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Consumer Perceptions of Cause-Related Marketing: A Comparison of India and the United States

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Intended date of commencement 05/07/22

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**Consumer Perceptions of Cause-Related Marketing: A Comparison of India and the
United States**

A Thesis

Presented to the Andrew B. Lacy School of Business

and

The Honors Program

of

Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Kyle Palmer

04 April 2022

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze consumer perceptions of Cause-Related marketing, as well as perceived level of mercenary intent and the impact of brand/cause fit. This is a cross cultural study, and the impact of culture will be analyzed between participants from the United States and from India.

Introduction to CSR and Cause-Related Marketing

Businesses and the business environment are constantly changing. A notable change has been a shift towards socially responsible businesses and business practices. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as defined by Carroll (1979), is the social responsibility of a business, which encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time. Understanding the impact of CSR, as well as its growth and popularity globally, can be very difficult, as many countries have different laws and attitudes regarding CSR

A common perception of CSR is that it only involves philanthropy. However, this is not the case, and Carroll's (1979) definition is important for understanding the true nature of CSR, as he incorporates economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities. Indeed, true social responsibility occurs within all aspects of a business environment (Joyner & Payne, 2002). Carroll outlines the four areas of responsibilities firms face in their existence, with the most important being economic, whereby an organization has the responsibility to produce goods or services that consumers want, and sell them for a profit. The second set of responsibilities is legal, in that once businesses and organizations are operational, they must adhere to certain laws and regulations; they are expected to practice their economic functions, while meeting the expectations of society, which in this case are expressed through laws. The third set of

responsibilities businesses face are ethical responsibilities. While the first two sets of expectations include operating a business ethically, society has additional expectations of organizations beyond what is expressed in law. The final set of responsibilities are discretionary responsibilities. It may seem confusing to label discretionary activities as responsibilities; however, it can be justified as society expects more from business than described in the previous three sets of responsibilities. Discretionary activities include voluntary acts that an organization undertakes, for example, philanthropic contributions. All of these responsibilities combine to create CSR, or ensure that all aspects of a business are socially responsible.

The best way to understand the growth and extent of CSR is by looking at the reporting of various CSR initiatives, either voluntary or mandatory. KPMG is a global network of professional firms that provide tax, audit, and advisory services. They have been tracking CSR reporting on a global scale since 1993, and their data has provided great information regarding the growth of CSR efforts. KPMG's most recent survey was conducted in 2017, and was the largest to date, including 4,900 businesses from 49 different countries. Their results are separated into two groups, the N100, which are the top 100 companies by revenue in each the 49 different countries studied by the KPMG, and the G250, which includes the top 250 revenue earning organizations in the world. Such G250 companies are important as they are often leaders in CSR reporting (Blasco & King, 2017). The 2017 study found that 93% of the G250 companies and 75% of the N100 engaged in reporting information regarding CSR activities. KPMG breaks down the statistics from those reporting by region. In 2017, the percentage of reporting for companies in the N100 for each region is as follows: Americas - 83%; Asia Pacific - 78%; Europe - 77%; and the Middle East and Africa - 52% (Blasco & King, 2017). These statistics demonstrate that variation exists in CSR reporting throughout the world.

Another significant piece of information gleaned from the KPMG reports is the rate at which companies are including CSR activities in their annual financial reports. From 2015 to 2017, their survey found an increase from 56% to 60% for the N100 companies, and an increase of 65% to 78% for the G250 companies. These statistics are significant, as it demonstrates that CSR is increasingly being regarded as important to business operations, and reporting on such efforts among top companies around the world is increasing.

One way that companies engage in CSR is through Cause-Related Marketing. Cause-Related Marketing, as defined by Varadarajan and Menon (1988), is a firm's contribution to a designated cause, which is linked to customers engaging in revenue producing transactions with the firm. People have viewed and labeled Cause-Related Marketing in many different ways, including: a horizontal sales promotion, a tie in between philanthropy and promotion, a corporate sponsorship of a charitable organization, and an initiation and funding of deserving causes. All of these labels are true, and they show the complexity of Cause-Related Marketing, which can take several forms, and is a strategy designed to promote marketing objectives via company support of a social cause (Barone et al., 2000). An example is when companies offer to give a donation that matches the purchase of their product. This type of marketing is effective because when people give, they feel good about themselves (Andreoni, 1989). By engaging in Cause-Related Marketing, companies are allowing consumers to receive the positive emotions that come with philanthropic giving, while still conducting their business practices. Although research exists on the consumer perceptions of CSR and Cause-Related Marketing, little research exists comparing perceptions of these components between countries. Through this research, I hope to contribute to the body of knowledge by comparing the consumer perception of Cause-Related Marketing between respondents from India and the United States.

Effects of Engaging in CSR on an Organization

Previous research has found that companies can benefit by engaging in CSR activities. Some research has found that CSR can have a significant positive impact on both corporate brand credibility and corporate reputation. For example, a study by Hur et al. (2014) examined the relationship between CSR and corporate marketing outcomes, such as brand equity, reputation, and brand credibility. Besides finding a significant positive impact on both corporate brand credibility, and corporate reputation, they also found that the relationship between CSR and corporate brand equity is mediated by brand credibility and corporate reputation. Hur et al.'s study demonstrates that organizations can positively impact their reputation, and strengthen their brand equity by engaging in CSR.

An effect of increasing such firm reputation and brand equity is increased attractiveness to potential employees, which was examined by Turban and Greening (1997). They conducted a study to establish if a relationship existed between a firm's CSR and their attractiveness to prospective employees. The variables analyzed included the rating of a company's Corporate Social Performance (another term for CSR), and the company's attractiveness as an employer, as well as the firm's reputation. The researchers found that an organization's Corporate Social Performance is related positively to both their reputation, and their attractiveness as an employer. They identified four particular areas where the company's reputation was helped the most: community relations, employee relations, environment, and product quality (Turban & Greening, 1997). The results of this study are significant, because they show that by participating in CSR, an organization can make themselves more attractive to potential employees. This is a benefit for a firm, as it can help them recruit more competitive employees, which will increase their workforce and in turn make them more competitive.

Research has also found that positive perception for an organization as a result of CSR is not exclusive to potential employees or consumers, it also extends to supplier relationships. Zhang et al. (2014) sought to establish a relationship between Corporate Social Performance and the trade credit scale that a company is given by its suppliers. Trade credit is when suppliers postpone the collection of revenue, or potentially even forfeiting payment (Schwartz, 1974). Zhang et al.'s study analyzed the effect of charitable donations by a firm on supplier perception, which is significant, as suppliers have a decisive effect on all aspects of a firm's operations or strategy (Freeman & Mcvea, 2001). Many other studies exclude suppliers when looking at CSR's impact on stakeholders, and the Zhang et al. study rectifies that. The researchers found that firms that engage in CSR can more easily attract suppliers and build a better relationship with them. Because of this, the firms also benefited as a result of more trade credit financing (Zhang et al., 2014). Another financial benefit that firms can receive from engaging in CSR is a higher credit rating (Attig et al. 2013). A study by Attig et al (2013) found CSR performance conveys important non-financial information that credit rating agencies are likely to use in their evaluations. They also found that credit rating agencies tend to award higher ratings to firms with good social performance. This is significant, as it further demonstrates the financial benefits of engaging in CSR.

CSR can affect the employees, the suppliers, and also the customers of an organization. A study by Lacy and Kennet-Hensel in 2010 sought to establish if a relationship exists between CSR performance and customer relationships over time. In order to do so, they studied the Corporate Social Performance of an NBA team over time. The results showed that customers' CSR perceptions were linked to their trust and their commitment to the firm. Additionally, the customer's level of commitment has a positive effect on purchase behavior and word of mouth

communications (Lacy & Hensel, 2010). This study shows that a firm can increase their customer's commitment and trust, and through that, their purchase behaviors and word of mouth communications. By engaging in CSR, a firm can positively impact the level of trust and commitment of their customers.

Overall, the research is clear that CSR can have a positive impact on every level of an organization. Companies often invest in and undertake CSR initiatives in order to create a positive moral capital, and to support a company's intangible assets such as reputation and credibility (Gofrey, 2005). This is beneficial to organizations, as it allows for them to mitigate potential damage for any kind of negative stakeholder evaluation. However, consumers do not appreciate egoistic or mercenary CSR motivations (Alcainz et al., 2010). This means that consumers react negatively when they feel that the company is undertaking CSR for a selfish reason. Alongside this, CSR is no longer just a theoretical concept, but also a reality, and can be used to mitigate negative consumer responses (Mcdonald, 2011). Some of the ways that companies practically utilize their CSR is through Cause-Related Marketing.

Cause-Related Marketing

Cause Related marketing is a practical form of CSR that corporations can engage in. An early example of an effective Cause-Related Marketing campaign was conducted by American Express in 1983 (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). American Express promised to donate a penny for each use of its charge card, and a dollar for each new card issued during their fourth quarter of 1983. All proceeds went towards renovating the Statue of Liberty. Compared to their 1982 fourth quarter, American Express saw a 28% increase in charge card usage, as well as a substantial number of new cards issued (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). This is an example of an effective Cause-Related Marketing program. Cause-Related Marketing has also been classified

as a horizontal cooperative sales promotion, as both the firm and the charitable organization benefit (Varadarajan, 1986). Another popular example of a Cause-Related Marketing campaign is the use of a Buy One Give One model. This is where companies like, Tom's Shoes, give a physical donation of their product to someone in need when a consumer purchases their product. This type of Cause-Related Marketing is common today, and has been found to enhance consumer promotion attitude, as well as purchase intention (Hamby, 2016)

Factors Influencing Consumer Perceptions of Cause-Related Marketing

There are several aspects of Cause-Related Marketing that must be identified and considered when inquiring about consumer perceptions toward this form of marketing. The first is the difference between a conditional and non-conditional donation. A conditional donation, which is the heart of Cause-Related Marketing, is the donation a firm gives based upon the number of sales it makes, or whatever the condition is that exists within their marketing plan. For example, a pair of Tom's shoes are given to those in need for every pair purchased. This is compared to a non-conditional donation, which is a more standard transaction between two parties, whereby the organization gives a sum of money or some other donation, and receives nothing tangible in return. This distinction is significant within Cause-Related Marketing, as the aspect of conditional donation can affect the consumer's perception of the product being purchased and then also donated (Dean, 2013).

Since Cause-Related Marketing involves the purchasing of products prior to a charitable donation occurring, consumers may attribute less than altruistic motives to firms engaging in this form of marketing. This leads into the idea of *mercenary intent*, or how the consumer perceives the company's actions. If a consumer perceives that a company is engaging in Cause-Related Marketing for a mercenary intent, or for the goal of making money and not really helping those

less fortunate, then this could cause consumers to perceive that organization less favorably. The reverse can be true as well, whereby consumers can believe that the goal of the charity donation is at least as important as the company making money in selling their products.

Some research exists on this issue, whereby a study by Dean (2013) sought to establish if a relationship exists between the type of donation (conditional or unconditional) and relationship of the firm, and the consumer perception of the mercenary intent of their donation, as well as the consumer perception of the management of the firm. The researcher found that those firms respondents regarded as “irresponsible” could improve their reputation by either type of donation; an “average rated” firm could enhance their position by engaging in a non-conditional donation, but a conditional donation would not hurt them; and firms labeled as “scrupulous” did not see a significant change when engaging in un-conditional donations, but saw a negative reaction when they engaged in Cause-Related Marketing via conditional donations (Dean, 2013). One way that scrupulous firms could engage in Cause-Related Marketing and counter claims of opportunism or mercenary intent is to engage in this type of marketing over a long term, thereby establishing longer-term commitment (Arnott, 1994).

Other studies of Cause-Related Marketing looked at general consumer perception toward such marketing plans. An example of this is a study conducted by Webb and Mohr (1998) in which approximately half of their sample expressed negative attitudes toward Cause-Related Marketing. This negativity originated in skepticism about the actual implementation of the marketing plan, as well as cynicism about the firm’s motives. These results are important as they typify some of the negative perceptions associated with Cause-Related Marketing.

Other studies found that Cause-Related Marketing can garner positive consumer perception. For example, Barone et al. (2000) found that companies that support social causes for

what are perceived by consumers to be the “right” reasons will be rewarded with an increase in the likelihood that their brand is chosen. This study also demonstrated that Cause-Related Marketing advantage can be mitigated by the presence and magnitude of price or performance tradeoffs that are required in order to enjoy the benefits of a Cause-Related Marketing product. This means a consumer’s positive perception can be mitigated or made obsolete, if the price or performance tradeoff in order to purchase the product is large or significant. If it is too difficult, or too expensive to purchase the product versus that of a competitor, then the advantage created by the Cause-Related Marketing component is mitigated.

Factors that Influence the Effectiveness of Cause-Related Marketing

Research has revealed several conditions that must be considered when looking at the effectiveness of Cause-Related Marketing. One such condition is “the cause” that is chosen to receive the charitable donation. A study conducted by Vanhamme et al. (2011) examined the influence of cause type, cause scope, and cause acuteness on consumers’ perception of the brand or corporate image. The researchers broke cause type into two categories, a cause that supports *primary needs* such as life’s necessities, or a cause that supports *secondary needs* that are concerned with quality of life. Cause scope was broken down into local, national, or international, and described the geographic scope and physical proximity to the consumer. Finally, cause acuteness was broken into a *sudden disaster* or an *ongoing tragedy*, and deals with whether an organization was raising money for an immediate issue, or a long term problem. The researchers found respondents responded the most positively to Cause-Related Marketing when it adopts an international scope (Vanhamme et al., 2011). The researchers also found that respondents favored shorter rather than longer scopes, but with only marginal significance.

Another aspect of Cause-Related Marketing that must be examined is the idea of brand/cause fit. Brand/cause fit is how well the cause that an organization is raising money for aligns with that organization. For example, a company that sells bicycles might engage in a Cause-Related Marketing Program that raises money to give bikes to children in need. This would be considered a higher level of brand/cause fit, as the functions and values of the business are similar to the functions and values of the cause. Nan and Heo (2007) investigated this issue. In this study, the researchers attempted to determine if a relationship exists between consumer perception and Cause-Related Marketing, as well as the effect of high versus low brand/cause fit. The researchers manipulated several variables, including the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component in an ad, as well as modifying the level of congruence between the brand and the cause. They found that an ad with a Cause-Related Marketing message, compared to an ad without one, elicited a more favorable response from consumers, regardless of the level of fit. They also found that consumer's attitude toward the ad and the brand are higher when there is a high level of brand/cause fit compared to low brand/cause fit; however, this is only true for those high in brand consciousness. For consumers that ranked themselves as low in brand consciousness, there was no difference in the perception toward the ad regarding brand/cause fit (Nan & Heo, 2007). These results are significant, and contribute to the body of research, as they show that brand/cause fit can have an effect on consumer perception, and they further solidified the idea that Cause-Related Marketing draws positive consumer perceptions.

Effect of Culture and Government Environment

While there is a large and quickly growing body of research regarding CSR, as well as Cause-Related Marketing, such research is lacking in terms of comparison between differing cultures or government environments perceive and respond to CSR. Differences in a culture can

impact how citizens perceive and react to the world around them. For example, an international study conducted by Waldman et al. (2006) examined relationships between institutional collectivism, which is the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage collective distribution of resources and action, and power distance, and the values of top management within organizations. The researchers analyzed data from 561 firms in 15 different countries, and found several interesting relationships. The first significant finding is that managers in wealthier countries are less likely to consider the greater community in their decision making. Second, the study found that managers in cultures that value institutional collectivism are more likely to consider and value CSR initiatives. Finally, the study found that managers in societies with high power distance devalue all aspects of CSR (Waldman et al., 2006). This could be because a manager in a culture of high-power distance does not often have to think about those below them, and therefore does not as often consider stakeholders in their decision making.

The results of Waldman et al.'s (2006) study are significant, as they establish there is a difference in the implementation and perception of CSR initiatives between different cultures. One of the most significant differences that can occur in government structure concerning CSR is the idea of mandating such activities. In countries like China and India, CSR has been mandated, and thus all companies earning above a specific threshold are required to engage in CSR; other countries and collectives, like the United States and the European Union, have some form of mandated reporting, where companies have to report environmental and diversity statistics, but are not required to engage in any activities.

Another study conducted by Lavack and Kropp (2003) compares consumer perception of Cause-Related Marketing in four countries: Canada, Australia, Norway, and Korea. The

researchers found that country, internal values, and external values show significant effects in predicting attitudes towards Cause-Related Marketing. The results show a significant positive relationship between attitudes toward such marketing and values. The key finding in this study is Cause-Related Marketing may be more effective for people from countries that place a high importance on values, and that values-based Cause-Related Marketing programs have the potential to be effective (Lavack & Kropp, 2003).

Justification of My Research

Even though there are great differences between how cultures and countries perceive CSR, there is little research comparing countries, and fewer that compare Cause-Related Marketing. It has been established that different cultures and countries have differing views on CSR. In this study, I will attempt to add to what is known by examining and comparing the consumer perceptions of Cause-Related Marketing of study participants between those in India and those in the United States.

This research is justified, as the United States and India have significant cultural differences, and have approached CSR initiatives in different ways. Hofstede Insights (n.d.) is an organization that provides culture information for managerial implications. Three particular factors are of note -- power distance, individualism, and long-term orientation. India was rated a 77/100 for power distance, 48/100 for individualism, and 51/100 for long term orientation. The United States was rated a 40/100 for power distance, 91/100 for individualism, and 26/100 for long term orientation (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). These are obviously very different scores, which highlight the culture differences in the countries. India is more collectivist, and focused on the greater good, as well as the future. The United States is much more individualist, with a much lower power distance.

Another significant difference between the United States and India that makes comparing the two countries valuable is the difference in CSR laws. India in 2014 became the first country to legally require companies to engage in CSR. There are three conditions that qualify a company in India for mandated CSR: if they have a net worth over \$70 million (US dollars), an annual turnover of \$140 million, and/or a net profit of \$699,125. If a company meets one of these three stipulations, then they must spend 2% of their average net profits from the previous three years on CSR activities (Shira, 2020). The categories and areas that these companies can work in are quite broad, encompassing generally any charitable action as acceptable. This environment is very different when compared to the United States, where no CSR initiatives are mandated for any corporations.

Hypotheses

My study involved the collection of data from participants in two distinctly different countries in reference to CSR issues. My goal was twofold. First, it was to look at data from participants overall, to see how my results compare to previous studies related to Cause-Related Marketing. Second, I then broke down my data to determine any differences in such data between participants in the US compared to those in India, so see if cultural differences might play a role.

I have two hypotheses related to my overall data (H1 and H2). These hypotheses deal with perception of Cause-Related Marketing components and the impact of a high brand/cause fit on perception. I expect that respondents will have a more favorable response, and a higher purchase intention, when exposed to a Cause-Related Marketing component. I also anticipate that when the brand/cause fit of the Cause-Related Marketing component is high, then this will

gather a more favorable attitude. I predict this because it reflects the findings of previous research.

I then offer three hypotheses related to differences between participants in the two countries (H3, H4, and H5). Given the cultural differences, I expect respondents in India to respond more positively to Cause-Related Marketing than respondents in the United States, due to the fact that more collectivist cultures have a better perception toward CSR activities (Waldman et al., 2006). Because of this, and since India has a higher long-term orientation, I expect the perception of Cause-Related Marketing to be higher in India. This is because collectivist cultures place a great deal of importance on the greater good of the larger group, and I believe that this will lead to a more favorable perception, as respondents from collectivist cultures will be more willing to help others. Additionally, a higher rated long-term orientation means that people from India typically place more importance on strategic group growth. Because they place more value in group growth, I expect they will be more willing to help other people, as they are trying to grow the group as a whole, and because of this I predict they will have a more favorable perception of Cause-Related Marketing. However, it will be interesting to see if mandating has an effect on consumer perception, as the citizens of India could place less value in Cause-Related Marketing if the company is required to be engaging in CSR. I also expect that respondents from the United States will rate the company as having a higher mercenary intent, as giving is less common within the United States. Finally, I expect for the impact brand/cause fit to be more pronounced on respondents from the United States than respondents from India. This is because giving is more common in India, and therefore I believe they will be more inclined to give regardless of the level of brand/cause fit, and therefore will be less affected by it.

My specific hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Exposure to an advertisement with the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component, compared to exposure to a similar advertisement without a Cause-Related Marketing component, will lead to:

- (a) a more favorable general attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (b) a more favorable purchase attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (c) higher purchase intention

H2: Exposure to an advertisement with the presence of a Cause-Related marketing component involving *high brand/cause fit* compared to exposure to a similar advertisement with a low brand/cause fit, will lead to:

- (a) a more favorable general attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (b) a more favorable purchase attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (c) higher purchase intention

H3: In comparing perceptions between participants in India and those in the U.S. regarding the level of brand/cause fit within an advertisement containing a Cause-Related Marketing component, brand/cause fit will have a stronger impact on respondents from the U.S. than on respondents from India.

H4: In comparing perceptions between participants in India and those in the U.S. regarding an advertisement containing a Cause-Related Marketing component, those in India will have:

- (a) a more favorable general attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (b) a more favorable purchase attitude toward the advertisement; and/or
- (c) higher purchase intention

H5: In comparing perceptions between participants in India and those in the U.S. regarding an advertisement containing a Cause-Related Marketing component, those in the US will have a higher perceived level of mercenary intent of the company than respondents from India.

Methods

Participants

This study was designed to include at least 100 participants, all college students from the ages of 18-24. The goal was to have a viable response (of at least 50 students each) from both residents of the United States, as well as from residents of India. This is an appropriate sample for this study, as the purpose is to compare consumer perceptions of cause-related marketing between India and the United States. By having sufficient respondents from each country, this will allow for the best opportunity to assess their perceptions. College students are an appropriate choice of participants for these samples, as they likely have previous knowledge of CSR. In addition to this, they are active consumers, and are likely to have experienced a Cause- Related Marketing program before.

Procedures

IRB – As the first step in the research, approval to conduct this human subject research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Butler University.

Survey - The survey consists of several sections, including a confidentiality statement, demographic questions, overall perception of the ad, overall perception of the brand, willingness to pay more for a product, and perceived level of mercenary intent. The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete, and includes variations of image stimuli. The survey also utilizes Likert

scales in order to gather input from the respondents, as this is a good way to measure a range of responses.

Distribution - This survey was distributed by means of email, so respondents were able to answer within their own time, and in a comfortable environment. The survey was electronic, which enabled it to be conducted internationally, and the survey URL was distributed by email or other means to students within two universities in the United States, and two universities in India. Respondents agreed to a consent statement that outlines the purpose of the study, details the rights of the participant, and provides the contact information of the researchers, before the respondents answered any questions.

Independent Variable Manipulation

The independent variable that is being manipulated is the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component within an advertisement, and the level of brand/cause fit within a Cause-Related Marketing component. This means whether the donation or the program aligns with the characteristics or defining components of the business. In order to achieve these manipulations, three different advertisements will be presented to the respondents, in randomized order: One with no Cause-Related Marketing component, one with a Cause-Related Marketing component with a low brand/cause fit, and one with a Cause-Related Marketing component with a high brand/cause fit. Each subject will only be exposed to a single condition, as to ensure they are not fully aware of the variables being measured. These are three different levels of independent variable manipulation.

The name, logo, and branding of the company in the advertisement is fictional, in order to avoid any preconceived notions and emotions that respondents might hold for existing companies. The three ads are identical in their color, size, shape, and branding, the only variation

will be the message presented at the bottom of the advertisement. This also minimizes the impacts of the aesthetics of the advertisement, as if variation was present, this could have an effect on the respondent's perception of the advertisement.

Both groups of participants (India and the United States) were randomly assigned to each of the three groups. This random assignment was done as a function of Qualtrics, whereby the survey software assigned a form of the survey as students opened the URL to start taking the survey. The first advertisement described a new promotional campaign, but did not include any Cause Related Marketing component, saying "Sunshine Orange Juice is naturally rich in the antioxidant Vitamin C, an ingredient known for preventing some heart diseases". The second advertisement displayed the same color, image, and branding, but the message at the bottom read "Sunshine Orange Juice is a sponsor of the Health Diet Research Association. For every bottle sold, we donate 10 cents to this worthy cause." The third advertisement contained the same colors, images, and branding as the first two advertisements, but the message said, "Sunshine Orange Juice is a sponsor of the Traffic Safety Research Association. For every bottle sold, we donate 10 cents to this worthy cause."

Measures

General Attitude toward the Advertisement - Several questions were developed in order to gather the consumer's general attitude toward the advertisement. Items were measured using 5-point Likert scales with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree." A sample question is, "I believe that this advertisement is effective".

Purchase Attitude toward the Advertisement - Several questions were developed in order to gather the consumer's general attitude toward the advertisement. Items were measured

using 5-point Likert scales with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “5” being “strongly agree.” A sample question is, “I believe that this advertisement sells the product well”.

Purchase Intention - One question was developed in order to assess the purchase intentions of consumers. The item was measured using a yes or no response. The prompt is: “I would buy this product”.

Statistical Procedures for Analysis

In this study, I utilized Two Sample T-Tests, which measure if a statistical difference exists between two sets of means. By utilizing this type of analysis, I will be able to conduct a statistical test that determines whether the statistical means of two groups are equal. Regression analysis was also used to analyze the data for one hypothesis, with the goal of exploring group differences as well.

Results

In total, 165 people participated in the survey; 105 of these respondents were from the United States, and 60 were from India. These respondents came from four different universities. In the United States, students from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN, and Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, MI. In India, participants were from Christ University in Bangalore, and Rajagiri University in Kerala. All respondents were college students, throughout all grade levels.

Of respondents from the United States, 57 identified as male, and 46 identified as female, 1 identified as Non-binary or a third gender, and 1 preferred not to say; 10 were first year students, 16 were second year students, 16 were third year students, and 63 were fourth year students. Of respondents from India, 32 respondents identified as male, 26 identified as female, and 2 preferred not to say; 23 were second year students, 2 were third year students, 2 were

fourth year students, and 33 were graduate students, in their first year of a business graduate program.

Three different conditions were presented to the respondents, with each respondent only seeing one of the conditions. Not all participants completed the survey, and those with partial answers were excluded from the data set. Of respondents in the United States, 33 were exposed to the advertisement with no cause-related marketing component; 36 were exposed to the advertisement with a cause-related marketing component with a high brand/cause fit; and 36 were exposed to the advertisement with a cause-related marketing component with a low brand/cause fit. Of those that responded in India, 19 were exposed to the advertisement with no cause-related marketing component; 23 were exposed to the advertisement with a cause-related marketing component with a high brand/cause fit; and 18 were exposed to the advertisement with a cause-related marketing component with a low brand/cause fit. See Table 1 for a summary of the respondents' demographics.

Table 1

Demographics of Respondents

	U.S. # (%)	India # (%)
Male	57 (54.3)	32 (53.3)
Female	46 (43.8)	26 (43.3)
Non-binary / third gender	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
Prefer not to say	1 (0.9)	2 (3.3)
1 st year	10 (9.5)	0 (0.0)
2 nd year	16 (15.2)	23 (38.3)
3 rd year	16 (15.2)	2 (3.3)
4 th year	63 (60.0)	2 (3.3)
Graduate	0 (0.0)	33 (55.0)
No Cause Survey	33 (31.4)	19 (31.7)
Low Brand/Fit Survey	36 (34.3)	23 (38.3)
High Brand/Fit Survey	36 (34.3)	18 (30.0)

This next section focuses on my hypotheses. Each involved examining the means for one or more groups and comparing them to see if there are significant differences. Tables are offered that show the means for the key variable being examined, as well as P values gathered from T-Tests or regressions that demonstrate statistical significance between groups of means. For most hypotheses, two types of T-Tests were conducted for each set of variables, T-Tests assuming equal variances and T-Tests assuming unequal variances. This was done in an effort to gain the best statistical insight into the data, and to discover if difference in variation existed. The results demonstrated that there were no significant differences in variance, as the values produced were virtually identical, differing only by the thousandths of a decimal. Because of this, only the values from the T-Tests assuming equal variances are displayed.

Hypothesis 1

Data for the first hypothesis was analyzed using T-Tests. The variables that were examined with this hypothesis include general attitude toward the advertisement, purchase attitude toward the advertisement, and purchase intention. The first hypothesis stated that respondents who were exposed to a Cause-Related Marketing component, compared to a similar advertisement without a cause related marketing component, would demonstrate a more favorable general and purchase attitude toward the advertisement, as well as a higher purchase intention. Support for this hypothesis would be demonstrated by a statistically significant increase in the average perceptions and purchase intentions of respondents. Respondents' general attitude toward the advertisement was assessed through two responses: (1) I believe this advertisement is appealing, (2) I believe this advertisement was effective. Purchase attitude was measured through three responses: (1) I believe this advertisement sells the product well, (2) I believe this advertisement would entice me to purchase this product, and (3) I believe this

advertisement would entice me to pay more than I normally would for this type of product.

Purchase intention was measured through one response, “Would you buy this product?”.

There was no support for Hypothesis 1. For general and purchase attitude, respondents were able to choose between 5 options for each of the responses in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “5” being “strongly agree.” Thus, respondents generated results in numbers 1 through 5. For purchase intention, results were gathered with a yes or no question, would you buy this product, with those answering yes being assigned the value of 1, and those answering no, the value of 2. The mean for the general attitude of groups exposed to a Cause-Related condition was 3.92, while the mean of the no Cause-Related group was 3.88. The mean for the purchase attitude of those exposed to a Cause-Related condition was 3.40, while the mean of those not exposed to a Cause-Related condition was 3.25, with a P value of 0.10. Finally, the mean purchase intention for Cause-Related groups was 1.31, while the mean for no Cause-Related groups was 1.33, with a P value of 0.41. As the alpha for these statistical tests was .05, none of the variables showed statistically significant differences between the groups.

Table 2 shows the key data for this Hypotheses #1 analysis area.

Table 2

Hypothesis 1: U.S. & India Combined Cause (High and Low Fit) vs. No Cause

	Combined Cause Mean	No Cause Mean	t-test p
General Attitude	3.92	3.88	0.36
Purchase Attitude	3.40	3.25	0.10
Purchase Intention	1.31	1.33	0.41

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree. *p>0.05

Hypothesis 2

Data for Hypothesis 2 was analyzed using T-Tests. The variable that was being examined for this hypothesis was the respondent's general attitude toward the advertisement. The second hypothesis states that respondents exposed to an advertisement containing a Cause-Related Marketing component with a high brand/cause fit will have a better attitude towards the advertisement than respondents exposed to an advertisement containing a Cause-Related Marketing Component with a low brand/cause fit. Support for this hypothesis would be shown by a statistically significant increase in average attitude between respondents exposed to a high brand/cause fit condition, compared to respondents exposed to a low brand/cause fit condition. Respondents' general attitude toward the advertisement was assessed through two responses: (1) I believe this advertisement is appealing, (2) I believe this advertisement was effective.

Upon testing, there was no support for this hypothesis. Respondents were able to choose between 5 options for each of the responses in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree." Thus, respondents generated results in numbers 1 through 5. The average attitude toward the advertisement for those in the high fit conditions was 3.81, or the higher end of "Neither agree or disagree." The average general attitude toward the advertisement for those in the low fit conditions was 4.03, or at the lower end of "agree." Upon completion of the T-Tests, it was discovered that there is not a large enough difference to be statistically significant, as the P value was .084, and the Alpha value was .05. The average purchase attitude for high fit cause groups was 3.30, and for low fit cause groups 3.49, with a P value of 0.06. Purchase intention was determined with a yes or no question, would you buy this product, with those answering yes being assigned the value of 1, and those

answering no, the value of 2. The average purchase intention for the high fit group was 1.26, and for the low fit group 1.36, with a P value of 0.14. Thus, it can be concluded that there is not a significant difference in general attitude, purchase attitude, or purchase intention toward the advertisement between those in the high and low brand/cause fit conditions.

Table 3 shows the key data for this Hypotheses #2 analysis area.

Table 3

Hypothesis 2: U.S. & India High Fit Cause vs. Low Fit Cause

	High Fit Cause Mean	Low Fit Cause Mean	t-test p
General Attitude	3.81	4.03	0.08
Purchase Attitude	3.30	3.49	0.06
Purchase Intention	1.26	1.36	0.14

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree. *p>0.05

Hypothesis 3

Data for Hypothesis 3 was analyzed using a regression analysis. The third hypothesis states that respondents from India will be more impacted by the presence of a Cause-Related marketing component than respondents from the United States. This was measured by comparing the general attitude toward the advertisement from those in the United States who were not exposed to a Cause-Related marketing component to those that were. Respectively, the general attitude toward the advertisement from those in India who were not exposed to a Cause-Related marketing component to those that were compared. Then, the sum of these differences were analyzed to determine if the presence of a Cause-Related marketing component affected one country more than the other. Respondents' general attitude toward the advertisement was

assessed through two responses: (1) I believe this advertisement is appealing, (2) I believe this advertisement was effective.

The main interest for this hypothesis is in the interactions between exposure to Cause-Related marketing and country (USA vs. India). Support for this hypothesis would be demonstrated by a statistically significant difference in the comparisons of each country to their control group (or those who received no Cause-Related condition). I would expect a positive coefficient for the interaction variable (Cause-Related condition x Country) for this hypothesis to be supported. Since the regression, it showed that no statistically significant difference existed in the comparisons of Cause-Related groups to those who received no Cause-Related condition there was no support for this hypothesis.

Table 4

Hypothesis 3: U.S. vs. India Combined Cause (High & Low Fit) Cause vs. Low Fit Cause

OLS Regression of General Attitude Comparing Cause-Related groups to those who received no Cause-Related condition

	Model 1	Model 2
Brand/fit level (0=low, 1=high)		-0.230 (0.310)
Brand/fit level*Country		-0.217 (0.386)
Country (1=USA, 0=India)	0.0223 (0.195)	0.148 (0.262)
Gender (1=male, 0=female or other)	0.170 (0.189)	0.156 (0.187)
Year of Study	-0.0956 (0.187)	-0.0842 (0.0791)

Constant	4.068** (0.323)	4.136** (0.344)
Number of observations	113	113

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states that respondents from India will have a more favorable attitude toward an advertisement with a Cause-Related marketing component than respondents from the United States. In order to determine this, data from those exposed to high and low brand/cause fit conditions was combined for the United States, and data from those exposed to high and low brand/cause fit conditions was combined for India. These two groups were then compared against each other. Respondents' general attitude toward the advertisement was assessed through two responses: (1) I believe this advertisement is appealing, (2) I believe this advertisement was effective. Purchase attitude was measured through three responses: (1) I believe this advertisement sells the product well, (2) I believe this advertisement would entice me to purchase this product, and (3) I believe this advertisement would entice me to pay more than I normally would for this type of product. Purchase intention was measured through one response, would you buy this product?. To show support for this hypothesis, a statistically significant difference between the general and purchase attitudes, as well as purchase intention, toward the advertisement between respondents from the United States and India would need to exist.

There was some support for this hypothesis, as there was not a statistically significant difference general attitude and purchase intention between the two groups, however one existed for purchase attitude. For general and purchase attitude, respondents were able to choose between 5 options for each of the responses in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree." Thus, respondents generated results in numbers 1 through 5. For purchase intention, results were gathered with a yes or no question,

would you buy this product, with those answering yes being assigned the value of 1, and those answering no, the value of 2. The average general attitude for those from the United States was 3.924, or on the higher end of “neither agree or disagree.” The average attitude for those from India was 3.939, again on the higher end of “neither agree or disagree.” While the average for India was higher, the numbers are virtually the same, and their difference was not large enough to show statistical significance. The average purchase attitude of those in the US exposed to a Cause-Related condition was 3.21, while the average for those in India was 3.73, with a P value less than 0.01. The average purchase intention for respondents from the US was 1.35, and the average for those from India was 1.24, with a P value of 0.13. With an alpha of 0.05, no statistically significant relationship exists for general attitude and purchase intention. However, with a P value of less than 0.01, there is a significant different in the perception of respondents exposed to a Cause-Related condition between the United States and India.

Table 5 shows the key data for this Hypotheses #4 analysis area.

Table 5

Hypothesis 4: U.S. Cause (High & Low) vs. India Cause (High & Low)

	U.S. Cause Mean	India Cause Mean	t-test p
General Attitude	3.92	3.94	0.46
Purchase Attitude	3.21	3.73	>0.01
Purchase Intention	1.35	1.24	0.13

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree. *p>0.05

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 states that when comparing perception between those in the United States and those in India, regarding an advertisement with a Cause-Related marketing component, respondents from the United States will have a higher perceived level of mercenary intent than respondents from India. This is measured again by combining the low and high brand/cause fit conditions for each country respectively, and comparing them to each other. Respondent's perceived level of mercenary intent was measured through two responses: This advertisement expresses that the company will donate to a cause for every purchase made. To what extent is this being done to benefit: (1) the company, and (2) the cause. Support for this hypothesis would be shown in two ways. The first is if a significant difference exists in response to the first prompt, this is being done to benefit the cause. The second is if a significant difference exists in response to the second prompt, this is being done to benefit the cause. In order to support the hypothesis, results would have to show that respondents from the United States believe it supports the cause more and the company less, and results from respondents in India would have to show that the campaign supports the company less and the cause more.

There was no support for this hypothesis, as no statistically significant differences existed. Respondents were able to choose between 5 options for each of the responses in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, again with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree." Thus, respondents generated results in numbers 1 through 5. The average response for the United States on whether the campaign supports the company was 3.859, or on the high end of "neither agree nor disagree," and the average response for those from India was 3.854, within the same range. While the results from the United States show they believe it benefits the company slightly more, the difference is not large enough to be statistically significant. In

regards to the campaign supporting the cause, the average for the respondents from the United States was 3.963, again at the higher end of “neither agree nor disagree,” and the average for respondents from India was 3.912. Again, the results show that respondents from the United States believe slightly more that the campaign benefits the cause, however T-Tests show that the difference is too small to be statistically significant. Table 6 shows the key data for this Hypotheses #5 analysis area.

Table 5

Hypothesis 5: Mercenary Intent for U.S. Cause (High & Low) vs. India Cause (High & Low)

	U.S. Cause Mean	India Cause Mean	t-test p
Benefit to Company	3.86	3.85	0.49
Benefit to the Cause	3.96	3.91	0.38

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree. *p>0.05

Additional Findings on Decision-making

In order to gain more insight into the attitudes and purchase intentions of respondents, several questions were asked to learn more about their thought process. After being asked the question of whether they would buy this product, respondents were taken to two different branches. For those exposed to a Cause-Related marketing condition, they were asked six additional questions; for those not exposed to a Cause-Related marketing condition, they were asked four additional questions. Those who answered yes (that they would buy this product) responded to why they would decide to buy this product: (1) The ad appealed to me, (2) the product appealed to me, (3) I use this type of product, (4) I wanted to try something new, (5) The charity (or cause) listed in the ad appealed to me, and (6) There was a clear connection between the product and the cause it was supporting. Those who answered no (that they would not buy

this product) responded as to why they decided not to buy this product: (1) The ad did not appeal to me, (2) the product did not appeal to me, (3) I do not use this type of product, (4) I do not want to try something new, (5) The charity (or cause) listed in the ad did not appeal to me, and (6) There was not a clear connection between the product and the cause it was supporting. Those who were not exposed to a Cause-Related marketing component did not see questions 5 and 6, as they did not pertain to them. For all questions asked, respondents were able to choose between 5 options for each of the responses in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “5” being “strongly agree.”

When analyzing these additional questions, several items must be noted. First is that of those respondents who said they would buy the product, more respondents from India stated that the advertisement appealed to them. Respondents from the United States had an average response of 3.667, while respondents from India had an average response of 4.022. This difference is statistically significant, with a P-value of .011. The next item that must be noted is that of those who reported they would buy the product, respondents from India saw a clearer connection between the cause and the company. Respondents from the United States had an average response of 3.5, while respondents from India had an average response of 4. This difference is statistically significant, with a P-value of .026. Finally, the third item that must be noted is that of those respondents who reported they would not purchase the product, those from India did not like the cause as much as respondents from the United States. Respondents from the United States had an average response of 2.125, while respondents from India had an average response of 3. This difference is statistically significant, with a P-value of .019.

Table 3

Decisions on Why or Why Not Purchase

	All US vs India			Cause-Related vs No Cause-Related		
	U.S.	India	t-test p	Exposed	None	t-test p
“Yes” Would Buy						
- Ad appealed to me	3.67	4.02	0.01	3.82	3.80	0.46
- Product appealed to me	4.05	4.16	0.22	4.08	4.11	0.41
- I use this type of product	3.98	3.93	0.39	3.95	4.00	0.39
- Wanted to try something new	2.94	3.87	>0.01*	3.34	3.26	0.34
- Cause listed in ad appealed to me	3.97	3.80	0.21			
- Clear connection between product and case	3.50	4.00	0.03*			
“No” Would Not Buy						
- Ad did not appeal to me	3.27	3.14	0.36	3.15	3.41	0.22
- Product did not appeal to me	3.49	2.93	0.08	3.41	3.18	0.26
- Do not use this type of product	3.41	2.93	0.16	3.24	3.44	0.33
- Did not want to try something new	2.27	2.50	0.27	2.29	2.41	0.37
- Cause listed in ad did not appeal to me	2.13	3.00	0.02*			
- No clear connection between product and case	3.54	3.10	0.17			

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree. *p<0.05

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of a Cause-Related Marketing component on consumer’s perception of an advertisement or marketing campaign. Additionally,

respondents from the United States and India were included and compared, in order to determine if their differences in culture and history of Corporate Social Responsibility would have any effect. Finally, whether the advertisement and the charity were similar in purpose was examined to determine if this relationship had any effect on perception.

The most significant findings from this study demonstrated that there were some differences between the United States and India, and between the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component and an absence of one. However, for the most part, the data showed that differences did not exist. For example, H1 was not supported, as there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of the advertisements with and without a Cause-Related Marketing component between all respondents. This is not consistent with the existing research, however there are several possible explanations. The first is that the advertisement itself or the charities listed within the advertisement were not common or significant to the respondents. For example, within respondents who said they would not buy the product, respondents from India said the cause listed did not appeal them, at a statistically significantly higher rate than respondents from the United States. In addition, of those who said they would buy the product, those from India said it is because they wanted to try something new, at a statistically significantly higher rate than respondents from the United States. These two insights demonstrate how the products and causes may not have been familiar or something that respondents do not usually purchase.

The next set of findings that must be discussed is the difference between the perceptions of respondents from the United States and India. Within the major categories of purchase attitude, purchase attitude, and purchase intention, only one comparison showed statistical significance. For the most part, responses showed great similarity between the two nations. There are several reasons why this may have occurred. One is that the cultural and historical

differences between the two nations were not significant enough to affect consumer perception of Cause-Related Marketing. The second is that the populations surveyed in this study were not representative of the population. The sample sizes for both groups, but especially those from India, were very small. In addition, all respondents were college students of similar ages, and the majority were business students. It is reasonable to infer that despite living in different nations with different cultures, these respondents share similar views as they have experienced many similar situations during their education. In the future, a more representative sample of the populations may yield stronger results.

Finally, in examining the perceived levels of mercenary intent, no statistically significant differences were found. This has both practical and managerial implications, being that respondents demonstrated they believed the advertising campaigns benefited both the company and the cause. This is significant, as it demonstrates that consumers are aware that companies are participating in Cause-Related Marketing campaigns to benefit themselves, but at the same time they are still benefiting the cause, and that their intentions do not have to exist in one area exclusively. Companies must be aware that consumers believe they are participating in a campaign at least partly to benefit themselves, so they should make sure to focus the campaign upon the cause. However, consumers in this study have demonstrated that even though they believe companies are participating to benefit themselves, they are also participating to benefit the cause.

Even though a majority of the relationships examined showed no statistical significance, there were findings supported by the statistics that can be pulled from this study. The first is that when comparing respondents from the United States and India that were exposed to a Cause-Related Marketing component, respondents from India had a statistically significantly higher

purchase attitude than respondents from the United States. This means that respondents from India that were exposed to a Cause-Related Marketing condition believed that the advertisement sold the product well, enticed them to purchase the product, and encouraged them to pay more than they normally would at a higher rate than respondents from the United States. This supports H4, as respondents from India had a higher purchase attitude. In addition, of respondents that reported they would purchase the product, those from India reported at a statistically significant rate that they saw a stronger connection between the company and the cause than respondents from the United States. Finally, of respondents that said they would not purchase the product, those from India reported at a significantly higher rate that the cause did not appeal to them, compared to respondents from the United States. All of these findings shed insight that the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component may have a greater effect on respondents from India, despite what the analysis of the three major categories demonstrated. The reason this may be so is because on several occasions, the cause and the connection between the cause and the company had an impact on the perceptions of respondents from India as compared to respondents from the United States.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The largest limitation of this study is that samples of respondents from the United States and India were not truly representative of the populations of the two countries. The sample sizes were very small, meaning that the data is not as accurate and representative of perceptions within the two nations as it could be. In addition, the samples included only college students of similar ages, with the majority being business students. Because the samples were not representative of all ages and groups of people, results may not be demonstrative of the nations as a whole. As well, despite being from two different countries with large cultural differences, many of the

respondents have shared very similar experiences, as they are all in stages of college education, and many share similar curriculum. This could be affecting the examination of differences in culture, as the two groups could share many cultural similarities due to their shared experiences. For future research, it is recommended that a larger and more representative pool of respondents be chosen from the two nations, in order to better examine the effects of culture and differences in the history of Corporate Social Responsibility.

The next limitation is that only one set of advertisements existed. While products and causes were chosen that were believed to be familiar and common with respondents from both countries, this may not have been the case. For example, of respondents who said they would not purchase the product, those from India said it is because they did not want to try something new at a statistically significantly higher rate than respondents from the United States. In order to mitigate this effect, it is recommended that in future research several different advertisements, with different products and causes, be presented to respondents. This would give a better likelihood that the effect of a Cause-Related Marketing component would be demonstrated, as there would be less effect from respondents not being familiar with either the company or the cause from one of the advertisements.

The final recommendation for future research would be to include more countries within the study. Even though the United States is a highly individualist nation, and India is highly collectivist, there may not be strong differences in perception of Cause-Related Marketing due to a variety of factors. In order to examine better the effect of a difference in culture, more countries should be included.

Conclusion

While the majority of the hypotheses in this study were not supported, findings were still of merit. The practical implications of these findings for marketers are that the presence of a Cause-Related Marketing component, and what the cause or charity is, may have a larger effect on respondents from India. Several findings indicated that this may be the case, however more research is needed in order to determine this. In addition, marketers should be aware that respondents are aware that companies are participating in these campaigns to benefit themselves, however consumers also believe the campaigns are being conducted to benefit the cause. Overall, this study helps demonstrate the complexities that exist in this area of research, and helps identify ways to improve research in the future.

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