

## THE IMPACT OF THE CAUSE RELATED PRODUCTS PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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### ABSTRACT

*Consumer involvement in promotional campaigns for different products depends on the degree to which the consumer considers the advertisements to be interesting, worth listening to and supporting a real cause. The more suggestive the ads, the more dramatic and intense experience they offer in the mind of the consumer. The emotional intensity determines the way the emotions transmitted by an advertisement are experienced. The promotion of a cause related product is based on raising the awareness of the target audience through the supported cause, in this case counting the emotional flow and the way of integrating emotions in the ads. The emotions represented in the advertisement can have a static or dynamic flow. Consumers accept more easily companies that prove that they have a civic spirit and fight for a cause. By purchasing a product from a company that promotes itself through Cause Related Marketing, the consumer will receive both the chosen product and the symbolic value that goes beyond the promised quality associated with the product to social responsibility.*

**KEYWORDS:** *promotion, product related to a cause, emotion, consumer behavior, marketing, social responsibility.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cause Related Marketing is a tool widely used by companies in the market in which they operate. There are many benefits for companies that integrate cause related marketing into their promotional campaigns, including: attracting new customers, increasing sales of products or services, creating a favorable image in the market in which the brand operates and last but not least engages in raising funds for a social cause. More and more companies are studying the concept of social responsibility and are rapidly moving from the process of conceptual identification and definition to implementation (Leon Schiffman et al., 2013).

Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. CRM is a program through which a company shows its desire and voluntarily engages in a concrete action to donate a sum of money based on the sales it makes over a period of time, established from the beginning in favor of a cause. The CRM campaign is valid for a well-defined period, refers to a specific product, is carried out to benefit a non-governmental organization, a natural or legal person or a partner who has the right to manage the money for the promoted cause (Michael R. Solomon, 2017) Business in the Community (BITC), 2004, defined Cause Related Marketing as *a commercial*

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Regarding the second hypothesis: H2: *The relevant emotions felt by the respondents will be specific to the collectivist culture (focused on others.)*, We specify that it is statistically supported, because the significant emotions for our final model were guilt and embarrassment, both have loads of 0.929, these representing emotions from the category of those specific to the collectivistic individual.

After eliminating all insignificant latent variables, we can see that the explanatory power of the model is 25% ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ), from which we deduce that the emotions felt after the choice made, guilt and embarrassment, are moderated by 25% by regressor variables (scenario, age, purchase intention, harmony, gender, uniqueness). The coefficients for the variables are found in Table 1, as follows: Scenario ( $\beta = -0.329$ ), Uniqueness ( $\beta = 0.92$ ), Harmony ( $\beta = 0.069$ ), BI ( $\beta = 0.141$ ), Gender ( $\beta = 0.082$ ), Age ( $\beta = -0.037$ ), Age \* BI ( $\beta = -0.134$ ), Uniqueness \* Harmony ( $\beta = -0.095$ ), Uniqueness \* Scenario ( $\beta = 0.158$ ).

Considering these, we can deduce that the scenario influences the emotions of guilt and embarrassment, specifically collectivistic ( $p$  value  $<0.001$ ).

Interaction between age and purchase intention plays a significant role on respondents' emotions ( $p <0.5$ ), and the desire to be unique moderates the connection between the created scenario and the emotions felt ( $p <0.5$ ), which tells us that although the scenario is one that presents a context in which the collectivistic side can be accentuated, the fact that uniqueness is a factor influencing the connection between them denotes that the decision taken may be due to the desire to assert the unique self (individualistic).

Regarding the purchasing power (BI = 0.025,  $p <0.5$ ), according to the results, it appears that its influence on the dependent variable is statistically significant. The rest of the interactions between the variables proved to be insignificant.

In the third column of Table 1, the values of the Cohen coefficient (Size Effect) are presented. All values are  $<0.20$ , which demonstrates that the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable is not relevant, as they are insignificant at the macroeconomic level. Consequently, future tests may resume the structure of this study on a larger number of respondents.

**Table 1. Path coefficients, p-value and Size Effect.**

Variables	Emotions	Size Effect
Scenario	-0.329*** ( $<0.001$ )	0.0128
Uniqueness	0.92 (0.103)	0.012
Harmony	0.069 (0.171)	0.010
BI	0.141* (0.025)	0.024
Gender	0.082 (0.129)	0.004
Age	-0.037 (0.304)	0.003
Age*BI	-0.134* (0.032)	0.017
Uniqueness*Harmony	-0.095 (0.095)	0.008
Uniqueness*Scenario	0.158* (0.014)	0.052

Source: authors processing

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The effects of social responsibility actions can be analyzed and interpreted both among companies and consumers. Among the companies, the employees are motivated to carry out environmentally

friendly activities, to volunteer, to support a cause and to fight with a unitary ensemble to achieve success over a cause. Among consumers Cause Related Marketing has a direct impact on sales force performance, with much emphasis on how the company focuses on such campaigns targeting a group of stakeholders (consumers), but also how it mediates the relationships and reactions of the sales force involved in such campaigns.

Throughout life, people acquire certain beliefs and form attitudes towards certain products, services, actions developed by the company, all these aspects influencing their buying behavior. The attitude of consumers is different in terms of food, sports, clothing, music or other social issues, but the company must find the common factor to convince the customer to buy a product. The process of bringing the customer closer to the company that promotes a product, object of the campaign related to a cause goes through the stages: awareness-testing-repetition.

The seemingly neutral product to the consumer if he tells a story or is the subject of a humanitarian activity or a philanthropic action makes the customer aware that actively participates in the improvement of a situation or in the action of doing good. Accepting a higher price is easier if the consumer perceives that higher price difference if they understand that they are supporting a humanitarian cause.

The present paper aimed to verify the applicability of studies conducted in the field of consumer behavior and Cause Related Marketing, in the case of Romania considering two directions: decision and cultural orientation; emotions and connection with cultural orientation.

Although the two initial hypotheses were statistically supported, we must analyze the results taking into account the limitations brought by the fact that the sample used is unrepresentative for the Romanian population. Emotions directed towards external stimuli (specific to the interdependent self) proved to be significant for our model, but at the same time, uniqueness (indicator of individualistic orientation) was a significant moderator between scenario and emotions, which indicates that although Romania's population is considered being a collectivistic one, this does not completely eliminate the individualistic side and the fact that generations are constantly changing.

On the other hand, the intention to buy was significantly related to emotions, which indicates how emotions can moderate our decision to buy certain products, but also the reason behind the decision. Inevitably, there are limitations to this study. A first limitation in terms of the veracity of the results is given by the way the study was distributed to respondents, the online environment is not a safe one in which the sample can be created so as to lead to safe and credible results, and the fact that the majority of the participants were young people between the ages of 18 and 24 which represents a limitation, as individuals can change their values and level of perception at different stages of life.

Also, the complexity and length of the questionnaire can create a state of fatigue or boredom, and therefore the answers do not really reflect their real opinion. In fact, the emotions studied were imagined by the respondents, and between the really felt emotions and the imagined ones there is a difference in perception.

On the other hand, future studies may transpose the scenario used in this paper, in real life, to a larger sample. Moreover, future studies can compare the buyer's attitude towards a product that supports a cause, when it reflects a problem of national interest and the role of its awareness in a collectivist versus individualistic culture.

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