

# THE INFLUENCE OF CAUSE RELATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS ON PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF CONSUMER SKEPTICISM

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## ABSTRACT

Cause-related marketing campaigns (CrM) were increasingly becoming a common feature of corporate marketing programs. Cause-related marketing is a marketing tool to increase business profit and serves society by corporate social responsibility. This study aims to investigate the influence of cause-related marketing campaigns on purchase intention; mediating the role of brand image and moderating the role of consumer skepticism. Data was collected from Punjab province through a survey questionnaire data from 362 general public. Smart-PLS was used for data analysis. The study results indicated that cause-related marketing campaigns (CrM) have a positive impact on purchase intention. The purchase intention (PI) has also a significant effect on brand loyalty. Brand image (BI) was found as a partial mediator furthermore it was seen consumer skepticism has a significant negative impact on the relationship between cause-related marketing campaigns and purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Cause-related Marketing Campaigns, Brand Image, Consumer skepticism, purchase intention, brand loyalty



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of cause-related marketing was developed by the foundations of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Corporate Social Responsibility stresses the responsibility of a business venture towards the community. Nowadays, Organizations have engaged with common beneficial partnerships with social causes as a convincing communication tool. It is known as named cause related marketing(Galan-Ladero, Galera-Casquet, Valero-Amaro, & Barroso-Mendez, 2013; Matson, 1994).

Cause-related marketing campaigns are a strategic tool that affects customer purchase behavior and product promotion(Grau & Folse, 2007). CrM campaigns are considered charitable acts and have a significant impact on customer behavior and purchase intention (Grau & Folse, 2007; Hajjat, 2003; Patel, Gadhavi, & Shukla, 2017). Cause-related marketing constitutes one of the marketing procedures that is considered one of the advanced marketing ways to increase the sale of an organization(Royd-Taylor, 2007). Several companies are utilizing CrM as a strategic technique to enhance the worth of their brand image in customer mind(Till & Nowak, 2000).

In 2019, corporate spending on CRM reached \$2.23 billion which showed a 4.6% rise from 2018 (Bae, 2020). The utilization of CrM campaigns results in skepticism in regards to the real presence of such partnership leading buyers to reject claims and resulting in changed consumer buying behavior(Bower & Grau, 2009; Deb, 2021). Recent research confirms this widespread skepticism among global consumers, finding indicating that 56% believe that many products used social barriers as a marketing ploy to sell more products(EDELMAN.COM, 2020).

Skepticism is more prominent in CrM campaigns where monetary and non-monetary campaigns were involved(Veleva, 2013). Consumer skepticism toward cause-related marketing could emerge due to the lack of information or awareness of cause-related marketing(Singh, Kristensen, & Villasenor, 2009). Consumer skepticism in connection with cause-related marketing messages could bring out unfavorable responses which may change buying behavior of customers(Manuel, Youn, & Yoon, 2014). Campaigns, where large-scale contributions are made to the public by means of product purchases, are often linked to skepticism(Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, 2005).

The literature revealed that Religious commitment has encouraged people to start schools, hospitals, and charities and volunteer for community programs. Islam and other significant religions of the world, such as Hinduism and Christianity, emphasize the need to help the needy (Ranganathan & Henley, 2008). In Islam charity is also called 'Zakat' is a compulsory religious obligation for a Muslim. Hindus are needed to eliminate their sins by donating money, land, and cows to the poor. In Christianity, it is required to help and enemies are to be supported and loved. According to (WEBER, 2002) religion decides morality and has a profound effect on the social and economic behavior of people in a particular land. Thus, the religion established in the way of life could recognize some political, social, and economic outcomes. In Islamic regions and countries, it's far more significant for Muslims to put up to God's will in their actions and beliefs (Wilson & Liu, 2011). Companies are constantly enhancing their brand image in customers' minds by utilizing cause-related marketing (CrM) campaigns, and it may increase the company's turnover (Green & Pelozo, 2011; Moosmayer & Fuljahn, 2010).

Pakistan is one of the most profitable destinations with a population of 228.40 million people, and the Pakistan population is the fourth largest in Asia and fifth in the world (Worldometer, 2022a, 2022c). Pakistan is an emergent country having a GDP (PPP) of 1.1 trillion ranked 22th (Worldometer, 2022b). In Pakistan, many companies like Unilever, Nestle, WARID (telecommunication), and P&G used CrM approach as a strategic marketing tool for enhancing sales and differentiating themselves from other companies in the marketplace.

In Pakistan, a limited number of firms are involved in cause-related marketing, because of the inability of firms to measure the effectiveness of this strategy. Little research has been conducted in the era of CrM in the context of Pakistan and particularly the role of brand image and consumer skepticism was ignored. Therefore, there is a need to find out the effect of consumer skepticism and brand image on the perceptions of the consumer toward CrM practices in Pakistan. So, this study aims to examine the effect of CrM campaigns on purchase intention toward brand loyalty in Pakistan. In addition, this study also examines the mediation role of brand image and moderating role of customer skepticism. Thus, this study provides the contributions to a better knowledge of the role of CrM campaigns and brand image on purchase intentions and the effect of consumer skepticism on CrM to purchase intention in a more comprehensive research model.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Cause Related Marketing Campaigns*

Cause-related marketing is stated as “the process of planning and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives”(Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). The significance of cause-related marketing has been increased in various filed such as marketing, management, philosophy, and communication.

Scholars claimed that CrM also reflected on marketing strategies, such as advertising, sponsorship, and marketing promotion(Berger, Cunningham, & Kozinets, 1999). Cause-related marketing is an umbrella term that included purchase-related donations in a strategic way(Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; GUPTA, 2006a). CrM is an organization's obligation to contribute a part of its profit to social welfare in a community(KOTLER P, 2005).

The literature presented that numerous companies used CrM as a marketing tool as a build a positive brand image in customers’ minds(Chattananon, Lawley, Supparerkchaisakul, & Leelayouthayothin, 2008). CrM is a new way that businesses maintain good public relations through broadcast(OLDENBURG, 1992). Successful CrM is not only a form of consumer behavior, such as brand choice, willingness to pay, and purchase intention (Koschate-Fischer, Stefan, & Hoyer, 2012; Robinson, Irmak, & Jayachandran, 2012; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

A direction that customer may take for a product is called purchase intention(BAGOZZI, 1999). CrM campaigns may benefit organizations by buildup brand attitude, purchase intention, and brand loyalty(Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000). CrM campaigns and brand image are significant methods to influence customers' purchase intention so based on the above literature following hypothesis is purposed.

*H<sub>1</sub>: CrM campaigns have a positive influence on Purchase Intention.*

### ***Brand Image***

Brand image is customer perception of company products and activity (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Brand image is an outcome of the individuals' interaction, thoughts, beliefs, ideas, feelings, and impressions about an organization (Van Rekom, 1997). Brand image can trigger changes in consumers' attitudes through quality, purchasing behavior, loyalty, and competitiveness (DOWLING, 2001; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Companies are using CrM as a strategic tool to acquire a competitive edge in the market (Anselmsson & Johansson, 2007). A company's positive brand image can enhance customer experience and reduce customer uncertainty while making purchasing decisions (ROBERTSON, 1986). So, we develop the following hypothesis.

*H<sub>2</sub>: Influence of cause-related marketing campaigns on purchase intention is mediated by the Consumer Skepticism*

Customers' tendency not to trust or to question an inspiration of a company to perform a cause-related marketing campaign (CHAO, 2009; Singh et al., 2009; Webb & Mohr, 1998). According to (Foreh & Grier, 2003) customer skepticism is the propensity of an individual to question, disbelieves, or doubt the claims made in the CrM program. The common tendency of doubt about the promotion claims represents a common marketplace conviction that fluctuates across people and is associated with general persuasibility (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). In Consumer skepticism, Customers use their information and knowledge to evaluate and interpret such activities and campaigns (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

Customers are skeptical about their intentions toward organizations' support for a reason (Marhana M Anuar, Omar, & Mohamad, 2013; Bae, 2018; Elving, 2013; Foreh & Grier, 2003). The popularity of CrM as a marketing tool has raised, and customers have become increasingly skeptical of organizations' help for a cause (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Customers are more likely to minor CrM claims and interpret the message as unreliable and more dynamic (Skarmas & Leonidou, 2013). Consumer skepticism or suspicion about the intentions of the companies that use CrM programs to promote their brands, increase sales, and the effectiveness of these initiatives in the future (Marhana Mohamed Anuar & Mohamad, 2012; Bae, 2018; Barone et al., 2000; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Szykman, Bloom, & Blazing, 2004).

High skeptical customers react less well toward cause-related marketing campaigns (GUPTA, 2006a; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Consumer reactions to CrM programs ranging from campaign reviews and purchase intentions are influenced by consumer concerns (Marhana Mohamed Anuar & Mohamad, 2012; Cui, Trent, Sullivan, & Matiru, 2003; GUPTA, 2006a; Webb & Mohr, 1998). After reviewing the literature following hypothesis is made.

*H3: Consumer skepticism moderates the effect of cause-related marketing campaigns on Purchase intention.*

### ***Customer Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty***

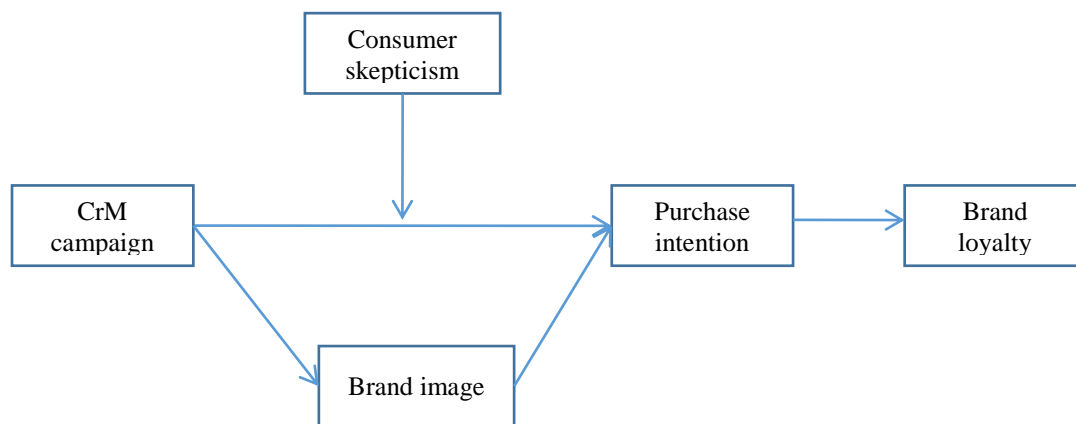
Purchase intention is the process of customer decision-making through buying, using, and disposing of a product/service to attain their needs (SCHIFFMAN, 2007). The purpose of purchasing a transactional action after customers have performed a general evaluation of the product and constructed their responsive response based on the test leads to the product rank(HSU, 1987). Consumer purchasing a product/service from one specific brand relies on its feature, quality, attributes, price, and image (Sarwar et al., 2023). It is determined that experience of buying remains in the mind of a customer for a long time(Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011).

The customer to buy a specific brand name product classification which may repeat buy by offering high value in services and products that differentiate the company as compared to the competitors(Kayaman & Arasli, 2007). Loyalty is a significant element of brand equity. Customer loyalty refers a strong customer behavior toward a brand(SIRDESHMUKH, 2002). Consumer loyalty means an emotional relationship with a customer to engage with repeated purchases of goods from the organization.

Brand loyalty is the association with the consumer with a particular good or brand that is demonstrated by their repeated purchases despite competitors (Shaukat et al, 2024). Several factors may affect factors customers' satisfaction, experience, attitude, brand awareness, cost, attractiveness, and knowledge (Bennett, 2002). Brand loyalty is one of the most volatile marketing factors known as part of specific customer responses to CSR views (Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011).

According to (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973) Customer loyalty was characterized by the following six conditions (1) weighted action (2) recognition in decision units (3) reaction to psychological affairs, depending on the assessment and decision (4) behavior (5) expression over time (6) behavior according to at least one other option brands(Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). So, considering of above literature we hypothesized;

*H4: Purchase Intention has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty.*



**Fig.1** Research Framework

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative methodology was utilized involving a survey approach for hypothesis testing of research. A simple random sampling method was adopted for data collection. 362 responses were received and a five-point Likert scale, where 1 was used for “strongly disagree” whereas 5 used for “strongly agree” were used in the questionnaire. Items of CrM campaigns adapt from(ĆORIC, 2015; Ross III, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992). Consumer skepticism items from(Brønn & Vrioni, 2001). Brand image items from(Cho, Lee, & Lee, 2017). Purchase intention items from(Duffett, 2015; HOU J, 2008) and brand loyalty items from(Castaldo, Perrini, Misani, &

Tencati, 2009; Ćorić, 2015; Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008; Salmones, Crespo, & Bosque, 2005; Sirdeshmukh, 2002).

Smart partial least square(PLS) was used to make partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) developed by (Ringle, 2015) and utilizing the 5000 bootstrap procedure. PLS-SEM has many edges, including its suitability for screening and forecasting research, as well as its flexibility in handling random data and small sample size. PLS-SEM is relevant to this study as it is ready for analysis where the aim is to predict the construction of key texts with a large number of indicators(J. F. J. HAIR, HULT, G.T.M., RINGLE, C. AND SARSTEDT, M, 2017b). A two-step method of process analysis, measurement, and structured models were considered(Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To test the reliability and validity, a measurement model was used, and to evaluate the hypothesized relationship, the structure model was used (J. F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

Descriptive analysis reveals statistical features of respondents as 59.1 percent male and 40.9 percent female. Among the respondents' the income range (10k-20k) was 19.3, (20k-30k) was 27.6, 30k-40k was 29.3, and 40k above was 23.8.

### ***Measurement Model***

To evaluate the reliability of every latent construct, Cronbach alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) were analyzed(J. F. J. HAIR, HULT, G.T.M., RINGLE, C. AND SARSTEDT, M, 2017a, 2017b). All the values of CA and CR above 0.7. This shows a good level of internal consistency (NUNNALLY, 1994). For convergent validity, factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) were evaluated. Factor loading of each item range (0.701-0.910) greater than the acceptable limit of 0.7 which is recommended by (J. F. J. HAIR, HULT, G.T.M., RINGLE, C. AND SARSTEDT, M, 2017b). Item of consumer skepticism (CS1, C2, C4) and purchase intention (PI1) was deleted due to less factor loading. AVE values greater than threshold values 0.5(Gefen & Straub, 2005; J. F. J. HAIR, HULT, G.T.M., RINGLE, C. AND SARSTEDT, M, 2017b). It tends to be presumed that all constructs showed adequate proof of Convergent validity. All the values of factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) confirmed that the construct is valid and shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.



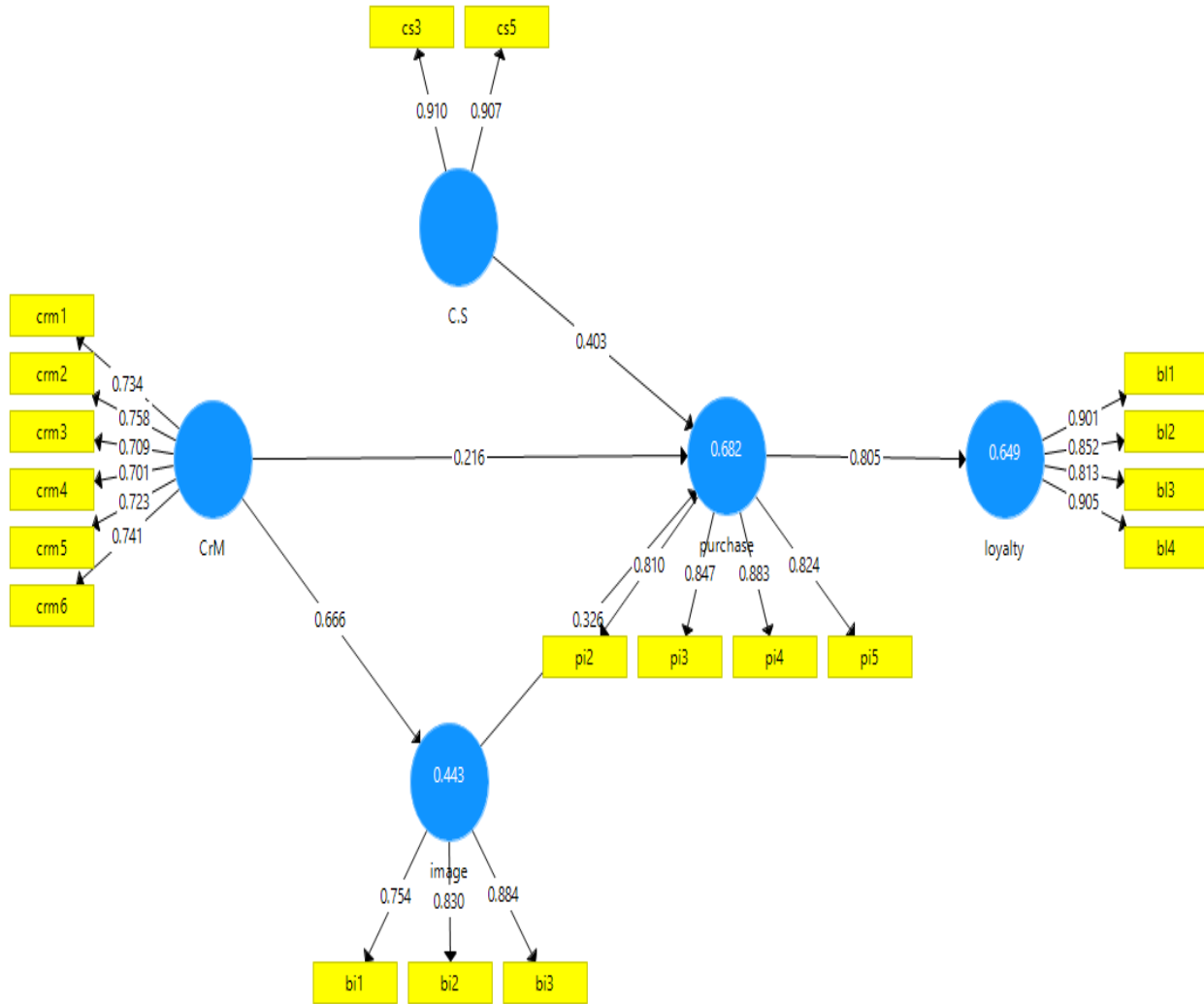


Fig. 2 cross loading of model

Table 1 Measurement Model

Research Constructs	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (Ca)	Composite Reliability (Cr)	Average Variance Extract (Ave)	Variance Inflation Factor(VIF)
Cause related marketing campaigns	CrM1	0.734	0.822	0.871	0.530
	CrM2	0.758			
	CrM3	0.709			
	CrM4	0.701			

	CrM5	0.723				
	CrM6	0.741				
Brand image	BI1	0.754	0.762	0.864	0.679	2.151
	BI2	0.830				
	BI3	0.884				
Consumer skepticism	CS3	0.910	0.787	0.904	0.825	1.862
	C5	0.907				
Purchase intention	PI2	0.810	0.862	0.906	0.708	1.000
	PI3	0.847				
	PI4	0.883				
	PI5	0.824				
Brand loyalty	BL1	0.901	0.892	0.924	0.754	2.250
	BL2	0.852				
	BL3	0.813				
	BL4	0.905				

Discriminant validity was tested by considering(Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The Fornell-Larcker criterion includes that the square root of the AVE in all construction should be more than the inter-construct links(Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results are presented in Table.2.

Table 2 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Consumer Skepticism	Cause Related Marketing Campaigns	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty	Purchase Intention
<b>Consumer skepticism</b>	0.908				
<b>Cause related marketing campaigns</b>	0.597	0.728			

<b>Brand image</b>	0.641	0.666	0.824		
<b>Brand loyalty</b>	0.854	0.665	0.683	0.868	
<b>Purchase intention</b>	0.741	0.674	0.728	0.805	0.841

**Structure Model**

A structural model evaluation process recommended by(J. F. J. HAIR, HULT, G.T.M., RINGLE, C. AND SARSTEDT, M, 2017b). Multi-collinearity is evaluated by the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF values less than 0.5 of endogenous variables are recommended by(Kock & Lynn, 2012). Standardized root means square residual (SRMR) is used to evaluate the model fit(Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). SRMR value of this research was 0.065, lower than the acceptable limit of 0.08(J. F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, M., Hopkins, L., & Kuppelwieser, V. G, 2014; Henseler et al., 2014) in Table 3. It can be presumed that the model is the most suitable. The study hypotheses are supported and detail is provided in table 4, 5, and table 6.

Table 3: SRMR

Fit summary	Saturated model value
SRMR	0.065

Table 4 Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	Statements	Beta( $\beta$ )	T-value	P-value	Results
H1	CrM campaigns have positive influence on PI.	0.216	4.001	0.000	supported
H2	The influence of cause-related marketing campaigns on purchase intention is mediated by the brand image of the organization.	0.326	8.689	0.000	supported
H3	Consumer skepticism moderates the effect of cause-related marketing campaigns on Purchase intention.	-0.090	2.418	0.016	supported
H4	PI has a positive influence on BL.	0.805	33.198	0.000	supported

**Mediation Analysis**

To examine the significance of the mediation effect, a bootstrapping technique was used (Preacher, 2008). The strength of the mediator can be tested by utilizing total effect and variance account for (VAF). Brand image (49.5%) has a partial mediation effect. According to (J. F. Hair, Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M 2013) values range (from 0.2-to 0.8) of partial mediation. Detail value is in Table 5.

*Table 5: Mediating effect*

Hypothesis	procedure	path	Path Coef.	Indirect effect	Total affect	VAF (IN.A/T.A)	T-value	p-value	Result
H3	Direct affect	CrM-PI	0.676	0.334	0.674	0.495	17.447	0.000	Accepted
	Indirect affect	CrM-PI	0.340				8.689	0.000	
		CrM-BI	0.666						
		BI-PI	0.502						

**Moderator Analysis**

The term moderating variable means a variable that can strengthen, reduce, counteract, or otherwise modify the relationship among independent and dependent variables. To examine the moderating effect product indicator approach (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003) utilized. Consumer skepticism has a negative significant effect on the relationship between CrM and PI. For detailed values see (Table 6).

*Table 6: Moderating analysis*

Hypothesis	path	Beta	T value	P-value	results
H4	CS*CrM → PI	-0.090	2.418	0.016	supported

#### 4. DISCUSSION

A growing number of companies have developed CrM programs among their goals of contributing to the creation of sustainable areas (Sarwar & Khan 2022). There has been limited research on the impact that CrM's activities on consumer behavior. A few studies have analyzed how the communication mechanism used to inform CrM actions affects consumer behavior. This study aims to examine the effect of CrM campaigns on purchase intention which revealed brand loyalty in a developing country such as Pakistan. In addition, this study also examined the mediation role of brand image and moderating role of customer skepticism as well.

Firstly, the findings of hypothesis (H1), the relationship between cause-related marketing campaigns and purchase intention, results show that CrM → PI ( $\beta=0.216$ ,  $t=4.001$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) has a positive influence in Pakistan. In Taiwan (Shih & Wang, 2021) found that CrM has a significant effect on purchase intention in the telecommunication sector.

Secondly, the findings of hypothesis (H3), the relationship between purchase intention (PI) and brand loyalty (BL), results show that PI → BL ( $\beta=0.805$ ,  $t=33.198$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) has a positive influence. In India (Panda et al., 2020) Conducted a study and found that purchase intention has a significant effect on customer brand loyalty.

##### *Mediating Effect of Brand Image*

The purpose of hypothesis (H2) is to determine the mediating effect of brand image (BI). The findings supported this situation, in which brand image mediated (partially) a causal relationship between cause-related marketing campaigns (CrM) and purchase intention (PI). Results showed that the total effect is 0.674, and VAF is 0.495 which means brand image partially mediates the relationship between CrM and PI whereas  $t=8.689$  and  $p=0.000$  have a significant and positive influence. Found same results in Indonesia in the Aqua mineral water sector (Suriyanto, Setiawan, Sumiati, & Sudjatno, 2020) found that brand image plays mediating role between CrM and Purchase intention.

### *Moderating Effect of Consumer Skepticism*

The aim of hypothesis (H3) is to determine the moderating effect of consumer skepticism. Consumer skepticism had a significant negative impact ( $\beta = -0.090$ ,  $t = 2.418$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ) on the relation of CrM –PI. In the USA (Bae, 2020) found that consumer skepticism has a negative and significant effect on Shoes Company.

### *Limitation and Future Research Direction*

This study attempted to examine the influence of cause-related marketing campaigns on purchase intention: mediating the role of brand image and moderating the role of consumer skepticism. For this purpose data were collected only from the Punjab province. For generalizability of the results, data will be collected from other provinces of Pakistan. In this study, brand image was used as a mediator, consumer skepticism as a moderator for future research on male, and female age, and education was used as a mediator or moderator. To know about the original behavior of consumers comparative studies will be conducted and results compared (developing with under-develop countries). This study is on FMCG products so future research will be conducted on durable goods/services sectors to determine whether these results are also applicable to other sectors or not.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In a country with more than 228.40 million people, the emerging environment within the marketing mandate, there is a basic need to investigate different parts of cause-related marketing policy. The study aimed to determine the influence of cause-related marketing campaigns on purchase intention in Pakistan. The study results enabled to authors to identify the links between different parts of the model.

Findings of the study revealed that CrM has a positive effect on consumer response in terms of purchase intention and Consumer purchase intention also positively affects consumer brand loyalty. In reality, purchasing a non-profit good allows the customer to join in charity and show support for their events, making them feel proud, useful, and satisfied with their accomplishments.

Findings also indicate that Brand image plays as a mediator and consumer skepticism plays as a moderator. This would result in more awareness and publicity of the firm's activities, as well as enraged consumer purchase intentions. Marketers must be cautious when creating a CrM campaign since skepticism has negative consequences. Consumer response is affected if marketers fail to handle skepticism well

This study's theoretical framework provides an in-depth knowledge of CrM campaigns, as well as related metrics and CrM campaign findings.

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