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Submission date: 12-Dec-2022 09:39AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1978537147

File name: 9502_Moharja_2019_E_R.pdf (441.89K)

Word count: 5888

Character count: 32339



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International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change. www.ijicc.net
Volume 9, Issue 5, 2019

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Cause-Related Marketing Claims Resulting from Overcoming Skepticism: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia

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Corporate marketing plans have been progressively turning into a standard because of cause-related marketing (CRM). This research looks at the planned result of a situational factor that may be meddled with on social networking sites (SNSs) through advertisement of cause-related marketing (CRM). For the purpose of supporting a social cause, statements are given that inspire confidence in the sponsoring organisation. This research investigates whether the impact of a CRM campaign on customer receptivity develops through customers' attributional thinking. It additionally contemplates how exceedingly sceptical versus less sceptical customers contrast in their reactions to CRM promotions. An online experiment was conducted. A total of 409 undergraduate students participated in the study. The confirmatory factor analysis was carried out with help of AMOS 22, whereas the moderating role of attribution was analysed by carrying out regression analysis in SPSS v.20. The strategy by which purchasers see and assess organisations' intentions decides the viability of the organisations' CRM promotions. In the end, a customer's perception of an organisation's credibility greatly affects their goal to join that organisation's brand page. This research propels speculations about customers' defensive components by anticipating the good reactions of the customers about the brand pages that highlight the CRM on SNSs.

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Key words: *Cause-related marketing, attributional thinking process, perceived corporate credibility, social networking sites.*



Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) are utilized by organisations nowadays for the purpose of cause-related marketing (CRM), and by means of customers' activity, organisations are bound to a social cause. Dissimilar to conventional CRM, CRM directed by means of SNSs does not expect shoppers to buy items. Rather, advertisers endeavour to urge purchasers to progress toward becoming individuals from the organisations' brand pages (Guerreiro, Rita, & Trigueiros, 2015). Through this activity, the buyer communicates his/her enthusiasm for a specific brand, and all individuals in his/her system might get notices, which results in word-of-mouth being spread about the brand. Along these lines, it additionally gives another chance at affecting the intended interest group (Palazon, Sicilia, & Lopez, 2015).

Then again, numerous researches contend that as CRM has turned into an undeniably prevalent tool for marketing, the reason for an organisation supporting a cause is what has turned customers' suspicion progressively toward the thought process related to the reason of support (Guerreiro, Rita, & Trigueiros, 2016). Insights in Marketing (2014) conducted a research exhibiting the pervasive scepticism that is present in the customers and found that distrusted promotion claims were being surveyed by 69% of customers. Customers may be led by scepticism in decisions where attribution has been made about the plans for a CRM that addresses a social cause that an organisation intends to promote. Customers consider whether the CRM is done with social concern in earnest and will be profitable for the social cause itself, or if it is for the purpose of serving the advantage of the company (Patel, Gadhavi, & Shukla, 2017).

In view of the above-mentioned contentions, this study investigated a situational variable that may influence the planned result of a CRM promotion: proclamations about a supporting organisation's purposes behind supporting a social cause. This research additionally investigated the mediating role of customer attribution in a supporting organisation's inspirations, so as to clarify whether motive attribution can establish an organisation's credibility and thus urge purchasers to join a brand page.

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Literature review and hypotheses

Cause-related marketing (CRM)

CRM has turned into the most polished type of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity. CSR entertains the possibility that organisations have an obligation to serve both the money-related premiums of their partners and, when all is said and done, the premiums of society (Pearce & Robinson, 2014). CSR includes different exercises by firms, for example, cause advancement, CRM, corporate social advertising, corporate philanthropy, and network volunteering. The CRM includes association with not-for-profit philanthropy and revenue-



driven organisations, with an end goal to raise assets and apprehend revenue-driven stakeholders. A great reaction to CRM may be spurred by customers to whom a magnanimous cause gives positive sentiments in exchange for help (Andrews, Luo, Fang, & Aspara, 2014).

Consumer scepticism toward advertising

The general inclination to doubt the informational cases of publicizing is known as Ad scepticism. Dispositional scepticism is a progressing condition of incredulity and quality of character, whereas a temporary state of scepticism has been concentrated by most examinations in which the situational factor actuates the state of customer (Williams, 2017). Unique situations and circumstances have been relied upon by scepticism of a temporary state (Kleber, Florack, & Chladek, 2016). A more extensive comprehension of customers' reactions to advertising activities is prompted by dispositional scepticism and a temporary condition impacted by intelligent and autonomous comprehension of a more profound type.

Ulterior motives and causal attribution

Positive attributions can be brought about by the procedure of customers' attribution, as explained in the theory of attribution. For example, for the purpose and prosperity of people that are outside of the organisation, an open, servile act of crediting sponsorship will serve as a potential advantage for them. This is similar to the antagonistic attribution, for example, an act of ascribing sponsorship will serve as a potential advantage for the organisation itself (Harvey, Madison, Martinko, Crook, & Crook, 2014). As suggested by Kim (2014), conviction does not just negatively drive the customers' potential response because the firm may earn profit through the utilization of CRM, but also because the customers recognize that the advantages a firm receives may be obfuscated by the firm. Inspiration for revenue-driven organisations is generally seen by customers as self-serving, and customers dread that organisations can control them by using a limited-time CRM as a trap. In this manner, they really think about the "why" questions, bringing about negative impressions of an organisation's intention (Vogel, Wanke, & Wanke, 2016). The logical data with respect to thought and attributional feeling are triggered by a moderately complex style of processes of taking part in CRM (i.e., proclamation of inspiration), which are described by cautious and dynamic thoughts of potential intentions.

Based on the studies discussed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: The customers' positive attribution about a sponsoring company will be generated by the statement of organisation-serving benefits along with public-serving advantages.

H1b: The customers' positive attribution about a sponsoring company will be generated only by the statement of public-serving advantages.



Interaction between statements of motivation and scepticism

Reactions of ad scepticism to publications by customers have been found in prior researches to be a significant determinant of the degree of ad scepticism by customers (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014). The data substance of advertisements, as expressed above, has been a general doubt for dispositional scepticism, which is an intelligent basis for customer quality. Along these lines, progressively sceptical customers may react all the more adversely to relevant data in advertisements. The influence strategies of advertisers with a higher level of learning have been found in purchasers with high scepticism, so what strategies need to be utilised and how influence happens is known by them (Patel et al., 2017).¹⁴ The theory that arises from this exchange is that shoppers' distrust of promotions may direct the impact of the expressed company's goal on the procedure of attributional thinking. Along these lines, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: When the advantages for both organisation and public are present, a negative attribution about the organisation's intentions will be shown by customers with a higher degree of dispositional scepticism.

H2b: When only public advantages are present, a positive attribution about the organisation's intentions will be shown by customers with a higher degree of dispositional scepticism.

Consumer perceptions about the credibility of a sponsoring company

Notwithstanding the thought process of attribution of a customer for a sponsoring organisation, a significant improvement of CRM attitude may be affected by the advancement of perceived validity of the organisation. Whether the sponsor is viewed as tenable is impacted by the attention of an organisation on CRM, as widely demonstrated in research. Although, it has been called to attention in recent years that the adequacy of a CRM tactic is decided by the thought processes of the firm with regards to the nearness of causal attributions (Marín, Cuestas, & Román, 2016). It has been found specifically by Kim (2014) that when the basic intentions of an organisation were straightforwardly expressed, there was a positive reaction towards the organisation by the study participants who participated for the causal attributions. The effect of promotion of CRM on planned purchasing or brand assessments by customers is almost certainly impacted by the inspiration of the organisation with regards to customers' attribution. From this discussion, it can be speculated that customer receptivity that is impacted by the CRM campaign may course through the attributions of the buyers, which are related to the thought process of the sponsoring organisation. This takes us to the next hypothesis:



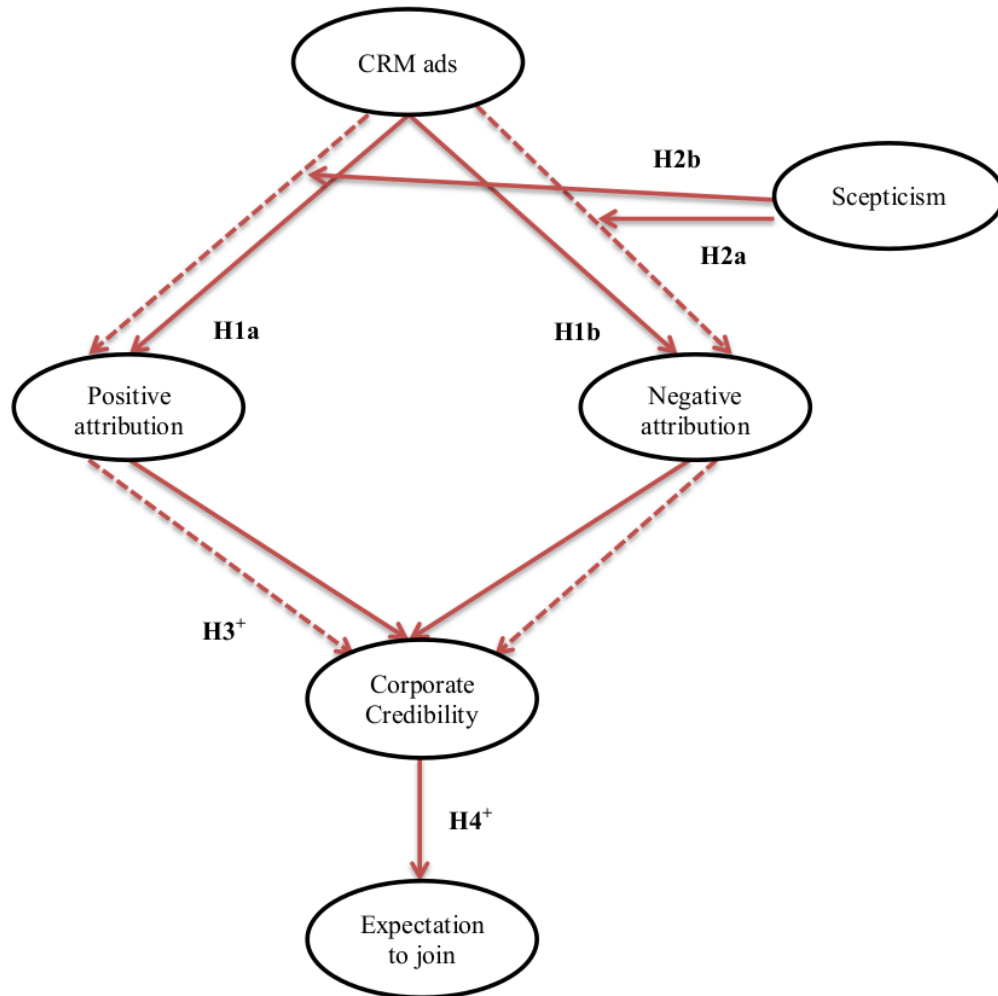
H3: The CRM appeals and their perceived corporate credibility relationship will be mediated by customers' attributions.

In the field of consumer behaviour, a substantial amount of attitudinal research has been carried out that suggests that the customer's impression of corporate credibility is a positive indicator of their motive. When customers know about an organisation's socially capable activities, they see the organisation as progressively sound, which prompts more noteworthy intentions of purchase (Inoue & Kent, 2014). Also, when customers consider an organisation dependable, they are bound to urge others to help the organisation's socially responsible initiatives and join the SNS brand page (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Based on the solid connection between CSR or CRM, organisation validity, and behavioural intention, we can propose the following hypothesis:

H4: A more solid intention to join the brand page will be generated by a greater perceived credibility of organisation.

1 The proposed hypotheses are summarized in the model in Figure 1.

Figure 1.





Method

Study design

The study was conducted online and pursued a two-by-two design of between-subjects. The statements of inspiration were for both organisation and public advantages versus only public advantages; and scepticism, which was either high or low. Scepticism was resolved as a two-classification factor by post hoc instead of being controlled, as this breaks down its impact on the connection that exists between the inspiration statements and attribution.

Sampling

The study was carried out at one of the top-ranking universities of Indonesia, and a total of 409 undergraduate students participated in the study through an online student portal. Students were chosen as the study sample because this demographic is viewed as a source that is amenable to generate marketing (CONE, 2017). In addition, it has been reported by Nielsen (2014) that 75% of the students have views about the social causes that come on social media like Facebook. These participants comprised 158 males (38.6%) and 251 females (61.37%). The mean age of the participants was 21, age ranged from 18 to 30, with a SD of 1.86). There was no significant observed difference across the four conditions among the participants. (Gender: $\chi^2(3) = 4.48, p = 0.54$; Age: $F(3, 406) = 1.67, p = 0.15$).

Stimuli development

According to CONE (2017), young people aged from 18 to 24 have ranked hunger and poverty as the most significant social issues, which is why the research made use of fictitious charity organisation for hunger. The participants were given three brands that were thought to be compatible with the cause of hunger. These brands included bottled water, school supplies provider, and a brand of shoes. The brand most compatible with the cause of hunger was thought to be a brand of bottled water by fifty participants ($F(3, 47) = 56.55, p < 0.05$). Then, a brand page was created for the brand on Facebook. The brand page also had a cover page that featured the slogan of the brand. Along with that, there was some brief information about the social cause that was being supported by the brand. The company name and logo of the brand were also present on the cover page and the products were displayed on the right side of the cover page. Additionally, the brand page sported a complete explanation of the degree of help the brand offered to the cause, which will compel the buyers to join the page. The activities that lay behind the motive of the firm and the utilization of the two distinct clarifications allowed the intentions of the organisation for the cause to be a control. "Hunger Will Be Eradicated in Indonesia with the Help of Our Actions" was the statement that served for the public advantage. Whereas "Hunger Will Be Eradicated in Indonesia with The Help of



Our Actions and Expand the Market for the Company's Product" served for the firm advantage. Both of these statements were displayed on left side of the brand page.

Procedure

The Qualtrics survey platform was used, in which a randomized, embedded block design helped by exposing the participants to the stimuli that measures degree of ad scepticism after filling out the questionnaire. One of the two conditions was arbitrarily appointed to them (CRM advertisement that supported the inspiration that serves the public and CRM promotion that supported the inspiration that serves both organisation and public), and how they reacted to the questions related to the inspiration of the association to the CRM campaign was noted. In addition, the apparent corporate credibility and the goal of the participants behind joining the page of the brand were also noted. Demographic information was collected from participants, manipulation checking was carried out, and participants expressed their familiarity with the social cause and the sponsored brand.

Measures

An eight-item questionnaire was adopted from Rifon, Choi, Trimble and Li (2004) for evaluating the positive and negative attributions of an organisation's inspiration. Newell and Goldsmith (2001) were referred to evaluate the perceived corporate credibility. Three items were adopted from Bearden, Lichtenstein and E. Teel (1984) to measure the expectations with respect to the probability of joining the brand page. Dispositional scepticism was evaluated based on nine items developed from Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998). All the scales, except expectation to join brand page, used to measure the dependent as well as independent variables were on seven-point Likert scales, with 1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree.

Results

Scale verification

Statistical analysis is carried out with the help of AMOS 22, and confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess the psychometric properties of the model of measurement. For each latent construct, all the factor loadings were found to be statistically significant. The minimum criteria of 0.80 and 0.60 for construct reliability (CR) and average variances extracted (AVE) respectively were exceeded, thereby affirming the convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), in the case of affirming the discriminant validity, the AVE for each of the factors should be more than the square of the correlations in pair-wise constructs. For the study variables, the discriminant validity was confirmed, since all the AVE calculated was higher than the square of the correlations in pair-wise. The



correlations are given in Table 1. The χ^2/df ratio is below 2.0 and the values for GFI, CFI, TLI and NFI are more than 0.90 which is the standard for model fit (McDonald & Marsh, 1990). RMSEA is 0.029, which is less than 0.05, which shows the existence of a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992).

Table 1: shows correlations of the construct and AVE on diagonal

	AD	PA	NA	CC	IN
AD	0.565				
PA	-0.467**	0.694			
NA	-0.056	-0.184**	0.592		
CC	-0.314**	0.456**	-0.064	0.695	
IN	-0.141**	0.280**	-0.135**	0.367**	0.734

Note: AS: Ad scepticism, PA: Positive attribution, NA: Negative attribution, CC: Corporate credibility and IN: Intention

** $p < 0.01$ shows correlation is significant.

Manipulation check

For the assessment of advantages that serves both organisation and public, a significantly higher score was observed ($M_{organisation\ and\ public} = 5.44, SD = 0.76, M_{public} = 3.34, SD = 0.75, t(408) = 20.06, p < 0.05$) for the participants who observed the statements of advantages that served both organisation and public, in comparison to the advantages that served public only. It is demonstrated from this outcome that the statements for the inspiration were successfully manipulated.

Tests for hypotheses

Effects on attribution of statement of inspiration by sponsoring company

The outcome of one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) indicated a significant and important effect for the statement of inspiration (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.98, F(3, 405) = 5.27, p < 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.04$). There was higher attribution for the inspiration of the sponsoring company by the participants for the positive goals that served the public ($M = 5.26, SD = 1.06$) in the cases where there were only statements of inspiration that served the advantages of public ($M = 4.87, SD = 1.36$) ($F(2, 406) = 8.61, p < 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.03$) because further investigations were carried out for univariate, and the results showed for CRM claims that served the inspiration for both organisation and public. This supports H1a. In comparison to this, a more negative attribution was exhibited by the participants ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.03$) for the statements that served both organisation and public ($M = 4.87, SD = 1.08$) in cases where the public serving inspiration was given. There was also a marginal



significance in the difference of the groups ($F(2, 406) = 6.58, p = 0.070, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.02$). Therefore, it supports H1b marginally.

Table 2: shows means and standard deviations of customers' perceived attribution facing statement of organisation- and public-serving versus only public-serving motivation

Dependent Variable	Statements of Motivation		F	df	partial η^2
	Organisation & Public Serving	Public Serving			
	(N = 205)	(N = 204)			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
PA	5.26 (1.06)	4.87 (1.36)	8.63**	406	0.03
NA	5.08 (1.03)	4.87 (1.08)	3.57	406	0.02

Note: AS: Ad scepticism, PA: Positive attribution

**p < 0.01.

The effects on attribution of scepticism and statement of inspiration of company

Since the equality of the between-group is contravened, the analysis of the multivariate effect of independent variables was carried out by Roy's test (Rencher & Christensen, 2012). Significant effects on scepticism (Roy's largest root = 0.26, $F(3, 291) = 36.94, p < 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.03$) and for the statements of inspiration (Roy's largest root = 0.03, $F(3, 291) = 3.57, p < 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.03$) have been indicated by the outcome of the multivariate results; however, no interaction exists between the statement of inspiration and scepticism (Roy's largest root = 0.02, $F(3, 291) = 1.48, p > 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.00$) (as shown in Table 3 and 4). Therefore, this did not support H2a and H2b.

Table 3: shows means and standard deviations of higher versus lower sceptics' perceived attribution facing statement of inspiration that served both organisation and public versus public only

	Statement of inspiration for Organisation & Public		Statement Inspiration for Public	
	HS	LS	HS	LS
	N = 67	N = 89	N = 80	N = 61
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
PA	4.79 (1.18)	5.56 (0.74)	4.26 (1.54)	5.48 (1.13)
NA	4.68 (1.28)	5.06 (0.98)	5.01 (1.17)	5.25 (0.93)

Note: AS: Ad scepticism, PA: Positive attribution, HS: High Sceptics, LS: Low Sceptics



Table 4: shows univariate results for customers' perceived attributions

	PA			NA		
	F	df	Partial η^2	F	df	partial η^2
S	53.11***	(3, 291)	0.14	5.93*	(3, 291)	0.03
IS	4.67*	(3, 291)	0.03	4.45*	(3, 291)	0.03
S x IS	2.94	(3, 291)	0.02	0.18	(3, 291)	0.00

Note: AS: Ad scepticism, PA: Positive attribution, S: Scepticism, IS: Inspiration Statements

* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Mediating role of attribution

With the help of SPSS v.20, a mediation analysis was carried out for the purpose of testing the proposed role of attribution that is mediated by the PROCESS macro package (Hayes & Little, 2018). A significant positive effect on organisation-advantage CRM appeal on organisation credibility perceptions was exhibited ($\beta = 0.21$, $t(406) = 2.08$, $p < 0.05$), as can be seen in Table 5. The second regression equation indicated that there is existence of positive relationship between the positive attribution and the advantages of CRM for the organisation ($\beta = 0.36$, $t(406) = 2.96$, $p < 0.05$). A positive connection was also found between the credibility of the organisation and the positive attribution ($\beta = 0.37$, $t(406) = 10.11$, $p < 0.05$). An insignificant effect of organisation advantage CRM appeal on an organisation's credibility was shown by the final equation ($\beta = 0.08$, $t(406) = 0.86$, $p > 0.05$). Positive attribution regression was also carried out. The outcome affirmed the mediating role of attribution that exists in the relation to perceived credibility of the organisation and the CRM (CI = -0.2326 to -0.0423), because zero was not included in the lower and upper boundaries. Therefore, H3 was not supported.

Table 5: shows the results of multiple regressions analysis and bootstrapping for attribution

Predictor	Dependent variable	PA		NA	
		β	T	B	t
CRM ad (1)	C	0.21	2.08*	0.20	2.07*
CRM ad	Att.	0.36	2.96**	-0.20	-1.89
Att. (2)	C	0.37	10.11***	-0.05	-1.12
1 and 2	Credibility	0.08	0.86	0.19	1.96
R^2			0.21		0.01
Indirect effects			0.1263		-0.0108
Bias			-0.2326 to		-0.0515 to



corrected CI					1
			-0.0423		0.0070

Note: Level of confidence for confidence intervals: 95; Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000
CI refers to confidence interval. AS: Ad scepticism, PA: Positive attribution, C: Credibility,
Att.: Attribution

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

5 *The effect of organisation's perceived credibility on expectation*

The organisation's credibility was taken as the independent variable, the expectation to join the brand page was taken as the dependent variable, and a general linear regression analysis was carried out. The credibility perception has been shown by the results to have a positive effect on the expectation ($\beta = 0.38$, $t(407) = 7.97$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.15$). The outcome of linear regression analysis supports H4.

Discussion

The outcome of the study recommends that, in cases where CRM are advertised both to the advantage of the organisation and the public, the philanthropy of the organisation is derived to a positive inspiration that, through the inspiration of the ascribed customers, works to serve the good of the public. This is contrasted with the exhibition displayed by the CRMs advertised to advantage only the public. The ulterior intentions of the sponsoring organisation for customers' attribution that moves customer receptivity is grounds for additional research, which may discover the CRM campaign's effect on it (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Klein & Dawar, 2004). Perceived credibility impacted the participants' expectation in a more direct and strong way to join the brand page. Consequently, it is recommended from the outcome of this study that the number of members of the page of such brands can be expanded by advertising on SNS brand pages that highlights the CRM.

The primary finding of this research demonstrates that public affirmation of an organisation-serving inspiration may diminish the disparity between customers' apparent thought processes and the organisation's expressed intentions. This outcome is predictable with earlier research; organisations may almost certainly shield themselves from negative impacts by talking about the thought processes fundamental to their beneficent projects (Kim, 2014). This research, in accordance with the past study, found that the attribution that is ulterior to the thought process of the sponsoring organisation was caused by buyer receptivity, which guarantees the CRM. It is demonstrated from the outcome of the study that it is not the organisation-serving thought processes that are seen by the customer that are of significance, but rather whether the clarification of the association itself and the apparent intentions are discrepant (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009). This



investigation affirms that if the sponsoring organisation is considered strong by the customer, then they are bound to join the brand page of the organisation.

The CRM assessment processes of the customers whose attributes are based on dispositional scepticism has been proof of the significance of a vital job of this investigation. When CRM occupies an organisation, the CRM claim is a self-serving inspiration, if the organisation is being candid. This has been accepted more explicitly by customers that possess scepticism in larger amounts versus those customers that possess scepticism in lesser amounts. A more negative attribution, on the other hand, is possessed by customers when there was expression of inspiration that serves the public, accompanied by fewer sceptic customers. The important role that is played by the casual attribution in the improvement of scepticism of an impermanent condition, by which apparent corporate credibility is lessened, is also explored in this research. What has been found by this research, and has significance, is that when the organisation is thought by customers to be abusing the cause instead of supporting it, there is a more noteworthy increase in the scepticism condition than when the organisation is thought of by customers as a firm that gives back to society. It has been found that apparent corporate credibility has a noteworthy negative effect on the transitory condition of scepticism that a CRM claim initiates.

Implications

Several practical implications are provided by this study. The outcome of the study proposes that the best technique in CRM is the affirmation of organisation-serving advantages in cause-related marketing that diminishes the scepticism of customers, since customers definitely realise that advertisers regularly utilize a public-serving advantage appeal as a general influence strategy. In this manner, an organisation will almost certainly repress the improvement of customers' impermanent condition of scepticism, which is expressed openly for the potential advantages that serve the firm and its activities. A significant role in the assessment of a CRM claim has been found in this research of the attributions of the customers. It has been suggested from the outcome that for the purpose of evoking positive reactions from customers, beneficent cause-supporting is not necessarily adequate. Rather, when considering how customer decision is impacted by the CRM campaign, advertisers ought to be worried about how customers see the inspirations that drive the CRM actions.

9 Limitations and directions for future research

Despite the fact that this study endeavoured to divulge some significant connections between causal attribution, dispositional scepticism, logical factor, and CRM viability, it merely contacts the outside of the hidden mental components and relevant factors, such as customers' individual qualities, the CRM, and the connection that exist between them. To continue the



assessment of customers, the turnaround connections that exist between characters, those which are based on dispositional scepticism and scepticism that is of temporary state, ought to be researched by future studies. In addition, how the dispositional scepticism is amplified by the scepticism of temporary state should also be researched further. In the end, this examination estimates behavioural expectations, not genuine conduct, which is inferable from the inherent troubles in estimating the real practices of customers to ineffectual brand pages on Facebook. There has been an extraordinary reaction of customers on SNSs where brand pages highlight CRMs: a genuine joining of the brand pages, which is solicited by them.



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