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CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

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Abstract

The paper presents the development of 5-point Likert scale for measuring attitudes towards cause-related marketing, as well as its application on a sample of Croatian consumers. The results of the research show that respondents are familiar with cause-related marketing and regard it as a good investment in the community. They see cause-related marketing campaigns as a good communication tool; they find a cause to be relevant for their personal involvement in campaigns, although the match between the cause and the product's characteristics seems to be less important. Finally, respondents do not find the size of the donation to be crucial for their participation in cause-related marketing campaigns, but they find it important to know about the size of the donation. The results of the research can serve to marketing managers, who need to thoroughly consider how to communicate specific elements of campaigns in order to achieve maximum understanding by the target group.

Keywords: cause-related marketing, Likert scale for measuring attitudes, elements of cause-related marketing campaigns

JEL classification: M14, M31, M37

1. INTRODUCTION

Cause-related marketing was firstly introduced by American Express in 1983 (Adkins, 1999, p. 15; Andreasen, 1996, p. 4; Varadarajan and Menon, 1988, p. 59), although there were some solitary examples of commercial cooperation between enterprises and non-profit organizations at the end of the nineteenth century (Adkins, 1999, p. 9), as well as in the seventies of the twentieth century (Husted and Whitehouse, 2002, p. 5).

Sinčić Ćorić *et al.* (2011, p. 4) reveal that there were different understandings of cause-related marketing during the eighties of the last century. In the absence of a formal definition at that time, Varadarajan and Menon first offered one, proposing that „Cause-related marketing is the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives“ (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988, p. 60). They concluded that

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cause-related marketing is distinct from sales promotion, corporate philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, corporate good Samaritan acts, and public relations, though it is often an amalgam of such activities.

In alignment with that thinking, Varadarajan and Menon (1988, p. 60), Andreasen (1996, p. 4), and Polonsky and Speed (2001, p. 1362) describe cause-related marketing as a specific marketing strategy, different from sales promotion, sponsorship and philanthropy. Webb and Mohr (1998, p. 227) view cause-related marketing as a strong marketing communication tool that can be used for different goals of a profit organization.

Adkins (1999, p. 11) defines cause-related marketing as a partnership between profit and non-profit organizations, designed with a goal of promoting a product's or service's image and meeting non-profit goals or any other type of non-profit initiatives. Daw (2006, p. 24) similarly points out that cause-related marketing initiatives provide benefits for both profit and non-profit organizations. Daw emphasizes that there are four key characteristics that differ cause-related marketing from other forms of cooperation between profit and non-profit organizations: creation of value for stakeholders and the community, mutually valuable cooperation and partnership between profit and non-profit organizations, participation of employees and consumers, and communication of the value of the cause-related marketing program to the general public. Sinčić Ćorić and Kurnoga Živadinović (2009, p. 71) in definition of cause-related marketing stress that campaigns always include a contribution of a specified amount to a designated non-profit cause, while Hajjat (2003, p. 95) describes cause-related marketing as marketing activities and funding programs that enable an association of a profit organization's identity with a non-profit organization, good cause or important social issue.

Contemporary marketing practices reveal that cause-related marketing is a specific type of partnership between profit and non-profit organizations (Sinčić Ćorić and Kurnoga Živadinović, 2009, p. 71) that also serves as a strong marketing communication tactic (Adkins, 1999, p. 43; Subrahmanyam, 2004, p. 116; Simcic Bronn and Belliu Vrioni, 2001; Adler, 2006, p. 5). Pringle and Thompson (1999) stress that cause-related marketing should be seen as a strategic and efficient source for brand differentiation and emotional positioning, as well as means of communicating a social sensitivity.

Cause-related marketing can be realized in different ways and at different levels. Daw (2006, p. 61) depicts three different types of initiatives of cause-related marketing campaigns: initiatives connected to the product, initiatives connected to the promotion's activities and initiatives connected to the program, while Varadarajan and Menon (1988, p. 64) differentiate strategic alliances of profit and non-profit organizations, linkage of a certain product to a non-profit cause, or linkage of a certain brand to a non-profit cause. Andreasen (1996, p. 5) distinguishes three forms of cause-related marketing programs: promotions based on transactions, promotion of common issues and licensing.

This paper starts from the studies confirming that cause-related marketing initiatives influence consumers' attitude and intention to buy. Unlike previous research, this paper analyzes what are the attitudes of consumers who have previous experience with such initiatives. Apart from measuring the general attitudes, in this particular study two elements of a campaign are selected: the donation size and personal connection with a cause. The study is carried out in Croatia, a small post-transition economy, that has recently become a full member of the EU, and companies are adapting to competitive environment also by pursuing modern cause-related marketing practices. Cause-relating marketing is rather

present in Croatia and so far consumers have responded to it well. There are many examples of cause-related marketing initiatives and most of them yielded desired results.

The paper is organized in the following way: in the second section, the literature review of the role of attitudes in consumers' intention to participate in cause-related marketing campaigns is presented. The methodology used in this research is explained in the third section. Results are given in the fourth section, while conclusions and limitations are presented at the end of the paper.

2. THE ROLE OF ATTITUDES IN CONSUMERS' INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, p. 200) define attitudes as a learned predisposition to act in a rationally favorable or unfavorable way toward the object, while Page and Luding (2003, p. 149) describe them as a psychological personal drift to a rationally positive or negative response and behavior due to stimulants and as a result of an attitude toward it. In order to understand the attitudes and the relationships between consumer attitudes and their behavior, different models for attitude interpretation are created. Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, p. 202) emphasize the theoretical model of attitudes that provide affective, conative and cognitive components of attitude. They stress that research in consumer behavior indicate that conative aspect of attitude is often treated as an expression of consumer intention to buy.

Fishben *et al* developed The theory of reasoned action (Summers *et al.*, 2006, p. 407; Matos *et al.*, 2007, p. 37) that relates attitudes, intentions and behavior and predict consumers' buying activities. They point out that the attitude is in a high positive correlation with intention to buy, and that it can correctly predict consumer buying action. They conclude that consumers' intention to buy is a better indicator of a final decision to buy in relation only to the attitude toward the buying object. Page and Luding (2003, p. 149) say that The theory of reasoned action confirms that it is possible to predict consumer behavior if attitudes are known at the time the behavior occurs, although other factors, such as personal attitudes and reference groups impact, influence the intention to buy (Matos *et al.*, 2007, p. 37). Verdurme and Viaene (2003, p. 97) indicate that after The theory of reasoned action, Ajzen developed The theory of planned behavior to which the intended behavior is determined by personal attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. In doing so, the personal attitudes towards the behavior are defined by certain beliefs about the behavior and their subjective evaluation. Pratkanis *et al* (1994, in Page and Luding, 2003, p. 149) emphasize that the strength of an attitude has a positive effect on attitudes and behavior in so much that a more a positive attitude towards the brand or product leads to a more positive impact on purchase intention.

Thus, consumer behavior is under the direct influence of attitudes towards specific products and marketing activities associated with the same product Engel *et al* (1995, in Darling and Puetz, 2002, p. 171). Cause-related marketing initiatives are, as noted above, a strong marketing communication tool by which it is possible to achieve the desired marketing objectives. Thorne McAlister and Ferrell (2002, p. 693) and Husted and Whitehouse (2002, p. 3) emphasize that the most common target of companies that conduct cause-related marketing initiatives are making a positive impact of favorable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions of the involved product and increase sales. In the context of consumer behavior it is important to note that the success of cause-related marketing

campaigns relies on the existence of socially conscious consumers who are willing to help others. Supporting the cause-related marketing is a pro-social consumer behavior (Youn and Kim, 2008, p. 124) that Basil *et al* (2006, in Youn and Kim, 2008, p. 124) described as a consumer behavior that contributes to the common good as opposed to satisfying only personal interests.

Webb and Mohr (1998, p. 227) state that research of the consumer attitudes and the impact of cause-related marketing initiatives on their behavior began in the mid nineties of the last century, despite the earlier acceptance and support of the cause-related marketing campaigns by all involved stakeholders. Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse (2007, p. 20) suggest that the research interests spread from the initial focus on the elements of campaign, such as donations proximity, product type or donation size to research of other aspects, such as the impact of advertising campaigns and efficient quantification of donations, all aimed at a comprehensive understanding of the impact of cause-related marketing campaigns and the consumers' behavior (Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse, 2007, p. 20).

Desired impact of cause-related marketing campaigns on consumer attitude and intention to buy the product involved in the campaign has been confirmed by several authors (Hajjat, 2003, p. 96). Farache *et al.* (2008, p. 212) explain that the studies show that consumers, when they are asked to evaluate cause-related marketing initiatives, are usually positive. Schiffman and Kanuk, say that it is possible to change attitudes towards products, services or brands by highlighting their links with social groups, events or occasions (2004, p. 214). Ross *et al* (1992, in Hou *et al.*, 2008, p. 365) state that cause-related marketing of the common good has a positive impact on attitudes and perceptions of consumers and that this influence is stronger on women than on men. On the other hand, Moosmayer and Fuljahn (2010, p. 545) found only an insignificant impact of gender in forming consumers' attitudes toward cause-related marketing. Galan-Ladero *et al.* (2013, p. 264) prove that attitudes toward a cause-related marketing campaign have positive influence on post-purchase satisfaction, as well as that post-purchase satisfaction with a product involved in a cause-related marketing campaign has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Adkins (1999, p. 61), Drumwright (1996, in Farache *et al.*, 2008, p. 212), Hajjat (2003, p. 95), Kotler and Lee (2009, p. 88) and Vanhamme *et al.* (2012, p. 261) point out that cause-related marketing activities positively influence corporate reputation, raise consumer loyalty and create favorable attitudes, motivate and connect employees, increase sales and market share and create positive publicity. According to research by Business in the Community, 86% of surveyed consumers would buy a product associated with a non-profit cause as opposed to one that is not, if the quality and price of a product are equal (Hajjat, 2003, p. 95). Effective implementation of strategic cause-related marketing initiatives has a positive influence on consumers' perception of the company and its products, state Dacin and Brown (1997, p. 70).

Studies further indicate that some factors like the type of non-profit cause, suitability between cause and company, personal relationship with a cause, gender and donation size can influence and change consumer attitudes (Farache *et al.*, 2008, p. 212). Trimble and Rifon (2006, p. 31) point that when compatibility does not play a key role, consumers are influenced by other elements of the campaign, such as the length of the campaign, importance of the non-profit cause or proximity and donation size.

Laferty (2007, in Hou *et al.*, 2008, p. 376) reveals that the perceived balance between the cause and the brand does not have a crucial influence on purchase intention and participation in the campaign, while Strahilevitz (1999, in Hou *et al.*, 2008, p. 376) says that

the harmony between the cause and the brand certainly contributes to a positive impact on the intention to buy. Furthermore, [Cheron *et al.* \(2012, p. 362\)](#) conclude that perceived match between the brand and the cause have positive impact on consumers' perceptions about cause-related marketing, while duration of the campaign is not confirmed to be important. [Zdravkovic *et al.* \(2010, p. 158\)](#) add that consumers' attitudes depend not only on congruence between the cause and the brand, but also on the interaction between fit and familiarity with the cause. [Chang \(2008\)](#) claims that when the donation magnitude is constant, a donation amount framed in absolute (money unit, i.e. dollar or euro) value is more effective than that in percentage terms for low-priced products, and the opposite is true for high-priced items. [Hou *et al.* \(2008, p. 364\)](#) examine the impact of cause on consumers' purchase decision and conclude that consumers prefer local causes over nation-wide ones. [Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse \(2007, p. 21\)](#) conclude that the proximity of donations and correctly formatted messages can have a positive impact on creating a favorable attitude and intention to buy for consumers which have less personal involvement with the cause. They also point out that even at high levels of involvement with the cause there is a greater positive incentive for consumers when there is a local donation opposed to a national or global donation, which is different from the research made by [La Ferle *et al.* \(2013\)](#), who didn't prove that beneficiary of the campaign (local or worldwide) impact the consumers' attitudes towards the campaign. [Rosen Robinson *et al.* \(2012, p. 135\)](#) claim that consumers will be more inclined to purchase the product involved in a cause-related marketing campaign if they have latitude to choose the focal cause of the campaign, and that providing choice is more important when the perceptual fit between company and cause is low.

[Landhert Grau *et al.* \(2006, in Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse, 2007, p. 19\)](#) hint that there are causes for which it is difficult to achieve high personal involvement, such as the problem of chronic world hunger or homelessness. [Lafferty *et al.* \(2004\)](#) proved that attitudes toward both the cause and the brand can be enhanced as a consequence of an alliance if perceptions of the alliance are favorable. Furthermore, they claim, the cause appears to benefit from the alliance to a greater extent than the brand. Their study supports the notions that the fit between partners plays a pivotal role in consumer acceptance of the alliance as plausible and that familiarity with the cause moderates the effectiveness of the alliance.

[Duncan \(2005, in Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse, 2007, p. 21\)](#) states that companies recognize the importance of the non-profit cause and the consumers' attitude towards it, and that they develop partnerships through cause-related marketing bearing this in mind. [Broderick *et al.* \(2003, p. 583\)](#) and [Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse \(2007, p. 20\)](#) point out that the level of emotional involvement is a key factor in the consumer's perception and response to a cause-related marketing campaign. They conclude that personal connection to the cause encourages consumers to participate in a cause-related marketing campaign, and that the contribution depends on the awareness of the personal importance of the cause. [Bhattacharya *et al.* \(2003, in Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse, 2007, p. 20\)](#) conclude that consumers are encouraged to participate because of a close identification with the company or cause that they want to support. [Lafferty \(1995, in Webb and Mohr, 1998, p. 227\)](#) similarly considers that the consumers' response and support of the cause-related marketing campaign is more positive if the cause is personally more important. [Farache *et al.* \(2008, p. 210\)](#) say that personal connection with the cause has a significant impact on consumers' attitude and buying behavior.

Benefits arising from campaigns depend also on the donation size ([Landreth Grau and Garretson Folse, 2007, p. 19](#); [Polonsky and Speed, 2001, p. 1363](#)). [Hajjat \(2003, p. 97\)](#)

declares, for example, that a high personal involvement with the cause together with a high donation size has a higher positive impact on attitudes and intention to buy, in relation to the reverse situation. Dahl *et al* (in Webb and Mohr, 1998, p. 227) suggest that consumers have a tendency to believe that the company exploits a non-profit organization if the donation is small, compared to a larger donation. Landreth Grau *et al.* (2007, p. 75) conclude that a small donation can lead to skepticism among consumers. Sinčić Ćorić and Kurnoga Živadinović (2009, p. 76) in research conducted in Croatia, find that the donation size does not affect the consumers' decision to change brands for those participating in the cause-related marketing campaign.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to measure the consumers' attitudes towards cause-related marketing, the research was made in two phases which are described below.

3.1. Phase 1: Developing instrument

The construction of Likert scale started with a literature review. Based on a literature review the authors constructed a pool of 95 items related to cause-related marketing; 42 of them were associated to the relationship and consumers' attitudes toward cause-related marketing and socially responsible behavior in general, 25 items were associated to the consumer's personal relation to the cause, and 28 items were associated to the importance of donation size. The pool of items was given to a sample of judges. They were all MBA postgraduate students at their final year of study. They were chosen in accordance to the methodological routine; they represented a homogeneous sample, and they were not experts in the field of research, but rather as similar as possible to the population that is interesting for the research. In total, there were 32 judges. The judges have been asked to evaluate the intensity of each item, where "1" stands for the lowest and "5" for the highest intensity of an item.

Only items with a correlation above 0.5 were included in the final scale (Table 1).

Table no. 1 – Items in Likert scale (correlation above 0.5)

No.	Items	Correlation
1.	I support socially responsible behavior and actions for common good.	0.52
2.	I would buy a product from a company that supports non-profit organizations that work for common good.	0.63
3.	Supporting non-profit goals, investing in the community and being socially responsible are necessary for successful and profitable business.	0.69
4.	I consider cause-related marketing as a good way for companies to invest in the community and support non-profit organizations.	0.59
5.	The cause of the cause-related marketing campaigns is important to me.	0.54
6.	It is important to me that the cause of the cause-related marketing campaign is associated with the characteristics and nature of the product itself.	0.53
7.	The donation size in cause-related marketing campaign is important.	0.57
8.	Increased involvement in a way of greater connection with the cause strongly influences the intention to buy a product that is involved in the cause-related marketing campaign.	0.54
9.	It is important to know the donation size allocated by a single purchase of the product that supports a specific charitable cause.	0.59

No.	Items	Correlation
10.	The non-profit goal in a cause-related marketing campaign is important.	0.66
11.	I think that companies that are involved in cause-related marketing campaigns contribute to communities by doing so.	0.59
12.	Corporate socially responsible behavior and supporting non-profit goals positively influence consumers' perceptions of a company.	0.74
13.	There are causes which I personally prefer and which I would support more as a consumer if they were involved in cause-related marketing campaigns.	0.53
14.	I think that the donation size from each single purchase of the product through cause-related marketing campaign is important to me.	0.53
15.	Cause-related marketing campaigns are a great communication tool for communicating with consumers.	0.54
16.	The allocated donation size affects my intention to buy.	0.53
17.	Companies that are involved in cause-related marketing campaigns and therefore support non-profit goals have my trust and consumer's support.	0.59
18.	It is very important to me which cause supports the cause-related marketing campaign.	0.58
19.	I think that consumers will respond in the form of higher purchase intentions when the donation size is significant.	0.55
20.	Cause-related marketing campaigns positively influence consumers' perceptions.	0.57
21.	The important thing to me is what amount will be donated to a specific cause if I buy a product that is involved in the cause-related marketing campaign.	0.67
22.	Corporate socially responsible behavior and supporting non-profit goals positively influence consumers' intention to buy the products of that company.	0.56
23.	Donation size is extremely important in cause-related marketing campaigns.	0.53
24.	The donation size is playing an important role in the intention to buy the product that is involved in cause-related marketing campaign.	0.72
25.	The higher the personal connection with the cause the higher the consumer's willingness to choose a product that supports the cause.	0.63
26.	The donation size for a non-profit goal is in a highly positive correlation with the intention to buy a product involved in a cause-related marketing campaign.	0.59

3.2. Phase 2: Measuring the attitudes towards cause-related marketing

Sample. The sampling was purposive, because the idea of the research was not to find out the general attitudes of an average consumer, but rather to see the attitudes of those consumers who have learned about cause-related marketing programs, and have some previous experience with such programs.

From 186 respondents in total, 162 claimed that they have previously bought a product that was involved in a cause-related marketing campaign, and could remember and name some of the cause-related marketing campaigns. Sample therefore consisted of 162 respondents who have had a previous experience with cause-related marketing campaigns. 72% of them were females, ranging from 26 to 45 years. 47% of the respondents were highly educated.

Data collection. The data were collected through a highly structured questionnaire. Apart from demographic data, the questionnaire consisted of a 5-point Likert scale with 10 items associated with cause-related marketing and socially responsible behavior in general, 7 items associated with the consumer's personal relation to the cause and 9 items associated with the donation size. The respondents were asked to score their level of agreement with

each item, on a scale from 1 to 5, where “1” stands for “I strongly disagree”, “2” stands for “I disagree”, “3” stands for “I neither agree, nor disagree/I cannot evaluate”, “4” stands for “I agree”, and “5” stands for “I strongly agree”. The respondents were guaranteed anonymity, therefore they were giving authentic answers.

Data analysis. A descriptive statistical analyses and two simple regression analyses, using E-Views were conducted.

4. RESULTS

4.1. General consumers' attitudes

The overall attitude of consumers that have previous experience with cause-related marketing campaigns towards such campaigns is neutral to positive (mean is 3,1).

Deeper analysis reveals that even 97% of the respondents support socially responsible behavior in general. 65% of them find that supporting non-profit goals, investing in the community and being socially responsible are necessary for successful and profitable business. 85% of the respondents consider that socially responsible corporate behavior and supporting non-profit goals positively influence consumers' perceptions of a company. 94% of the respondents report their willingness to buy a product that supports non-profit organizations working for a common good.

As [Table 2](#) reveals, 95% of the respondents consider cause-related marketing as a good way of investment in the community, while 93% of them think that companies involved in cause-related marketing programs contribute to the community by being involved in such programs. 82% of the respondents consider cause-related marketing as a great marketing communication tool. When asked about trust towards companies that are involved in such campaigns, or that support them in different ways, 70% of the respondents report agreement, while 20% of them cannot evaluate and 10% of them even disagree with that. Finally, 86% of the respondents feel that cause-related marketing campaigns positively influence consumers' perceptions of actors involved.

Based on frequency of answers “I agree” and “I strongly agree”, as well as on means related to items, it can be concluded that consumers have positive attitude toward cause-related marketing in general, although there are cases in which their opinions are to a certain extent disperse (for instance, item no 17).

[Table 2](#) also gives descriptive statistics for the items associated with the cause in cause-related marketing programs. As can be observed, the majority of the respondents agree with different items related to the cause. 86% of the respondents think that the cause is important for them, as well as 88% of them find the non-profit goal to be important. 85% of the respondents think that the greater their personal involvement with the cause, the greater their willingness is to buy the brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign. 87% of the respondents find some causes more preferred than the other. Only 43% of the respondents state that the cause involved in a cause-related marketing campaign needs to be related to the characteristics of the product (whereas 40% of them feel that this is not important or not important at all). Finally, 60% of the respondents find that their personal involvement with the cause influences their intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign, while 30% of them cannot evaluate that influence, and 10% of them feel that there is no influence of a cause to their intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign.

Table no. 2 – Descriptive statistics for items

Item no	Frequency of "I agree" and "I strongly agree" (4 and 5 in 5-point Likert scale) % of respondents	Mean	Variance	Standard deviation	Variation coefficient
<i>items associated to general attitudes toward cause-related marketing</i>					
4.	95%	4,41	0,33	0,64	14,44
11.	93%	4,29	0,59	0,77	17,84
15.	82%	4,13	0,64	0,80	19,42
17.	70%	3,74	0,81	0,90	24,11
20.	86%	4,03	0,52	0,72	17,97
<i>items associated to "cause" in cause-related marketing programs</i>					
5.	86%	4,18	0,71	1,27	30,47
6.	43%	3,05	1,62	1,27	41,81
8.	60%	3,68	0,89	0,94	25,65
10.	88%	4,16	0,67	0,82	19,74
13.	87%	4,17	0,59	0,77	18,36
18.	70%	3,80	1,18	1,08	28,53
25.	85%	4,23	0,68	0,82	19,43
<i>items associated to "donation size" in cause-related marketing programs</i>					
7.	53%	3,39	1,32	1,15	33,92
9.	82%	4,11	0,88	0,94	22,80
14.	61%	3,58	1,11	1,05	29,48
16.	46%	3,09	1,21	1,10	35,55
19.	47%	3,42	0,95	0,97	28,44
21.	62%	3,55	1,05	1,02	28,86
23.	57%	3,56	0,98	0,99	27,86
24.	53%	3,48	0,88	0,94	26,94

Based on the presented facts, it can be concluded that the majority of consumers find the cause in cause-related campaigns to be important. They perceive some causes to be of a greater importance for them. In such cases they feel themselves more motivated to participate in such campaigns. On the other hand, there seems to be substantial dispersion in their opinions about the "match" between the cause of the campaign and the characteristics and nature of the product itself (item no 6).

The situation is to some extent different when respondents were asked to take donation size in mind. Table 2 reveals that for most of the items respondents did not have the same opinion. The exception is item no 9, where 82% of the respondents agreed that it is important to know the donation size. It can be observed from Table 2 that only 53% of the respondents think that the donation size is important for their participation in the cause-related marketing campaigns. At the same time, 31% of them do not consider donation size to be important. Mean value for the majority of the items is around 3 (I cannot evaluate or I neither agree nor disagree), with rather large variation coefficients. Both prove that

respondents have different opinions about the importance of the donation size. The only exception is related to the item no 9 (“It is important to know the donation size allocated by a single purchase of the product that supports a specific charitable cause”). 82% of the respondents agree with that argument (mean 4.11).

Taking the above in mind, it can be concluded that consumers consider donation size less important than the cause of the campaign. However, the majority of them would like to know the specific amount of the donation size allocated by a single purchase of the product involved in a cause-related marketing campaign.

4.2. Elements influencing consumers’ intention to buy

In order to explore the influence that “cause” and “donation size” may have on consumers’ intention to buy, two simple regression analyses were conducted. In the first model respondents’ answers about socially responsible behavior were used as the constant variable, while their answers related to item number 10 were used as the independent variable (Table 3).

Table no. 3 – Results for the first simple regression analysis – “cause”

	Estimated parameter	Standard error	t value	p - value
Constant	2.142883	0.252424	8.489210	0.0000
Cause	0.463795	0.067737	6.847004	0.0000

According to the data from Table 3, estimated regression equation is:

$$\text{Intention to buy} = 2.142883 + 0.463795 \text{ cause} \\ (0.252424) (0.067737)$$

The results show that a p-value is statistically significant (0.000); therefore it can be concluded that consumers’ intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign is greater for those more involved with the cause.

In the second model, respondents’ answers about socially responsible behavior were used as the constant variable again, while their answers related to item number 13 were used as the independent variable (Table 4).

Table no. 4 – Results for the first simple regression analysis – “donation size”

	Estimated parameter	Standard error	t value	p - value
Constant	2.830632	0.282670	10.01389	0.0000
Donation size	0.283363	0.079407	3.568508	0.0005

According to the data from Table 4, estimated regression equation is:

$$\text{Intention to buy} = 2.830632 + 0.283363 \text{ donation size} \\ (0.282670) (0.079407)$$

The results show that a p -value is statistically significant (0.005); therefore it can be confirmed that *consumers' intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign increases with the donation size*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Companies constantly attempt to enhance their corporate image, cultivate a favorable attitude in the minds of consumers, and realize some sales gains by prominently advertising their acts of philanthropy and sponsorship of worthy causes. This was firstly emphasized by Varadarajan and Menon in their seminal paper from 1988, and is still pertinent. In that sense, contemporary companies view cause-related marketing as a manifestation of the alignment of their corporate philanthropy and enlightened business interest, simultaneously responding to the changing marketing conditions. In order to plan and implement specific elements of cause-related marketing campaigns it is important to understand how consumers perceive them, as well as what are their general attitudes towards such programs. This was an incentive for many research projects, including the one presented in this paper.

The research presented in this paper analyzes consumers' attitude towards cause-related marketing in general, as well as towards the importance of cause and donation size in cause-related marketing programs.

The results of the research show that respondents are familiar with cause-related marketing and specific marketing activities that are allied to such campaigns. The majority of respondents regard cause-related marketing as a good investment in the community. They also support non-profit organizations in their activities in the community. They see cause-related marketing campaigns as a good communication tool; they find a cause to be relevant for their personal involvement in campaigns, although the connection between the cause and the product's characteristics seems to be less important. However, the research results prove that their intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign is greater for those more involved with the cause. The respondents do not find the size of the donation to be crucial for their participation in cause-related marketing campaigns, but they find important to know about the size of the donation. More to it, the results confirm that their intention to buy a brand that supports a cause-related marketing campaign increases with the donation size. To conclude, the overall consumers' attitude toward such campaigns is neutral to positive. There are two limitations to these results. Firstly, the structure of a convenient sample consisted of majority of the female respondents (72%). Although this is so, women primarily make purchasing decisions, therefore their answers can be considered indicative. The second limitation is connected to the selected elements that can influence consumers' attitudes. Apart from investigating consumers' general attitude towards cause-related marketing, this research specifically analyzes selected elements that can influence consumers' intention to participate in cause-related marketing campaigns, i.e. cause and donation size. For that reason, when interpreting the results one should not exclude the influence of other elements on consumers' intention to buy the brand that supports a cause relation marketing campaign. As a consequence, the results can be considered indicative, and can serve as a starting point for future research of cause-related marketing.

Regarding strategies and tactics facilitating cause-related marketing, the findings provide useful insights to marketing practitioners. The results point out that it is necessary to thoroughly consider how to communicate specific elements of campaigns (i.e. donation size,

match between product's characteristics and purpose of campaign, personal involvement with a cause etc.) in order to achieve maximum understanding by a target group.

Since this research specifically analyzes cause and donation size, as elements that can influence consumers' intention to participate in cause-related marketing campaigns, some future research should include other elements, such as perception of connection between cause and product, perception of fit between cause and company etc. It would be also interesting to find out whether there are gender differences as well as differences between consumers with previous experience with cause-related marketing programs and those without it.

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