

An Empirical Study to Measure Millennial's Buying Behavior with Reference to Cause Related Marketing



DOI: 10.26573/2021.15.1.3
Volume 15, Number 1
January 2021, pp. 33-46

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Cause related Marketing (CrM) is a very effective way to build the brand, to reinforce, demonstrate and bring life to corporate values and it makes an investment visible with reference to corporate social responsibility and corporate community. Cause-Brand congruence is the degree of congruence between a cause and a business's product/service. This study tries to measure the moderating effect of Cause-Brand congruence on the relationship of CrM and consumer buying decision. Single cross-sectional research design has been adopted for the current study. Primary data are collected through survey method using structured questionnaire. Data analysis concludes that cause-brand congruence has the statistically significant impact on the relationship between cause related marketing and buying decision. A Few researches have been carried out in India on cause related marketing but there is a research gap on the said topic which will add more knowledge and information in the limited available pool which provides new direction to academics, corporate world and to the society as a whole.

Keywords: Cause related Marketing (CrM), Millennial's' buying behavior, Attitude, Cause-Brand Congruence

1. Introduction

Simply providing quality products or services does not suffice in today's competitive business environment to win. In modern world CrM plays a vital role where CrM can be defined as a strategic alliance between the company and a cause for the achievement of mutual benefits (Adkins, 2004). That is why the companies are called upon to design innovative strategies to not only attract the new customers but also to retain the existing customers (Matson, 1994). In this context, CrM represents one of the modern marketing strategies (Taylor, 2007) which are being used by most companies. CrM campaigns can increase the sales of the company by increasing trial purchase, repeat purchase and / or promoting multiple unit purchase. Today, most of the companies are using CrM as a strategic tool (Till and Nowak, 2000) to build a positive corporate image in the minds of consumers (Chattananon et al., 2008) which results in enhancing the sales of a company's products (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988) and profit as well (Adkins, 2004). Consumers have better perceptual associations with those organizations that work with charities and good causes (Farache and Perks, 2008).

Increased competition in the market has saturated the possibility of brand differentiation based on traditional attributes such as price and quality. Brand needs to be associated with symbolic values such as altruism or civic mind so that consumers are able to identify themselves with the brand and thus build a stable committed relationship that benefits both parties. In this context, linking the brand with corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a very effective positioning strategy that can be competitive for differentiation attributes (Brammer and Millington, 2006; Du et al, 2007 in Bigne'-Alcaniz, et al., 2009). It can be argued that generally people have preference for brands which are associated with social causes in CrM strategy (Webb and Mohr, 1998; Till and Nowak, 2000; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005).

Despite CrM's widespread appeal, there are still many contradicting views regarding the characteristics of an effective CrM campaign across various literatures. On one hand, some researchers believe that only a logical connection between the brand and the sponsored cause can bring about positive returns (Hoek & Gendall, 2008). Such logical connection can be referred to as high brand-cause congruence. On the other hand, low brand-cause congruence is generally considered to have a negative impact. Despite this, many other researchers have questioned the validity of this belief and argue that the degree of congruence doesn't influence customers' decisions at all.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was originated in 1953 with the publication of Bowen's book, "Social Responsibilities of Businessmen" where the emphasis was mainly placed on the owner's social conscience, rather than on the company itself. The definition of CSR is changing in meaning and practice (Secchi and Lee, 2008). Corporate Social Responsibility can be defined as a company's commitment to minimize or eliminate the harmful effects on society and a way to maximize its long term beneficial effect (Mohr, Webb, and Harris, 2010).

Being the pioneers in this field, Varadarajan and Menon (1988) defined CrM comprehensively in an article - which proved to be very influential for later researches as "the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives" (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988, p.60). Introducing the aspect of worthiness, Skory, Repka and McInst (2004, p.2) poise that "CrM is simply marketing with a worthy cause". CrM is defined as a practice in which company donates to a social cause, using profits from sales of certain goods (Larson, Flaherty, Zablah, Brown & Wiener, 2007). Another definition of CrM denotes that "it's a commercial activity by which businesses and charities or good causes form a partnership with each other to market an image, product or service for mutual benefit" (Adkins, 2003: 670). The rapid growth of CrM can be attributed to the increasing demand for socially responsible companies (Hoek & Gendall, 2008).

CrM finds basis in the theory of social exchange which looks at human interaction in terms of dynamic social process in which parties exchanges the resources, commodities or skills in order to maximize their returns in minimum possible cost. In CrM, the parties involved are the company, the cause and the consumers. Consumers

may take CrM positively if they feel that it is a way in which they are getting satisfaction at very little or no extra cost.

Concluding about the potential for a company's CrM to affect consumer choice is difficult because existing evidence is equivocal regarding the effectiveness of CrM campaigns. In some studies, CrM has been found to have a favorable effect on attitudes (Brown and Dacin 1997; Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992; Tate 1995) and purchase intentions (Kroll 1996; Murphy 1997; Ross et al. 1992; Sen and Morwitz 1996; Smith and Stodghill 1994). However, in certain other studies CrM has been found to foster negative perceptions about a company's motivation for engaging in such activities (Smith and Stodghill 1994). When properly executed, CrM helps in increasing the sale of products. According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997), this means, among other things, tying the cause to the organization's mission, making it long term, not using it as a short-term tactic to increase sales, and understanding that the effects are not always easy to measure and whatever effects there are, normally through enhanced reputation, are very long term.

One essential factor for successful CrM campaign is brand-cause compatibility, congruence or fit (Bigne-Alcaniz et al., 2011; Nan and Heo, 2007; Trimble and Rifon, 2006). Brand-Cause Congruence is also known as Brand Cause Fit that can be defined as the "overall perceived relatedness of the brand and the cause with multiple cognitive bases" (Nan and Heo, 2007, p. 72). In other words, it is the degree of acceptance of the pairing of the brand and the cause, from the consumers' point-of-view.

Cause Congruence is also known as Cause Fit which is the link between company image, brand positioning, target market, cause image and constituency. Companies lacking the brand-cause congruence are considered as selfish. Lack of fit between brand and cause will lead to negative consumer attitude and reduced purchase intention. A perceived match between brand and cause congruence leads to positive perception towards CrM.

Studies have shown that high perceived brand-cause congruence can positively impact a consumer's buying choice (Pracejus and Olsen, 2004). High perceived brand-cause congruence has been found to enhance brand recall (Cornwell and Coote, 2005); corporate credibility, and consumer attitudes toward the sponsored cause (Rifon et al., 2004). On the other hand, low perceived brand-cause congruence may result in backlash from consumers because they might perceive the motivation of such cause related marketing campaigns as purely for the self-interest of the sponsoring company, with the objective of generating sales. As such, cause related marketing campaigns with low perceived brand-cause congruence might be viewed as an abusive marketing tool, instead of being viewed as a pure altruistic intention of contributing to society.

Robinson, Irmak and Jayachandran (2012) asserted that a high congruence indicates a higher competency to help the sponsored cause because the company would have the suitable expertise, skills, products and technologies. A low congruence makes consumers doubtful towards the company's motives, credibility, and also the capability to support the cause (Trimble & Rifon, 2006).

2.1 Scope of the Study

1. The scope of the study is limited to Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan with reference to Western India.
2. Researcher has taken only Millennial's (Age group of 18-38- having birth year from ranging from 1981 to 2000) as sampling unit.
3. In addition to that, research is limited to personal care products of FMCG industry. In personal care products Oral care, Hair care, Skin Care, Cosmetics, Deodorants, Perfumes, Feminine Hygiene, Paper Products, Fabric wash, Household cleaners are selected for the study.
4. Further the conceptual scope of study is limited to Corporate Social Responsibility, Cause Related Marketing, Cause Fit, Attitude and Buying decision aspect of Millennial's' buying behavior.
5. Different demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, Income are taken into consideration for the study along with other variables which are based on literature.

2.2 Gap of Literature

Many researches have been conducted abroad on CrM and buying decision but there is a research gap in India with reference to cause-brand congruence as a moderating variable and depicting the impact of low cause-brand congruence or high cause-brand congruence on the buying decision of Millennial.

2.3 Need for Study

1. In today's competitive environment firms are focusing on differentiation aspect where they are trying to gain competitive advantage by doing something unique. CrM is considered as a major paradigm shift in marketing activities especially in FMCG sector. Here the purpose is to contribute new findings to the emerging era of CrM with reference to cause-brand congruence in developing countries like India.
2. Many researches have been conducted abroad on cause related marketing and buying decision but very few researches have been conducted by taking cause-brand congruence as a moderating variable and depicting the impact of low cause-brand congruence or high cause-brand congruence on the buying decision of customers.
3. From the perspective of practical contributions, current study provides how cause-congruence is supposed to be considered at the time of implementation of cause-related marketing strategies.
4. From the managerial view point as well as view point of practitioners and corporates, it is needed to provide a statistically proven model to implement their strategies in effective and efficient manner. This study will provide a useful information to trio.
5. According to, New Companies Act, 2013 (CSR Act-Section 135), the company having net worth of Rupees Five Hundred Crore or more, or turnover of Rupees One Thousand Crore or more during financial year shall form a CSR committee. The company should spend at least two percent in every financial year. That amount should be an average net profit of the company made during three immediate preceding financial years as per the CSR policy. This indicates that a

study on cause-related marketing can provide a tool to the companies to adopt CrM as an effective CSR strategy.

3. Research Methodology

Single cross-sectional descriptive research design method is used for this study. Non-probability Convenience Sampling Technique is chosen for this study. The consumers who are aware with the term CrM are considered as sample for this study. Sample Unit is customers (Specifically Millennial’s’- Age group of 18 to 38) who are purchasers of the personal care products. Sample size is 583 individuals. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. To get an insight into the research area and to develop the hypothesis, the information was collected from various books, journals, and websites and research projects. Structured Questionnaire was administered to respondents to get information.

3.1 Research Objectives

- 1. To evaluate cause-brand congruence as a moderating variable
- 2. To measure the effect of Cause Related Marketing on overall Attitude
- 3. To measure the effect of Cause Related Marketing on buying decision
- 4. To measure effect of overall attitude on buying decision

3.2 Hypothesis

Sr No	Hypothesis
1	Ho: There is no significant impact of cause related marketing on overall Attitude.
2	Ho: There is no significant impact of cause related marketing on Buying decision.
3	Ho: There is no significant impact of Overall attitude on Buying decision.
4	Ho: There is no Moderating effect of Brand-Cause Congruence on the relationship between CrM and buying decision.

3.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument is structured questionnaire to measure Millennial’s’ Buying Behavior with reference to CrM by examining Moderating Role of Cause-Brand Congruence in Western India. The questionnaire has only close-ended questions. The five points Likert scale and seven point Likert scales are used.

3.4 Data Specifications, Data Analysis and Result Discussion

The constructs were subjected to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify that the manifest variables load upon the proposed constructs and are indeed indicative of these constructs. The combination of CFA and construct validity assessments allows the researcher to evaluate the quality of their measures within a Measurement Model prior to testing the structural model. Maximum likelihood estimation procedures are used to estimate the parameter of the full measurement of the model. It consists of the two first orders latent variables namely CrM and buying decision and one second order variable namely overall attitude towards brand which is the result of attitude towards campaign and attitude towards the company. There are total 17 indicators which measured the said latent variables. CrM is measured through 5 indicators and Attitude towards company and campaign are measured through 4 and 5 indicators, respectively. Buying decision is measured through 3 indicators.

Table 1 Respondent Profile

No	Variables	Categories	Frequency (Total-583)	Percentage (Total-100)
1	Gender	Male	333	57.12
		Female	250	42.88
2	Age (in years)	18-24	176	30.19
		25-31	216	37.05
		32-38	191	32.76
3	Marital Status	Married	352	60.38
		Unmarried	231	39.62
4	Education	No formal education	10	1.72
		Up to higher secondary	41	7.03
		Diploma	48	8.23
		Graduation	269	46.14
		Post-graduation and above	215	36.88
5	Occupation	Student	124	21.27
		Home maker	28	4.80
		Self Employed	197	33.79
		Salaried	234	40.14
6	Annual Income	Below 200000	163	27.96
		200001 - 400000	236	40.48
		400001 - 600000	105	18.01
		600001- 800000	33	5.66
		800001 – 1000000	27	4.63
		1000001 and above	19	3.26
7	Members in Household	1-2	12	2.06
		3-4	270	46.31
		5-6	264	45.28
		More than 6	37	6.35

3.5 Measurement Model

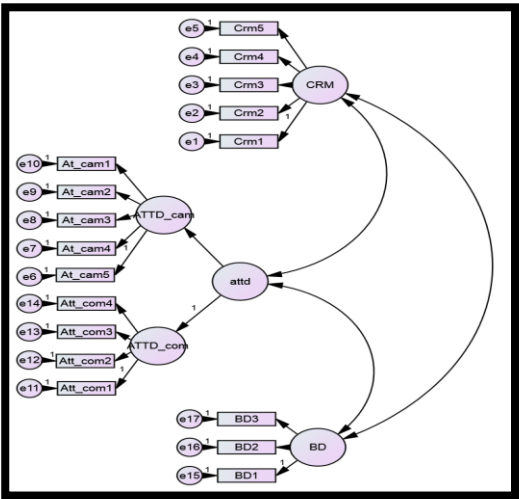


Figure 1 Measurement Model (CFA)

3.6 Reliability and Validity

It is important to find out internal constituency of the measurement prior to further analysis. Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient of reliability can be used to find out the reliability of the scale. Inter item correlation and Item to total correlation is also used to find out how the item is internally correlated and how it is correlated with the other items. According to Nunnally (1978), Cronbach’s alpha value more than 0.70 indicates good level of internal consistency.

Table 2 Reliability Coefficients*

Scale	Cause Related Marketing	Attitude	Buying Decision
Cronbach’s alpha	0.878	0.967	0.854

Here, reliability coefficients are found to be more than the standard value of 0.70 which provides the good construct reliabilities for the constructed scales.

Table 3 Factor Loading, AVE and CR

Factor	Indicator	Factor	AVE	CR
Cause Related Marketing	Crm1	0.778	0.672	0.878
	Crm2	0.75		
	Crm3	0.806		
	Crm4	0.732		
	Crm5	0.777		
Buying Decision	BD1	0.869	0.579	0.859
	BD2	0.858		
	BD3	0.724		
Overall Attitude	ATTD_com	0.887	1.00	1.00
	ATTD_com	0.857		

For the evaluation of the reflective measurement model, outer loading, average variance extracted and composite reliability plays most important role. According to Joe F Hair et al., outer loading should be more than 0.7 , AVE should be greater than or equal to 0.5 and Composite Reliability should be greater than 0.7. Table shows the quality measurement for the model. Outer loading, AVE, composite reliability provides the good model fit as all the criteria are above the standard cut off.

If the variable’s square root AVE value is higher than the estimated correlation between it and another variable, then there is evidence to support an acceptable degree of Discriminant validity between these variables.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

	Buying Decision	Cause Related Marketing	Overall Attitude
Buying Decision	0.820		
Cause Related Marketing	0.608	0.769	
Overall Attitude	0.649	0.761	1.00

The overall results from comparing square root AVE estimates to their corresponding correlation estimates were indicative of Discriminant validity among these variables. Discriminant Validity test shows how much variance is in the indicators that are able to explain variance in the construct. As, square root of AVE is greater than Correlation, the model is having sound discriminant validity.

Table 5 Model Fit Criteria

Chi-square	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	RMSR	NFI	CFI	TLI	IFI
427.721	3.687	0.068	0.037	0.953	0.966	0.960	0.966

Here, Chi-square value is 427.721 but researchers have concluded that when sample size exceeds 200, chi-square automatically increases and hence, is not considered as a main inferential parameter. In such cases, other fit indexes are taken into consideration rather than the chi-square value.

Here, CMIN/DF is 3.687 which indicate excellent model fit. RMSEA is a good indicator of the model fit. Ideal value of the root mean square error (RMSEA) is 0.05 and below, and a value less than 0.08 is also considered as acceptable. Value of the RMSEA is 0.068 which indicates the good fit. RMSR also provide the evidence for the good fit. The standard value of each of CFI, NFI, IFI and TLI is 0.9. Nearer to 1 indicates excellent fit. Values of these parameters in this research are 0.966, 0.953, 0.966 and 0.960 respectively which provides the evidence for the excellent fit.

3.7 Path Analysis

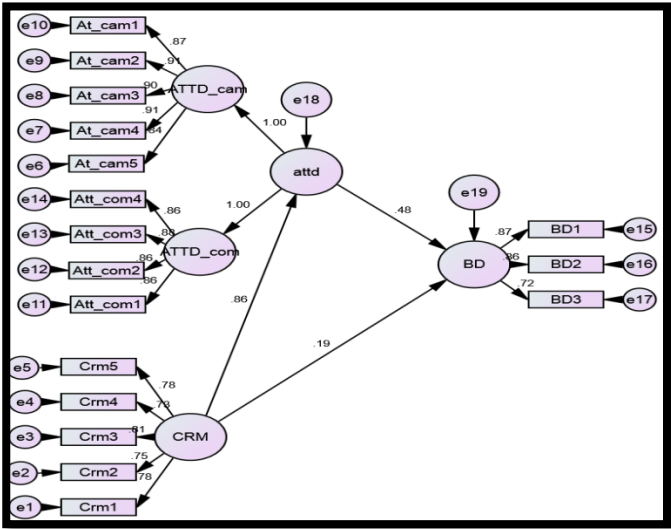


Figure 2 Path Analysis

Figure 2 shows the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Cause related marketing has the positive impact on the overall attitude. Standard beta weight of impact of cause related marketing on the overall attitude is 0.86, which indicates that cause related marketing has a significant impact on the overall attitude.

CrM also has a positive impact on the buying decision with the standardized beta weight of 0.19. CrM has a positive and low influence on the buying decision. Overall Attitude has positive impact on the buying decision with the standardized beta weight of 0.48. Overall Attitude has the moderate impact on the buying decision.

3.8 Multi-group Analysis

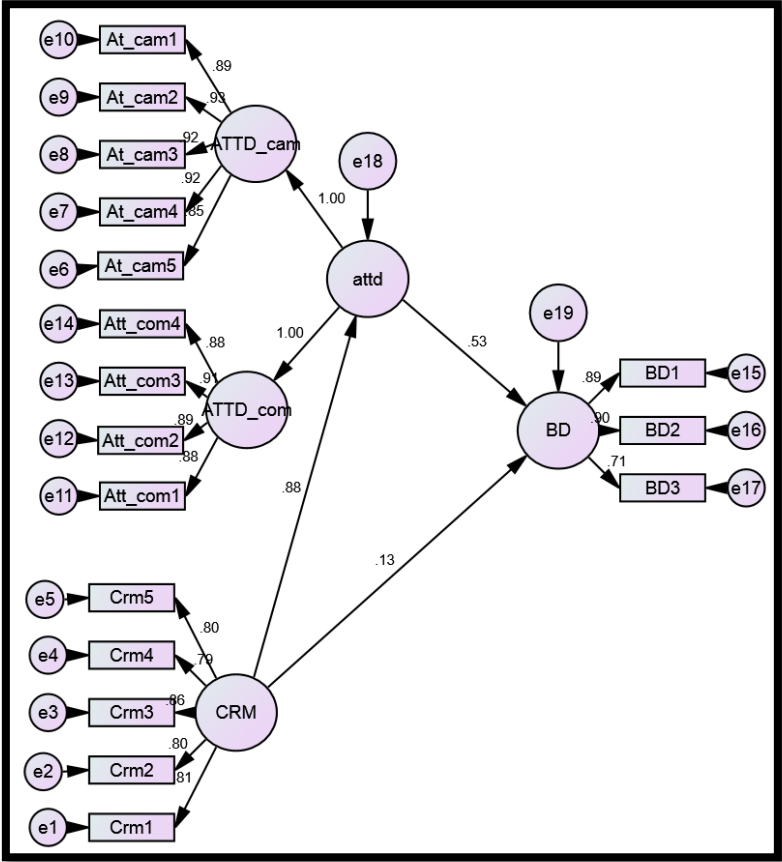


Figure 3 Low Cause Congruence Model

Multi-group comparison of proposed models, where differences in path estimates for different sampled populations have been relatively naive. Often, researchers simply examine and discuss the difference in magnitude of particular model path estimates for two or more data sets (e.g., Thompson et al. 1994). Cause Brand Congruence is inserted as the moderating variable. Cause Brand Congruence is the categorical variable having two categories namely High Congruity/ High fit and Low congruity/ Low fit. Proposed model is run for the sample with high congruity (High Fit- 258 respondents) and low congruity (Low Fit- 325 respondents). Low cause-congruence indicates that Regression weight of cause-related marketing to the overall attitude is 0.88 and regression weight of cause related to buying decision is 0.13. Where, regression weight of overall attitude to buying decision is 0.53.

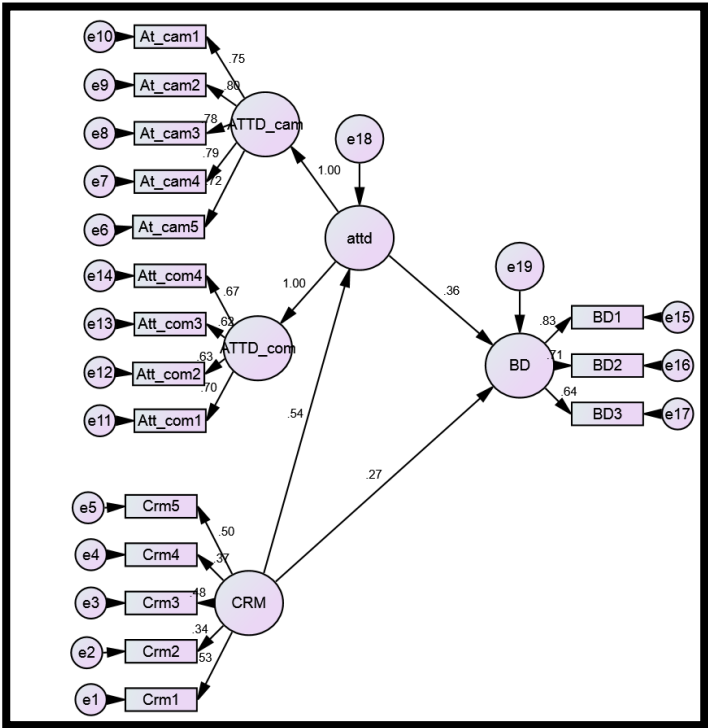


Figure 4 High Cause Congruence Model

High cause-congruence indicates that Regression weight of Cause Related Marketing to the overall attitude is 0.54 and regression weight of cause related to buying decision is 0.27. Where, regression weight of overall attitude to buying decision is 0.36. Nested Model comparison Table provides the statistical evidence for the moderating effect of the cause-congruence on all the regression weight of the proposed model. Chi square value is 35.283 with the degree of freedom 17. P value is 0.006 which is less than 0.05 which indicate that both models have significant difference in the regression weight of the SEM model. It can be inferred that there is significant moderating effect of the cause congruence/ cause fit on the structural weight. It can be said that path model does not have the same effect for sample with low congruence and high congruence sample.

Table 6 Nested Model Comparisons

Model	DF	CMIN	P	NFI	IFI	RFI	TLI
				Delta-1	Delta-2	rho	rho2
Structural weights	17	35.283	0.006	0.005	0.005	-	-

4. Managerial Implications

- 1. The present study suggests the many implications for marketers and companies. This study will be useful to marketers as, they can give more focus to the factors

like Attitude, Cause Brand Congruence and Buying Decision as this study concludes that these factors make the significant contribution in the successful CrM. Demographic conclusion also becomes very useful to the marketers and companies.

2. From this study, it can be said that cause related marketing plays an important role to create the positive attitude towards the brand. Companies have to focus more on the cause related marketing as it provides the positive attitude and perception towards brand as well as companies which ultimately influence the buying decision of the consumers.
3. Here we have used SEM- Structural Equation Modeling and CFA- Confirmatory Factor Analysis which are considered as very powerful statistical tools which gives more validity and reliability to findings. This study has added crucial literature in the existing one which will be useful to academicians who have to do further research with reference to cause-related marketing.
4. Here it should be noted that the majority of the study is undertaken in developed countries so this study can be considered as a value addition to the pool of existing literature considering lack of research to investigate Millennial's' Buying Behavior with reference to Cause Related Marketing to examine moderating role of Cause-Brand Congruence in Western India
5. According to the Indian Companies Act, 2013, and the "New Act", CSR has been incorporated as a legal requirement in India. Findings of the study will be beneficial to both charity organizations as well as retailers to decide whether to or not to engage in cause marketing.
6. As a part of CSR, the companies and brands will be able to use this study to gain added advantage by considering cause related marketing as CSR activity.
7. Findings of study will be helpful to society as well considering the effect of cause congruence that more and more companies will be involved in CrM activity that will provide more benefits to the society.

5. Conclusion

Here, the main objective of the study is to find out the effect of the Cause Related Marketing on Millennial's' buying decision. This study also tries to find out the moderating effect of cause-brand congruence on the relationship between CrM and Millennial's' buying decision. This study concludes that CrM has a positive and significant impact on the Millennial's' overall attitude towards brands. Cause related marketing also has the positive direct impact on the buying decision but this effect is very low. Overall Attitude towards brand has a positive and significant impact on the buying decision. Multi-group analysis concludes that cause-brand congruence have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between cause-related marketing and buying decision. High cause-congruence has the higher regression weights of the proposed model compared to Low cause-congruence regression weight. Hence, the study confirms the moderating effect of the cause-brand congruence on the relationship between cause-related marketing and Millennial's' buying decision.

6. Limitations and Further Scope of the Study

This study has following limitations.

1. The present study is having samples from Western India only.

2. The study is restricted to a specific sample size; otherwise the scope of study might have been extremely broader.
3. Further research is needed that covers diverse regions across India.
4. Limitations of field work and research procedure apply to this research as well.

CrM has many variables which plays important role, but this study focuses only on cause brand congruence. Future study can be done including many other variables like donation size, brand equity, loyalty etc. More Demographic variables also can be included as study variables and comparative analysis can be done between different states also.

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Mahendra Sharma is Pro-Chancellor and Director General, Ganpat University (Gujarat, India), is a seasoned Management Academician, Researcher, Administrator and Strategist, and also a prolific writer and an eminent speaker. Dr Sharma was listed among top 100 influential vice chancellors who have impacted policies and awarded 'Outstanding Contribution to the Field of Education Award' by World Education Congress and Private Universities Forum. He is also known for his insightful thoughts and uniquely conceived innovative education programs in Management for bridging Industry-Academic gaps, by introducing a sectoral specialization within MBA, M.Phil and Ph.D program in Management. He has a rich experience of more than 20 years in the field of education. With Ph.D in Consumer Behaviour area, he possesses teaching expertise in the areas of Strategic Management, Sales & Distribution Management, Services Marketing, Retail Management and Consumer Behaviour and guided 22 M.Phil. and 12 Ph.D. candidates till date.

Maurvi Vasavada is Chairperson, Associate Professor Ganpat University-Centre for Management Studies and Research. Profound Academician and strategic leader with experience of more than 15 years in Academia. She plays the Key role in designing and developing Industry oriented postgraduate Management programs to align the academic and corporate expertise globally by adopting innovative teaching pedagogy. With Doctorate degree in Agri economics, her teaching area are International Marketing and Agriculture Marketing. She has Three book publication and more than 25 Research papers published in International and national level journals. She believes Research oriented Practical learning is fundamental to create the employable workforce.