to the prevailing sentiments while self-enhancement value holders were more obliged for other stimuli to respond to the CRM efforts. These findings support strategically designing and deploying cause-related marketing campaigns to resonate with consumers' values to enhance their engagement.

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