

Doing Good with Shopping – A Systematic Review of the Effects of Cause-related Marketing on Purchase Intention

Abstract

Commitment to social and ecological responsibility is becoming increasingly relevant for companies, as more and more customers are demanding companies to act in a more sustainable and conscious manner (Bockman et al., 2009; Schmeltz, 2012). Cause-related Marketing, as a strategy of showing socially responsible practices is both an academic and a managerial marketing issue. One of the older questions in the debate on Cause-related Marketing is whether it is profitable for organisations to pay attention to social requirements as factors that cause purchasing intention. Today, taking social aspects into account is an important trigger for empirical research in Cause-related Marketing. Understanding whether and which aspects of Cause-related Marketing make a difference for purchase intention have important implications for marketing managers and researchers. However, the answer to this question has not yet been found, as the fragmented literature shows.

This apparent ambiguity invites a systematic review of the literature that can clarify the debate whether Cause-related Marketing has effects on purchase intention and allow conclusions to be drawn concerning which kind of impact it has.

Through intensive literature research, a total of 61 papers published between 1992 and 2018 were identified and then classified according to the definition of Cause-related Marketing of Varadarajan & Menon (1988) based on a framework developed by the author. The papers were then analyzed descriptively.

The results show that interest in this area is growing and that year after year a wider variety of topics and methods are emerging. However, so far only individual aspects have been examined. The cause-brand fit was most frequently studied. Constantly changing conditions make it necessary to combine various Cause-related Marketing components.

Key words: Cause-related Marketing, corporate social responsibility, purchase intention, buying behavior, systematic review

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1. Introduction

As more and more customers are turning away from materialism, current trends are emerging that aim to reduce the negative effects of purchases on the environment and society. This changing behavior is one of the driving forces behind Cause-related Marketing. Cause-related Marketing links product sales to the support of a cause (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988) and can be classified under the superordinate term corporate social responsibility. The topic of Cause-related Marketing is not new, but it must be refined due to emerging innovative technologies. It is no longer enough to only consider changing customers' attitudes and subsequent behaviors. Mobile technology and social networks have revealed other forms of accountability such as sharing economy, freeganism and pay-per-use (Jastrzebska, 2017).

Due to fragmented research thus far, the goal of this investigation is to review research on Cause-related Marketing and structure the empirical and theoretical findings to give an over-view of the current state of research.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, the relevance of Cause-related Marketing will be discussed considering the aspects of corporate social responsibility and purchasing behavior. Thereafter, the research objectives and methodology will be addressed. Then the conceptual framework will be introduced. This section is followed by the analysis of the current state of research on the effect of Cause-related Marketing on purchase intention. The ensuing discussion highlights the research gaps derived from the literature review. In the last section the limitations and possible avenues for future research will be pointed out.

2. The Evolution of Cause-related Marketing

Corporate Social Responsibility and Cause-related Marketing

Companies must take responsibility for their actions or, in other words, develop a corporate social responsibility strategy. The first comprehensive discussion of corporate social responsibility took place in the USA during the 1950's. The publication 'Social Responsibilities of the Businessmen' by Bowen (1953) marked the beginning of the debate on this concept. In 1979, Carroll laid the foundation for a model that is still one of the best-known and most cited models for corporate social responsibility (Ma et al., 2012). Carroll defines corporate social responsibility as a construct that meets society's economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations. In 1991, Carroll illustrated these four responsibilities in a pyramid. Due to emerging criticism of the pyramid form as an allocation of values to the individual categories and the division into charitable responsibility, Carroll and Schwartz modified their allocation in 2003 and developed a corporate social responsibility approach with three responsibilities that merged into one another. They subsumed the category philanthropic under ethical responsibility.

Cause-related Marketing

Rooted within the corporate social responsibility landscape is the field of Cause-related Marketing. It describes the corporate practice of linking company donations to product sales (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). According to this definition, the donation depends on the engagement of the customers. For each transaction, the company donates a certain amount for a specific cause. Kotler and Lee (2005) define Cause-related Marketing in a comparable way and express the donation as a certain percentage of sales revenue. However, according to Adkins (1999), this purely transaction-related view of Cause-related Marketing is too limited. Other marketing instruments such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing and sponsoring are also a part of Cause-related Marketing (Adkins, 1999). It can therefore be stated that no unified definition of Cause-related Marketing exists thus far.

However, the definitions only differ regarding the concept range. Opinions vary as to whether Cause-related Marketing requires a transaction (Kotler and Lee, 2005) or just connecting a company for a relevant social purpose that benefits both parties, the firm and the charity (Pringle and Thompson, 1999). There are similarities, such as the mutually profitable business relationship between companies and non-profit organizations. Since the broad definition according to Pringle and Thompson or Adkins is too imprecise, the classification according to Varadarajan and Menon is used as a basis for the further course of this investigation.

Cause-related Marketing and Purchase Behavior

The current state of research on Cause-related Marketing and its effect on purchase behavior is fragmented. The

existing studies have only focused on specific issues, with no regard to the complete framework. As a means of overcoming fragmentation, Rousseau et al. (2008) suggested systematic reviews to be useful for consolidating findings.

Therefore, this paper presents a narrative literature review that aims to bring some structure into current research and to advance an agenda for future research on Cause-related Marketing in the customers' attitudes and behavior context.

3. Research Objectives and Methodology

The objective of the study is to review systematically the findings of published research papers and answer the question what impact various types of Cause-related Marketing have on purchase intention. To gain a comprehensive view of how Cause-related Marketing aspects impact purchase behavior, the author observed broadly the academic literature, including three relevant databases: EBSCOhost, Emerald Insight and Science Direct and implemented cross-referencing. Not only have marketing journals been analyzed, but also journals in business ethics and management. These journals also publish issues within the field of Cause-related Marketing within a marketing context. These databases have been searched using the following search criteria: 'cause-related marketing' or 'cause related marketing' or 'cause marketing' and 'purchase intention' or 'buying intention' or 'willingness to buy' or 'buying willingness' or 'purchase probability' or 'purchase behavior' or 'purchase'. The full text of the articles was searched and the search engine was also allowed to search for similar terms. A total of 181 papers were found as a result. These articles were then scanned and any papers which did not examine the search terms were removed. Therefore, there will be a total of 61 papers investigated in this study ranging from 1992 to 2018. A detailed compilation of all papers used, including theoretical background and methodology, can be found in the appendix.

4. Conceptual Framework

To approach the different data and to gather them in an appropriate way, qualitative researchers often use a loose conceptual framework (Elliott and Timulak, 2005). The classification derived from the Cause-related Marketing definition from Varadarajan and Menon (1988) and the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1988) offers a relevant conceptual framework. The framework is depicted in figure 1 (p. 4). Both authors defined Cause-related Marketing 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-producing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives'* (p. 60).

5. Results

The results will be analyzed and discussed according to the different aspects of Cause-related Marketing depicted in figure 1 with a focus on the theoretical background and the most important findings.

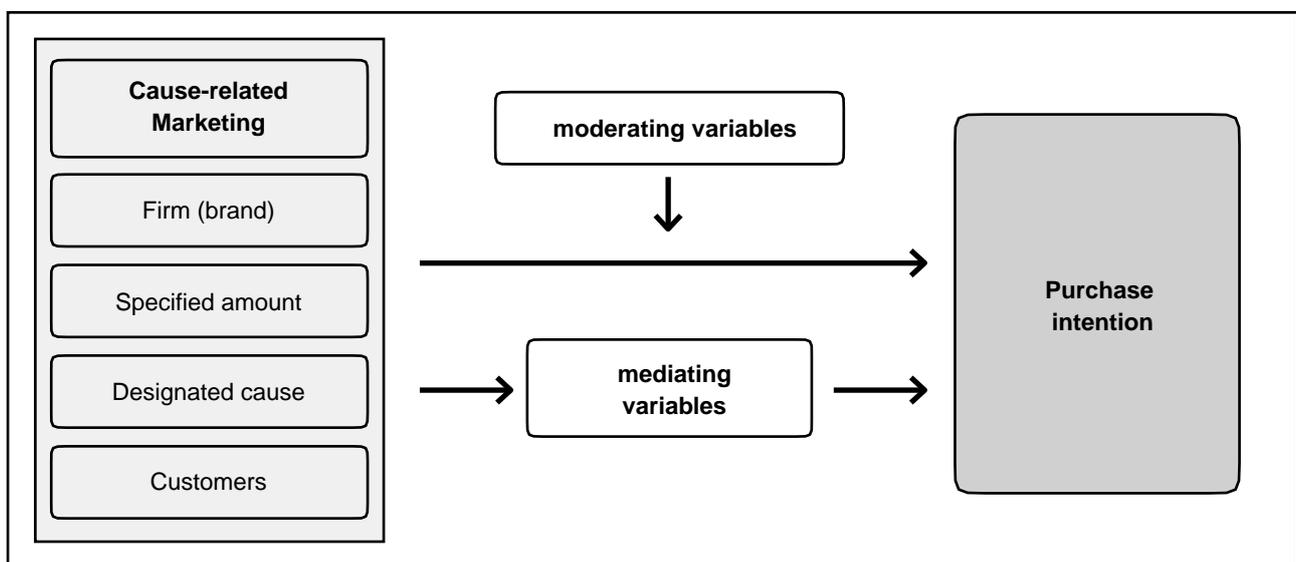


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Firm (brand)

Regarding the element 'firm', the following aspects are mainly considered in the literature: cause-brand fit, product type, attitude toward firm/brand.

Cause-brand fit

The element of cause-brand fit is the most studied. The results basically all reflect the same aspect. A high fit between cause and brand results in a higher purchase intention (Chang and Liu, 2012; Chéron, 2012; Gorton et al., 2013; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006; Kerr and Das, 2013; Lafferty, 2007; Melero and Montaner, 2016; Neel et al., 2013; Samu and Wymer, 2009; Sung and Lee, 2016).

This can be justified by the help of information-integration theory (Anderson, 1981). Brands are presented in alliance with a charity in order to evoke associative learning of the customer and thus transfer social associations to the brand. Some authors investigate additional moderator or mediator effects. On the one hand, cause-brand fit can act as a mediator between the relationship of attitudes and purchase intention (Neel et al., 2013). On the other hand, various customer-related effects, such as need for cognition (Kerr and Das, 2013) or gender (Chéron, 2012) moderate the cause-brand fit effect on purchase intention. People with a high need for cognition consider fit as important for purchase intention.

While the above-mentioned authors made a distinction between high and low fit, Chang and Liu (2012) distinguished between consistent and complimentary fit. The type of product moderates the effect, determining whether a consistent or complimentary fit is better.

All studies found a significant effect of cause-brand fit on purchase intention, except for the studies by Roy (2003, 2010). One possible explanation for this deviating result is that the researcher measured the effect of the interaction with type of firm and concluded that only the interaction of cause-brand fit and type of firm plays a role for purchase intention.

Product type

In Cause-related Marketing campaigns, company donations are linked to product sales. Products themselves can be divided into utilitarian and hedonic products. Regarding their effects on purchase intention when combined with a donation, the researchers came to different conclusions. On the one hand they stated that purchase intention is greater for hedonic products when combined with a donation than utilitarian products (Melero and Montaner, 2016; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). Another researcher states that utilitarian products are more effective for the use in a Cause-related Marketing campaign (Galan-Ladero et al., 2013). Minton and Cornwell (2016) found out that adding a cause to a product, regardless of the type, did not significantly increase purchase intention.

These contradicting findings can be explained by different individual cognitive processes which lead to different evaluations of the use of a product and its effects. The consumption of hedonic products can for example cause feelings of guilt. The dissonance theory by Festinger (1957) provides a theoretical structure for understanding guilt-induced behavior. To maintain cognitive consistency people buy social responsible products.

Attitude toward firm (brand)

Several authors confirm that the attitude toward the firm or brand must be positive for the cause-related campaign to be successful (Bigne-Alcaniz et al., 2012; Baek, 2017; He et al., 2016; Lee and Ferreira, 2011; Pérez, 2009; Shu-Pei, 2009). Attitude toward firm or brand can function as mediator or moderator.

Information-integration theory (Anderson, 1981) explains that customers' prior attitude or knowledge influences them in assessing new information that they receive from a Cause-related Marketing campaign.

The attitude to the firm or brand mediates on the one hand the relationship between Cause-related Marketing and purchase intention (Baek, 2017; Bigne-Alcaniz et al., 2012; Pérez, 2009; Qamar, 2013; Shabbir et al., 2010). On the other hand, identification with the brand moderates the evaluation of Cause-related marketing and its effects on purchase intention (Lee and Ferreira, 2011; Rathod et al., 2014).

Regarding a negative attitude or identification with the firm, there is a contradictory view concerning its effect on purchase intention. On the one hand, some authors recognized that when identification with the firm or brand is low Cause-related Marketing provides an additional reason to buy the product (Lee and Ferreira, 2011). Gabrielli and Baghi (2010) argue on the other hand that the support of a charitable cause cannot compensate for a bad image.

Specified amount

Among the element specified amount, the various levels of donation and the type of presentation has been examined. This is mainly limited to financial donations; the non-financial donation is only examined in one study.

Level of financial donation amount

Several authors examined the diverse levels of donation amount and found that the highest level of purchase intention can be achieved when donation amount is perceived to be high (Boenigk and Schuchardt, 2013; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, 2016).

This effect is moderated by product price (Boenigk and Schuchardt, 2013), but also by customer-related motives. The customers' attitude toward helping others and their warm glow feelings are influential in this regard (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). A high product price and positive emotions positively influence the relational structure.

Presentation of financial donation amount

The presentation of financial donation amount is essential. Presenting the donations in an absolute amount is better compared with presenting it as percentage of profit or price (Kleber et al., 2016). This effect is moderated by individual difference in numeracy. Expressing the specified amount as percentage leads to confusion and to an overestimation of the amount spent (Olsen et al., 2003).

If the donation amount is presented with a percentage then a fixed percentage is better for increasing purchase intention (Hyllegard et al., 2011). If the donation amount is presented as absolute amount it does not play a role if it is an exact amount or a vague amount of a currency (Kerr and Das, 2013).

Only one study cares about non-financial donation – in particular the donation of a product in the form of a buy-one-give-one-promotion (BOGO). Hamby (2016) found out that non-financial donations are more effective with utilitarian products (moderator) through the mediator of perceived helpfulness.

Construal-level theory (Liberman et al., 2007) serves as theoretical justification of these effects. The theory organizes customer thinking on a continuum of high and low construal. Presentations with concrete features such as an absolute amount of money can evoke a concrete construal which arouses more attention. Personal relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) can also contribute to explaining this effect. The theory will be discussed in more detail in the next paragraph.

Designated cause

For the element designated cause, mainly cause choice and the proximity effect (temporal and local) have been investigated.

Cause choice

The researchers concluded that allowing customers to choose a cause has a positive effect on the intention to buy (Howie et al., 2018, Kull and Heath, 2016; Lucke and Heinze, 2015; Robinson et al., 2012). This effect is mediated by personal characteristics such as collectivism (Robinson et al., 2012) or involvement (Kull and Heath, 2016), customer empowerment and commitment (Lucke and Heinze, 2015).

This effect can be explained by the personal relevance for the customer. Relevance is defined in relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) as a function of processing effort and positive cognitive effect. A positive cognitive effect is achieved when information is particularly important for the situation in which a customer finds himself or when a significant change is activated in the customer's surroundings.

Proximity effect

The proximity effect plays a role with regard to temporal and local proximity. Customers are more willing to support causes occurring suddenly (Hou et al, 2008; Tangari et al, 2010; Vyravene and Rabbanee, 2016) and are locally close (Ross, Patterson and Stutts, 1992) rather than ongoing and far away causes. In terms of duration; customers prefer long-lasting campaigns over short-lasting campaigns (Youn and Kim, 2018). Customers' temporal orientations moderate the influence of the temporal framing within the ad on purchase intention (Tangari et al, 2010).

This relevance of distance has its origin in the social impact theory, which states that the reaction to a social stimulus, such

as naming the recipient of a donation in an advertising campaign, is influenced by the proximity and immediacy of the origin of the donation (Latané, 1996; Latané and Bourgeois, 2001).

Ad appeal

It has also been examined to what extent the cause should be designed in terms of visual aspects. Examination has been done on portraying either cause or brand as main aspect. Portraying the brand instead of the cause in the ad is more effective for purchase intention when focusing on utilitarian products (Chang, 2012; Lafferty and Edmondson, 2009). Chang (2011) tested the effect of different ad appeals (guilt vs. non-guilt). The researcher concluded that when the cause is communicated with a guilt appeal and a practical product, purchase intention is higher. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) can function as an explanatory approach. Customers try to reduce their feeling of guilt by buying a social product.

Kind of cause

There are several types of causes a company can donate money to, e.g. to human, and health, environmental or animal causes. When it comes to purchase intention, cause does not directly play a role (Guerreiro, 2015; Lafferty and Edmondson, 2014) only an indirect one through cause-brand fit (among others Chang and Liu, 2012).

Customers

The personality traits of customers will be analyzed on the basis of their sociodemographic characteristics and traits. Following the definition of Varadarajan and Menon (1988), the term customer is consistently used for this investigation. However, this does not mean the repeat buyer, but the prospective buyer. This difference is also decisive for the viewpoint of the results. There was no clear use of the two terms in the papers investigated; they were often used interchangeably.

Gender

With regard to sociodemographic, only the trait of gender was considered. Avilela and Nelson (2016) showed that gender plays a role as moderator on the attitude toward sponsorship and perception of brand quality as predictors of purchase intention. The results showed that women are more likely to buy Cause-related Marketing products. Hyllegard et al. (2010) instead found no difference. Most samples were student samples and therefore did not control for other sociodemographic variables.

Emotions

Emotions are important to consider when creating a Cause-related Marketing campaign. Triggering positive emotions (Andrews et al., 2014, Guerreiro, 2015; Tucker et al., 2012) or reducing negative emotions by participation (Elving, 2013; Kim and Johnson, 2013) plays a significant role as a mediator in the relationship. Also important is how people perceive themselves, the self-construal, which functions as a moderator (Chen and Huang 2016; Kim and Johnson, 2013). Interdependent people tend to react more on moral emotions than independent participants.

Involvement/Commitment

Cause/Brand-Involvement is decisive for the success of Cause-related Marketing campaigns. Several studies confirm that a prominent level of involvement triggers a higher purchase intention (Berger et al. 1999; Bester and Jere 2012; Gorton et al. 2013; Hajjat 2003; Hyllegard et al., 2010, 2011; Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011; Sung and Lee 2016; Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal 2005). Involvement can act as mediator, moderator or independent variable in the relationship between Cause-related Marketing and purchasing intention.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The literature review tried to summarize extant research on the effect of Cause-related Marketing elements on purchase behavior, to connect the findings of several studies and to derive gaps in research that might guide future research.

It has been noted that interest in this area is growing and that year after year a wider variety of topics and methods are

emerging. The number of growing studies shows the advantages and potentials of the use of Cause-related Marketing elements to increase purchase intention.

However, in most of the studies only one aspect of Cause-related Marketing has been examined. That is, Cause-brand fit was the most investigated. One possible reason might be the rising concern of greenwashing activities (Du, 2014; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Nyilasy et al., 2014). Lyon and Montgomery define greenwashing as communication that encourages customers to get a positive impression of a company's sustainability practices without implementing appropriate measures in the company. Due to this rising concern and constantly changing environmental conditions; the combination of different aspects of Cause-related Marketing can be useful to strengthen the understanding of the underlying mechanisms to explore links to new concepts. Especially the effects of moderators and mediators show that it is also necessary to deal with the combination of various aspects.

7. Limitations and Further Research

This review contains at least three limitations. The first limitation refers to the selection of the journals. No journal was excluded from the search due to its rankings (e.g. ERIM Journals List or Science Citation Index). This served to give an overview of the current research landscape. Secondly, the specific choice of purchase intention as dependent variable can be questioned. The literature that deals with the effect of Cause-related Marketing on purchase intention is limited. The relatively small number of studies of the issue and the high number of rejected papers could be viewed as suggesting a need to understand the topic as an emerging research domain. If other dependent variables had been included, such as attitude toward the company, there would have been more references, but the results would have been diluted as well. The third limitation goes hand in hand with the second. Purchase intention was used as a dependent variable but not the actual purchase behavior. This has to be reflected critically insofar as the commitment to a responsible lifestyle does not necessarily have to be replicated in the purchase of sustainable products. This relationship is described in the literature as the mind-behavior gap (Schuitema and Groot, 2015). Customers lack the motivation to reflect on their actions when shopping and often do not see themselves in a position to reliably assess the effects of their purchase. Out of convenience, familiar patterns of buying behavior are used. The buying behavior shows a resistance to change (Barbarossa and Pastore, 2015).

This limitation leads to the first focal area for future research. In addition to improve the understanding of actual behavior, research is needed on actual customer behavior. A comparison must be made between the willingness to buy and then compared with actual sales figures. Furthermore, qualitative studies should be carried out to determine possible reasons for the mind-behavior gap.

Besides that, there are many more opportunities for future research which will be presented according to the used framework.

Firm (brand)

The integrated firm is always a manufacturer; an examination of a retailer or a service provider is missing. It is interesting to find out whether information-integration theory applies and whether positive information about the retailer or a service provider can be transferred to a Cause-related Marketing campaign (Anderson, 1981).

As mentioned above, concerns of Greenwashing activities are rising (Du 2014; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Nyilasy et al., 2014). The skepticism among customers is mainly triggered by the communication of various oppositional stakeholders, such as the press. A study on the effects of the inclusion of negative press (e.g. as a moderator) has not yet been carried out. Given the growing importance of this issue, it would also be appropriate to take this aspect into account.

Specified amount

The growing skepticism of customers is also contributing to the next research gap. Only the donation per product is examined. An investigation of the effects of the actual amount of donations has not yet been carried out. However, it is possible that the donation per product is high, however not the total donation amount in comparison to the company's turnover.

There has also been no comparison between financial and non-financial donations. However, this is particularly necessary in view of the developments in practice. A start-up in Germany, Sharefoods, focuses on the BOGO donation and donates one product with every product purchased. The campaign is well accepted by customers (about-drinks, 2018). Construal level theory (Liberman et al., 2007) supports this principle, as it is often easier for customers to assess the counter value of a product than to estimate how much a percentage donation is.

Designated cause

Praxis is also the trigger for the next research gap. Two large companies have already discovered the holidays, especially the time shortly before Christmas, to combine with a call for donations. The holidays mark a time to reflect, give thanks, and give back. Coca-Cola and Uber are using this time to support Cause-related Marketing campaigns for suffering children (Clarabridge, 2018). In research, the examination of a fit between donation and occasion is lacking. Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) offers the corresponding theoretical starting points. It can be assumed that the relevance of an event such as Christmas promotes the processing of information and thus positively represents the relevance of the donation.

Customers

The literature review showed that 3 of 4 studies used a convenience sample consisting of students. Since sustainable behavior often also depends on socio-demographic variables, there is a need for further research into different clusters in the population.

Another interesting area for future research is other industries. So far mainly the FMCG industry has been examined. The examination of different industries would be useful in the interest of improving generalization of the results. There is for example the trend toward conducting e-commerce via mobile phones (Turban et al 2018). This innovation in purchase processing should be taken into account in the transaction-based definition of Cause-related Marketing. The technology makes it possible, for example, to give more information on types of donations. It also enables the customer himself to set a donation amount.

Finally, it can be said that attention should be paid to the customers and their increased involvement in Cause-related Marketing.

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Appendix

Table 1

Cause-related Marketing and Purchase Intention

Author	Title	Journal	Theoretical foundation	Method	Key results
wt al. (2014)	Cause Marketing Effectiveness and the Moderating Role of Price Discounts	Journal of Marketing	Theory of Warm-Glow Giving	Experimental design, n = 426 students	In combination with a given price discount, the impact of Cause-related Marketing on purchase intention is greatest at a moderate level of discounts. Customers warm glow feelings mediate the impact.
Avilelaa and Nelson (2016)	Testing the Selectivity Hypothesis in Cause-related Marketing among Generation Y: [When] Does Gender Matter for Short- and Long-term Persuasion?	Journal of Marketing Communications	Gender-Schema theory, theory of psychological reactance	Experimental design, n = 177 students	Gender plays a role as moderator on the attitude toward sponsorship and perception of brand quality as predictors of purchase intention.
Baek et al. (2017)	Millennial Consumers' Perception of Sportswear Brand Globalness Impacts Purchase Intention in Cause-related Product Marketing	Social behavior and personality	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 382 students	Appraisal of the brand plays a significant role in evaluating brand-cause fit and firm motives which then influences purchase intention.
Berger et al. (1999)	Consumer Persuasion Through Cause-Related Advertising	Advances in Consumer Research	Theory on prosocial behavior	Experimental design, n(1) = 196, n(2) = 210 students	The inclusion of a cause claim influences purchase intention through the mediation of brand attitude, involvement and perceived argument quality. Women tend to respond more positively to Cause-related Marketing than men.
Bester and Jere (2012)	Cause-related Marketing in an Emerging Market: Effect of Cause Involvement and Message Framing on Purchase Intention	Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Experimental design, n = 40 women	Involvement with the cause positively influences purchase intention.

Bigne-Alcaniz et al. (2012)	Cause-related Marketing: The Influence of Cause-Brand Fit, Firm Motives and Attribute Altruistic to Consumer Inferences and Loyalty and Moderation Effect of Consumer Values	Journal of Marketing Communications	Information accessibility-theory, social identity theory, theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n(1) = 373, n(2) = 595 students	Positive beliefs about the firm positively influence attitude toward the firm, which then influences purchase intention. This relationship is moderated through the cause-brand fit.
Boenigk and Schuchardt (2013)	Cause-related Marketing Campaigns with Luxury Firms: An Experimental Study of Campaign Characteristics, Attitudes, and Donations	International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing	Attribution theory, anchoring and adjustment theory	Experimental design, n = 281 students	The highest level of purchase intention can be reached when donation amount spent is perceived to be high.
Chang (2011)	Guilt Appeals in Cause-related Marketing, The Subversive Roles of Product Type and Donation Magnitude	International Journal of Advertising	Cognitive dissonance theory	Experimental design, n = 820 participants	Communicating a cause with a guilt appeal has a positive effect on purchase intention. This effect is higher for utilitarian products and a low donation amount.
Chang (2012)	Missing Ingredients in Cause-related Advertising – The Right Formula of Execution Style and Cause Framing	International Journal of Advertising	Congruency theory	Experimental design, n = 236 students	A cause-focused ad leads to higher purchase intention in hedonic product promotions and a brand-orientated ad leads to higher purchase intention in utilitarian product promotion. This effect is moderated by self vs other-focused.
Chang and Liu (2012)	Goodwill Hunting? Influences of Product-cause Fit, Product Type, and Donation Level in Cause-related Marketing	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	Attribution theory	Discrete choice experiment, n = 512 participants	A high cause-brand fit (consistent or complimentary) leads to higher purchase intention. Customers are more likely to choose a hedonic product offering a donation with a complementary-fit cause. In contrast, individuals tend to prefer a utilitarian product with a consistent-fit cause. This effect is moderated by donation level. Higher donation level positively influences purchase intention.

Chen and Huang (2016)	Cause-related Marketing is Not Always Less Favorable than Corporate Philanthropy: The Moderating Role of Self-construal	International Journal of Research in Marketing	Construal-level theory	Experimental design, n = 203 participants	Customers react more positively toward philanthropy than Cause-related Marketing. But it also depends on the customers: customers with interdependent self-construal are more likely to choose Cause-related Marketing than customers with independent self-construal.
Chéron et al. (2012)	The Effects of Brand-cause Fit and Campaign Duration on Consumer Perception of Cause-related Marketing in Japan	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 196 participants	A high cause-brand fit creates greater purchase intention. This effect is moderated by gender and past experiences in philanthropic activities. The duration of the Cause-related Marketing campaign does not influence purchase intention.
Elving (2013)	Skepticism and Corporate Social Responsibility Communications: the Influence of Fit and Reputation	Journal of Marketing Communications	Attribution theory, associative network theory, congruence theory	Experimental design, n = 160 participants	Customers' skepticism when confronted with a Cause-related Marketing advertisement negatively influences purchase intention. Bad reputation leads to more skepticism; high level of fit instead leads to less skepticism.
Gabrielli and Baghi (2010)	Co-branding Strategy for Cause Related Marketing Activities: The Role of Brand Awareness on Consumers' Perception	6th International conference, univeristà della svizzera italiana	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 154 participants	The support of a social cause cannot compensate for a bad company image.
Galan-Ladero et al. (2013)	Does the Product Type Influence on Attitudes Toward Cause-Related Marketing?	Economics and Sociology	Behavioral theories	Questionnaire, n = 456 participants	Cause-related Marketing influences purchase intention through the mediator of attitude toward it. This effect depends on the product type: utilitarian products are more effective for Cause-related Marketing campaigns.

Gorton et al. (2013)	Understanding Consumer Responses to Retailers' Cause Related Voucher Schemes: Evidence from the UK Grocery Sector	European Journal of Marketing	Associative learning theory	Questionnaire, n = 401 adults	Company-cause fit and status of cause are predictors of interest, involvement and sincerity. Those three variables then influence purchase intention.
Guerreiro et al. (2015)	Attention, Emotions and Cause-related Marketing Effectiveness	European Journal of Marketing	Stimulus-Organism-Response theory	Eye tracking, n = 48 participants	Emotional arousal and pleasure are dominant when buying hedonic products. When buying utilitarian products customers focus on the brand logo and the donation.
Gupta and Pirsch (2006)	The Company-cause-customer Fit Decision in Cause-related Marketing	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Organizational identification theory, information-integration theory	Experimental design, n(1) = 232, n(2) = 531 students	The fit between cause and company is important for the increase in attitude toward company-cause alliance and therefore purchase intention. The level of skepticism toward a Cause-related Marketing campaign does not influence purchase intention.
Hajjat (2003)	Effect of Cause-Related Marketing on Attitudes and Purchase Intentions: The Moderating Role of Cause Involvement and Donation Size	Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing	Behavioral theories	Experimental design, n = 240 students	The combination of high involvement and high donation creates high purchase intention; the opposite is true for a mismatch.
Hamby (2016)	One For Me, One For You: Cause-Related Marketing with Buy-One Give-One Promotions	Psychology and Marketing	Construal-level theory	Experimental design, n = 277 students	Non-financial donations (donation of a product) are more effective with utilitarian products for purchase intention through the mediator of perceived helpfulness.
He et al. (2016)	Moral Identity Centrality and Cause-related Marketing: The Moderating Effects of Brand Social Responsibility Image and Emotional Brand Attachment	European Journal of Marketing	Emotion theory, signaling-priming theory	Experimental design, n = 160 adults	Customers with higher moral identity have a higher purchase intention. This effect is moderated by a cognitive and moral aspect: brand social responsibility and emotional brand attachment

Hou et al. (2008)	Cause's Attributes Influencing Consumer's Purchasing Intention: Empirical Evidence From China	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	Personal relevance theory, social exchange theory	Questionnaire, n(1) = 178, n(2) = 376 participants	Cause-brand fit, cause importance and cause proximity play an important role for purchase intention. The effects of those factors are mediated through customers' attitude toward product and firm.
Howie et al. (2018)	Consumer Participation in Cause-Related Marketing: An Examination of Effort Demands and Defensive Denial	Journal of Business Ethics	Cognitive dissonance theory	Experimental design, n = 175 students	Allowing customers to choose the sponsored cause seems to effectively refocus their attention and increases customers' threshold for campaign requirements.
Hyllegard et al. (2010)	Exploring Gen Y Responses to an Apparel Brand's Use of Cause-Related Marketing: Does Message Matter When It Comes to Support for the Breast Cancer Cause?	Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	Theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n = 349 participants	Perception of Cause-Related Marketing is a strong predictor of attitude toward brand but not toward purchase intention. Involvement in the cause is essential for purchase intention. Gender does not play a role.
Hyllegard et al. (2011)	The Influence of Gender, Social Cause, Charitable Support, and Message Appeal on Gen Y's Responses to Cause-related Marketing	Journal of Marketing Management	Theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n = 562 students	Women tend to respond more positively to Cause-related Marketing than men. The exact amount of donation given and involvement in the cause is essential for increasing purchase intention.
Hyllegard et al. (2014)	College Students' Responses to Prosocial Marketing Claims on Apparel Hang Tags	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Theory of reasoned of action	Experimental design, n = 262 students	Cause-related Marketing has no more relevance for increasing purchase intention than other green messages.
Kerr and Das (2013)	Thinking About Fit and Donation Format in Cause Marketing: The Effects of Need for Cognition	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	Cue consistency theory	Experimental design, n = 216 students	The effect of cause-brand fit depends on the moderating effect of need for cognition. People with a low need for cognition do not display a difference. People with a high need for cognition consider fit as important for purchase intention. The kind of donation amount does not play a role. When combined with a hedonic product, any kind of donation is important.

Kim and Johnson (2013)	The Impact of Moral Emotions on Cause-Related Marketing Campaigns: A Cross-Cultural Examination	Journal of Business Ethics	Concept of self-construal	Questionnaire, n = 180 (US), n = 191 (Korean) students	Moral emotions influence purchase intention through the moderating effect of self-construal.
Kleber et al. (2016)	How to Present Donations: The Moderating Role of Numeracy in Cause-related Marketing	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Prospect theory	Experimental design, n(1) = 56, n(2) = 118 students	The presentation of the donation amount is essential. Presenting the donations in an absolute amount is better compared with presenting it as percentages. This effect is moderated by individual differences in numeracy. This effect is independent of price and kind of product.
Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012)	Willingness to Pay for Cause-Related Marketing: The Impact of Donation Amount and Moderating Effects	Journal of Marketing Research	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n(1) = 103, n(2) = 115 students	The height of donation amount influences purchase intention. The higher the donation amount the higher is the purchase intention. It is moderated by customers' related motives. The customers' attitude toward helping others and warm glow motive are influential in this regard. In case of a low company-cause fit, customers attribute motives to the company according to the donation amount.
Koschate-Fischer et al. (2016)	When will Price Increases Associated with Company Donations to Charity be Perceived as Fair?	Journal of the Academic Marketing Science	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n(1) = 127, n(2) = 575, n(3) = 141 participants	The height of donation amount influences purchase intention. The higher the donation amount the higher is the purchase intention. It is mediated through attributed motives and perceived price fairness and is moderated through company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) reputation (positive), company-cause fit (negative) and simultaneous and no simultaneous timing (no simultaneous timing of price increase is better).

Kull and Heath (2016)	You Decide, We Donate: Strengthening Consumer–brand Relationships through Digitally Co-created Social Responsibility	International Journal of Research in Marketing	Reactance theory	Experimental design, n = 208 students	Allowing customers to choose a cause (unrestricted) leads to greater purchase intention. Mediator of this relationship is customer empowerment and engagement.
Lafferty (2007)	The Relevance of Fit in a Cause–brand Alliance when Consumers Evaluate Corporate Credibility	Journal of Business Research	Congruence theory, social identity theory	Experimental design, n = 153 students	The fit between brand and cause is important to generate higher purchase intention regardless of company credibility.
Lafferty and Edmondson (2009)	Portraying the Cause instead of the Brand in Cause-related Marketing Ads: Does it Really Matter?	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	Information-integration theory	Experimental design, n = 495 participants	Portraying the brand instead of the cause in the ad is more effective for purchase intention which is mediated through the cause-brand alliance.
Lafferty and Edmondson (2014)	A Note on the Role of Cause Type in Cause-related Marketing	Journal of Business Research	Information-integration theory	Experimental design, n = 776 participants	The kind of cause only plays an indirect role. Human and health cause category has a greater influence on attitude toward cause than environmental or animal causes. It has no effect when it comes to purchasing the product.
Lee and Ferreira (2011)	Cause-Related Marketing: The Role of Team Identification in Consumer Choice of Team Licensed Products	Sport Marketing Quarterly	Social identity theory, random utility theory	Discrete choice experiment, n = 119 participants	When identification with the firm and brand is low, Cause-related Marketing provides a justification to buy the product.
Lucke and Heinze (2015)	Role of Choice in Cause-related Marketing – Investigating the Underlying Mechanisms of Cause and Product Involvement	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences	Congruity theory	Experimental design, n = 420 students	Giving customers the choice to choose the cause negatively influences involvement. Involvement then influences purchase intention.
Manuel et al. (2014)	Functional Matching Effect in CRM: Moderating Roles of Perceived Message Quality and Skepticism	Journal of Marketing Communications	Attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 100 students	There is no significant relationship between Cause-related Marketing message and motivation for purchasing a brand.

Melero and Montaner (2016)	Cause-related Marketing: An Experimental Study about how the Product Type and the Perceived Fit may influence the Consumer Response	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	Behavioral theories	Experimental design, n = 86 students	The kind of product plays an important role for purchase intention. Purchase intention is greater for hedonic products. Cause-brand fit creates greater purchase intention.
Minton and Cornwell (2016)	The Cause Cue Effect: Cause-Related Marketing and Consumer Health Perceptions	The Journal of Consumer Affairs	Cueing theory, activation theory	Experimental design, n = 140 students	Adding a cause to a food package did not increase purchase intention.
Neel et al. (2013)	Cause-Brand Alliance: Purchase Intention	Journal of Indian Management	Information-integration theory	Questionnaire, n = 846 university members	A high fit between cause and brand results in a higher purchase intention.
Olsen et al. (2003)	When Profit Equals Price: Consumer Confusion About Donation Amounts in Cause-Related Marketing	Journal of Public Policy and Marketing Fall	Behavioral theories	Experimental design, n(1) = 62, n(2) = 81, n(3) = 29, n(4) = 133, n(5) = 137 students	To express the specified amount as a percentage of profit or price leads to confusion and to an overestimation of the amount spent. A higher percentage told lead to a higher purchase intent.
Pérez (2009)	Effects of Perceived Identity Based on Corporate Social Responsibility: The Role of Consumer Identification with the Company	Corporate Reputation Review	Social identity theory, self-categorization theory	Experimental design, n = 296 participants	Positive beliefs about the firm positively influence the attitude toward the company, which then influences purchase intention.
Qamar (2013)	Impact of Cause Related Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Corporate Image, Consumers' Attitude and Brand Attractiveness	Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research	Behavioral theories	Questionnaire, n = 278 participants	Cause-related Marketing campaigns influence purchase intention through the mediation of customers' attitude.
Rathod et al. (2014)	Effect of Cause-Related Marketing on Corporate Image and Purchase Intention: Evidence from India	International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets	Theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n = 150 participants	Cause-related Marketing campaigns influence purchase intention as well as corporate image. Customers' skepticism influences through a moderator effect corporate image, which then influences purchase intention.

Robinson et al. (2012)	Choice of Cause in Cause-Related Marketing	Journal of Marketing	Collectivism, goal proximity theory	Experimental design, n(1) = 41, n(2) = 59, n(3) = 112, n(4) = 90 students	Allowing customers to select a cause has a positive effect on purchase intention through the mediation of perceived personal role.
Ross et al. (1992)	Consumer Perceptions of Organizations That Use Cause-Related Marketing	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Prosocial behavior theory	Questionnaire, n = 238 adults	Females are more positive toward Cause-related Marketing than men. People tend to support local causes more than national causes.
Roy (2010)	The Impact of Congruence in Cause Marketing Campaigns for Service Firms	Journal of Services Marketing	Theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n = 176 students	Interaction of congruence and service type plays a role for purchase intention.
Roy and Graeff (2003)	Consumer Attitudes Toward Cause-Related Marketing Activities in Professional Sports	Sport Marketing Quarterly	Behavioral theories	Telephone survey, n = 500 participants	Cause-related Marketing is beneficial for building an athlete's image.
Samu and Wymer (2009)	The Effect of Fit and Dominance in Cause Marketing Communications	Journal of Business Research	Information-integration theory	Experimental design, n = 120 students	Perceived fit and cause dominance are essential for purchase intention.
Shabbi et al. (2010)	Cause related Marketing Campaigns and Consumer Purchase Intentions: The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness and Corporate Image	African Journal of Business Management	Theory of reasoned action	Questionnaire, n = 203 students	Cause-related Marketing campaigns positively influence purchase intention through the mediation of brand awareness and corporate image.
Sheikh and Beise-Zee (2011)	Corporate Social Responsibility or Cause-related Marketing? The Role of Cause Specificity of CSR	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Theory of person-organization (P-O) fit and social identity theory	Experimental design, n = 103 participants	Corporate Social Responsibility and Cause-related Marketing have similar positive effects on customers' attitudes. A requirement for Cause-related Marketing is a high cause affinity.
Sony et al. (2014)	How to Go Green: unraveling Green Preferences of Consumers	Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration	Theory of reasoned action	Experimental design, n = 300 participants	Green Corporate Social Responsibility and Cause-related Marketing are substitutable.
Strahilevitz and Myers (1998)	Donations to Charity as Purchase Incentives: How Well They Work May Depend on What You Are Trying to Sell	Journal of consumer research	Theory of Warm-Glow Giving	Experimental design, n(1) = 150, n(2) = 264, students	In a Cause-related Marketing campaign, hedonic products create greater purchase interest than utilitarian products.

Sung and Lee (2016)	What Makes an Effective CSR Program? An Analysis of the Constructs of a Cause-related Participant Sport Sponsorship Event	International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship	Theory of reasoned action	Questionnaire, n = 650 participants	Involvement, cause-brand fit and attitude toward brand influence purchase intention. The corporate image has the function of a mediator.
Tangari et al. (2010)	The Moderating Influence of Consumers' Temporal Orientation on the Framing of Societal Needs and Corporate Responses in Cause-Related Marketing Campaigns	Journal of Advertising	Construal-level theory	Experimental design, n = 525 household panel users	Customers' temporal orientation moderates the influence of the temporal framing within the ad on purchase intention and attitude on the Cause-related Marketing campaign.
Tsai (2009)	Modeling Strategic Management for Cause-related Marketing	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	Confirmation bias theory, attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 669 participants	Evaluation of the brand plays an important role in increasing purchase intention. If the evaluation is positive, purchase intention is positive as well. Feeling moral pleasure to participate mediates this process.
Tucker et al. (2012)	Consumer Receptivity to Green Ads	Journal of Advertising	Theory of persuasion	Experimental design, n = 420 shoppers	Personal characteristics (high environmental activism) positively influence purchase behavior.
Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2005)	Using Commitments to Drive Consistency: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Cause-related Marketing Communications	Journal of Marketing Communications	Commitment-consistency theory	Experimental design, n = 153 students	When customers are committed to an environmental cause, they are more willing to donate and have a higher purchase intention.
Vyrvavene and Rabbanee (2016)	Corporate Negative Publicity – the Role of Cause related Marketing	Australasian Marketing Journal	Information-integration theory	Experimental design, n = 343 students	Customers are more willing to support a sudden cause than an ongoing cause.
Youn and Kim (2018)	Temporal Duration and Attribution Process of Cause-related Marketing: Moderating Roles of Self-construal and Product Involvement	International Journal of Advertising	Construal level theory, attribution theory	Experimental design, n = 323 students	The combination of temporal duration and self-construal affect purchase intention. Independent individuals were influenced by the message that was framed with the distant, long-term duration.