A Qualitative Study of Cause-Related Marketing Campaigns and Consumers’ Purchase Intention of On-Demand Ride Services in Egypt

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a matter of interest for academics and practitioners especially in the form of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM). The paper aims to revisit CRM campaign dimensions shaping consumer responses in terms of attitude toward firms and purchase intention in a less research market such as Egypt. Exploratory qualitative interviews were employed of thirteen in-depth interviews and one focus group (seven participants) with Egyptians using on-demand ride services. The current study shed the lights on the main CRM campaign factors affecting purchase intention and firm attitude. Those factors are cause involvement, consumers’ participation effort, company-cause fit, corporate credibility, altruistic attribution, campaign feedback, socio-demographic dimensions, and skepticism. Results revealed that campaign feedback has a master effect on consumers’ attitudes and purchasing behavior and wasn’t studied heavily in the literature. Also, the importance of the cause itself and how consumers are personally involved in the social issue is of great concern. Consumers’ skepticism and degree of participation effort required from
consumers result in negative effects on their attitude toward firms which in turn affect their purchase intention. Yet, managers should inform consumers by how the company is using their donations, additionally; they should hamper consumers’ skepticism and enhance their trust in the socially conscious brands. People have to be updated with the campaign’s achievement and progress on a regular base. Eventually, determining the antecedents of CRM campaigns would help managers in selecting the best partners for an effective social venture.

**Keywords:** Cause-related marketing, Purchase intention, on-demand ride services, Egypt
1. Introduction

Recently, a considerable literature has grown up around the theme of firms’ responsibilities toward societies. Since companies began to be judged on how they affect the society and environment, they tend to develop their social responsibilities as a whole (Sheikh & Beise-Zee, 2011). Nowadays, CRM as a dimension of CSR has grown dramatically and grabbed the attention of researchers and practitioners to investigate how consumers respond to this form of marketing communication (Roy, 2010; Galan Ladero et al., 2015). It was described as the donation made by companies to a worthwhile cause or a charitable organization based on consumer purchases from those companies’ products (Nan & Heo, 2007).

In reviewing consumers’ responses toward sponsoring firms, scholars have long debated the impact of socially responsible and CRM campaigns on consumers’ attitudes and behavior. Some researchers found favorable consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward those firms (e.g. Landreth, 2002; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006), whilst other studies revealed some unfavorable behavior (Karem Kolkailah et al., 2012). Thus, questions have been raised about the factors that motivate consumers to participate in this kind of partnership campaigns.

Based on the synthesis of previous studies in the CSR paradigm, it can be concluded that they were mainly focused on Anglo Saxon cultures and few types of research have studied CSR in the developing countries (Jamali & Karam, 2018). Moreover, Arab cultures may provide further insights or different results as they are known with their incline to the giving behavior and being religious by nature. More investigations are needed to know if the variables that have been identified the most in previous literature such as; company-cause fit, corporate credibility, altruistic attributions, socio-demographic characteristics and cause involvement are having the same importance also in the Arab cultures. Further, more studies are needed to provide a deep understanding of how consumers make decisions on buying socially conscious products (Hou et al., 2008).

The majority of the previous studies addressed CRM in the products sector; however, they paid little attention to services contexts. Patel et al. (2016) call for future studies to examine CRM initiatives in different types of goods and services than product categories (e.g. Fast moving consumer goods). Furthermore, the results of an exploratory study with consumers of socially responsible products in Egypt indicate that campaign feedback, cause-involvement, and skepticism are predicting attitude toward firms and purchase intention. However, campaign feedback as a variable identified by the exploratory study as an important factor has received limited, if any, attention in previous studies.

To this end, this research aims at addressing these gaps by investigating the CRM campaign antecedents shaping purchase intention in the on-demand ride services in Egypt. An area less researched in the extant literature (Khattab & Mahrous, 2016; Gupta et al., 2018; Mahrous, 2013; Mohsen et al., 2018; Shazly & Mahrous, 2017; Marzouk & Mahrous, 2017; Mahrous & Kotb, 2014; Adel et al., 2018; Adel & Mahrous, 2018). Specifically, this study is examining the relationship between cause-related marketing campaigns dimensions, and attitude toward firms and consumers’ purchase intention.
For a greater understanding of antecedents and consequences of CRM, researchers have studied the cognitive, behavioral and affective variables in exploring consumer responses to CRM programs (Roy, 2010). Some of the previous studies specialized in conceptualizing the CRM (e.g. Varadarajan & Menon, 1988; Webb & Mohr, 1998; Subrahmanyan, 2004), while the other stream of research examined how consumers respond to CRM such as; investigating consumers’ evaluation of CRM offers (e.g. Cui et al., 2003; Grau & Folse, 2007; Chéron et al., 2012; Galan Ladero et al., 2015), and consumers’ attitude towards sponsoring brands/firms (e.g. Webb & Mohr, 1998; Till & Nowak, 2000; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 2005; Lafferty, 2007; Groza et al., 2011; He et al., 2016; Patel et al., 2016).

Upon reviewing research of consumer responses, there was much emphasis shown by all on examining factors that determine how the CRM campaigns affect the consumer responses. The structure of CRM offers has been of great importance as it helps firms to differentiate themselves from others, enhance sponsor’s reputation and benefit the cause itself (Ellen et al., 2000). The current study contributes to the existing consumer behavior literature by exploring the main predictors of the consumer responses to the CRM initiatives. In addition, it highlights the importance of the context-related variables (e.g. campaign feedback in this study), that hasn’t been focused on before.

To investigate these issues, this paper as the first phase of multifaceted research, conducted an exploratory study in a form of unstructured interviews to develop a model of the factors shaping successful CRM campaigns. The later phase will empirically examine the main factors identified by the exploratory study and covered in the literature. The paper has been organized in the following way; first, the methodology of the study is explained followed by the exploratory study results. Second, the theoretical background and hypotheses development are presented. Finally, the conclusion and implications for theory and practice are discussed. The purpose of the study is to advance the consumer behavior literature by exploring the main variables shaping CRM campaigns that influence purchase intention and attitude toward the firm in the on-demand transportation services in Egypt. Specifically, this research aims to achieve the following objectives; (1) Understanding the relationship between CRM campaigns dimensions and consumers’ attitude towards firm, (2) Understanding the relationship between CRM campaigns dimensions and purchase intention, and (3) Testing the theory of reasoned action role in explaining the drivers of CRM and their impact on purchase intention.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Despite the importance of attitude formation in the consumer research and the different theories (e.g. the Theory of Planned Behavior and Theory of Reasoned Action), there is a lack on determining the variables influencing attitude towards CRM campaigns (Galan Ladero et al., 2015). Lots of variables have been previously examined in different research topics and have received some kind of empirical attention in exploring their role in CRM effectiveness. Researchers divided the variables based on four dimensions: cause-, company-, the campaign- and consumer-related dimensions (Hammad et al., 2014). Several variables have shown a great effect on attitude towards firms and reveal a positive impact on consumers’
purchase intention than others. Based on the results of the exploratory study (explained in the next section) and previous studies, a synthesis of the literature review is discussed and a number of hypotheses are developed.

2.1 Cause-Related Dimensions

These dimensions referred to the company features that considered by consumers in assessing the CRM initiatives (Hammad et al., 2014). This study addresses two main cause-related dimensions. The first dimension is caused by involvement. The notion of involvement was described as the idea of personal importance or relevance to an issue or product for individuals (Petty et al., 1983). Personal relevance is the level of the personal interest triggered by a stimulus in a certain situation (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010). Given these meanings, some scholars explained this construct to cause importance which refers to the support of a cause due to social norms or personal experience (Hou et al., 2008). Others, such as Lafferty (2007), referred to this construct as cause importance or cause involvement. The current study refers to this construct as cause involvement as it is wider in meaning than cause-importance. It was found that the effect of CRM initiatives on attitudes and purchase intention is more explained under conditions of high involved consumers with causes (Patel et al., 2016). Bergkvist and Zhou (2018) believe that consumer-cause fit, cause-importance and cause involvement are sharing a common theme in the CRM persuasion studies as they are related to consumers’ personal relevance.

The second one is the degree of the participation effort required from consumers that were conceptualized by Landreth (2002) as “The amount of effort required from the consumer to participate in the CRM program”. It was suggested by Cha et al. (2015) that customers’ participation effort in the CSR activities has many benefits including being a way for consumers to boost their self-esteem by decreasing the psychological gap between the brand and the consumers’ themselves. Moreover, Landreth (2002) noted that different CRM campaigns may require different levels of participation. It could be either by relying on sales promotions (i.e. rebates and coupons) which is known as active participation. Also, companies may just ask customers to make the purchase without requiring anything further from them and the company, in turn, donates to the cause based on the purchase, which is called passive participation.

Consumers’ active participation in CSR initiatives is deemed to be one of the critical kinds of support for CSR (Cha et al., 2015). They approve that purchasing a product or service is not enough for enhancing consumer awareness of firms’ CSR activities. Yoplait's Lids for Lives campaign is a good example applying active consumer participation, as consumers were asked to clean the lid of the product purchased and mail the lids back to the company before the company donates to the cause (Grau & Folse, 2007).

Previous studies such as Landreth (2002) and Hou et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between cause-related dimensions mentioned above and consumers’ attitudes and purchase intention. With regards to the results of the personal interviews and the focus group, participants show negative responses to the effort required from consumers in CRM campaigns. In accordance with the results of the interview, the hypothesis suggests a negative
relationship between customers’ participation effort and consumer responses. Consequently, the following hypotheses were developed:

**H1**: There is a positive relationship between cause involvement and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H1a), and purchase intention (H1b)

**H2**: There is a negative relationship between the degree of the participation effort required from consumers, and their attitude towards firms (H2a), and purchase intention (H2b)

### 2.2 Company-Related Dimensions

The second category is related to the company-related dimensions where the variables of concern are company-cause fit, corporate credibility, and altruistic attribution. *Company-cause fit* is one of the most essential factors that underpin CRM campaigns’ success which was studied extensively in the literature (Trimble & Rifon, 2006; Nan & Heo, 2007; Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2010; Chéron et al., 2012). Company-cause fit refers to the consumers’ perception of the extent to which the firm and the cause are compatible with each other (Roy, 2010). Terms like congruence, relevance, similarity, compatibility, and fit can be used interchangeably to refer to the pairing of the sponsor and the cause (Trimble & Rifon, 2006). Fit could be a function of two types of compatibility addressed in the majority of research in the literature; function and image (Chéron et al., 2012) in addition to other types of fit mentioned by few researchers such as; target market (Nan & Heo, 2007), positioning (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), individual characteristics and similar values (Christofi et al., 2015).

Further, previous studies (e.g Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Roy, 2010; Zdravkovic et al., 2010) agreed that high fit conditions positively affect consumers’ attitude towards firm relative to low fit conditions. Stream of research was conducted to support the effect of company-cause fit on consumers’ purchase intention (Landreth, 2002; Gupta & Pirsch, 2006; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Lafferty, 2007; Hou et al., 2008). The previously mentioned studies proved a significantly positive effect of company-cause fit on purchase intention. However, the results of Lafferty (2007) didn’t show a main effect in the association between company-cause fit and purchase intention.

The second dimension is the *corporate credibility* which is defined as how consumers and other stakeholders perceive the firms’ trustworthiness and expertise (Goldsmith et al. 2000). According to the conceptualization of corporate credibility, it makes sense that the more the firms are considered as experts in their industries, the more credible it could be perceived by consumers (Trimble & Rifon, 2006). In the context of CRM, brand credibility can be defined as “the extent to which a consumer perceives that the brand expresses sincerity and goodwill (trustworthiness) and has the skill and experience necessary (expertise) to associate to the specified social cause” (Bigné–Alcañiz et al., 2010). It was proven that corporate credibility is positively and directly related to attitude towards brands, ads and purchase intention (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lafferty et al., 2002).

The third dimension of the company-related dimensions is the *Altruistic attribution* that was found to be one of the most influential factors in CRM context. Attribution theory describes
how people justify the reasons for other people’s behavior (Ellen et al., 2000; Forehand & Grier, 2003), it also shows how attributions affect consumers’ attitude (Lee et al., 2009). So, the tendency of consumers to understand the firms’ motives in marketing communications can be explained using the attribution theory (Becker-olsen et al., 2006). Marketer motives affect consumers’ overall evaluation of firms (Webb & Mohr 1998), and how they respond (Ellen et al., 2000). Two main motives have received different labels in research: extrinsic versus intrinsic (Ellen et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2009; Roy, 2010), firm-serving versus public-serving (Foreh & Grier, 2003), profit-driven versus socially driven (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006).

Negative beliefs consumers hold about the firm’s motives for engaging in CRM programs may lead to unfavorable responses to those programs (Webb & Mohr, 1998; Ellen et al., 2000; Becker-olsen et al., 2006; Roy, 2010; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2018). Scholars have found a positive impact of public-serving motives on attitudes toward firms (e.g. Lee et al., 2009). Moreover, the perception of altruistic motives has a significant influence on consumers’ purchase intention (Becker-olsen et al., 2006; Hammad et al., 2014). The hypotheses are to be extended to the majority of results found in the literature and thus,

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between company-cause fit and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H3a), and purchase intention (H3b).

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between corporate credibility and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H4a), and purchase intention (H4b)

**H5:** There is a positive relationship between altruistic (public-serving) attribution and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H5a), and purchase intention (H5b).

### 2.3 Campaign-Related Dimensions

This set of dimensions includes all factors shaping CRM campaigns such as; initiative timing, campaign feedback, repetition, donation magnitude, and others. It was found that campaign feedback wasn’t extensively studied in the literature, however, all respondents in the exploratory study have clearly emphasized the great importance of this factor in the CRM campaigns’ success. Companies need to state the actual results of the campaign achievements such as; declaring how much money they have raised and how these funds are going to be spent (Webb & Mohr, 1998; Docherty & Hibbert, 2003). The importance of this dimension comes back to the concept of “perceived consumer effectiveness” (PCE) which refers to the extent to which the individuals feel their efforts make sense and affect their social behavior (Rice, 2006). Familiarizing consumers with CRM claims overcomes consumers’ skepticism towards CRM campaigns that resulted from the lack of awareness and knowledge of the CRM claims (Singh et al., 2009). Consequently, consumers with high levels of skepticism toward CRM tend to respond less favorably to CRM campaigns than consumers with lower levels of skepticism toward CRM (Webb & Mohr, 1998), and this will be explained in the consumer characteristics later on.

Previous research argued the problems regarding the doubt of a firm’s social disclosures. This doubt was justified by Ingram and Frazier (1980) for two main reasons, either due to the low
disclosure quality or the irrelevance of those disclosures to the user’s decisions model. The importance of this dimension comes back to the concept of “perceived consumer effectiveness” (PCE) which refers to the extent to which the individuals feel their efforts make sense and affect their social behavior (Rice, 2006). Also, it was suggested by Hammad et al. (2014) that when companies give consumers the credit for the success of helping others, this would enhance their social behavior toward CRM initiatives. In light of the above discussion and the exploratory study results, the following hypothesis was suggested,

H6: There is a positive relationship between campaign feedback and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H6a) and purchase intention (H6b).

2.4 Consumer-Related Dimensions

Finally, concerning the consumer-related dimensions, the socio-demographic characteristics of consumers (e.g. age, gender, education level…etc) should be considered in CRM due to their importance to marketers in understanding the best profile matches a certain brand, and their help in determining who will be more responsive to CRM efforts (Cui et al., 2003). Prosocial behavior research helps in understanding how the demographic variables may affect purchase decisions in CRM (Ross et al., 1992). With regards to the results of Kareem Kolkailah et al. (2012), it was noted that consumers with high educational levels consider the social responsibility role of firms in their purchasing behavior. In addition, Hammad et al. (2014) results showed a more favorable attitude toward firms and willingness to purchase by older people than younger ones. Kim and Johnson (2013) found that the tendency of young women to buy a socially conscious product is high. Much support has been found in previous research that females had more positive attitudes toward firms and causes than males (e.g. Ross et al., 1990-1991; Ross et al., 1992; Chéron et al., 2012).

In addition, Skepticism, as a personality characteristic was described as “It, reflects doubt about the truth of something” (Skarmeas et al., 2014). CRM as a kind of CSR is more likely to examine consumers’ skepticism due to the unrevealed motives for doing such practices (altruistic versus egoistic motives) (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2016). Sometimes, companies tend to use CSR programs to achieve organizational objectives (Ellen et al., 2006). The source of ambiguity and conflict motives here is due to the fact that the main purpose of any firm is to maximize profit, whereas participating in CRM initiatives should be triggered by the desire to support societies (Elving, 2010). The reason is that it is hard to link those conflicting motives to the mind of consumers.

Thus, the authors attributed the reasons for skepticism toward CRM to different reasons. First, skepticism is a result of the lack of consumers’ knowledge or awareness of the company’s CRM programs in addition to a lack of trust in those companies (Singh et al., 2009). Also, when consumers perceive the company motives for participating in CRM to be egoistic motives, skepticism arises (Elving, 2010). In addition, consumers’ uncertainty about the integrity of the CRM offers and donations may lead to skepticism (Webb & Mohr, 1998). To reduce consumer skepticism, it is highly recommended for companies to enhance their repetition and familiarity strategies for the purpose of achieving highly credible CRM campaigns (Singh et al., 2009). They added that effective CRM campaigns can be launched
by small and/or new companies applying repetition strategy as well. It is not necessarily to be large and reputable companies to launch effective CRM programs.

Mendini et al. (2018) found that consumers’ willingness to purchase increases as a result of high trust and low skepticism towards CRM activities. It was found that in case of high skeptical consumers toward the CRM initiatives and the motives of the sponsoring firm, consumers’ attitudes and purchase behavior towards those firms were affected negatively (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Elving, 2010; Mimouni Chaabane & Parguel, 2016). Thus, the study suggests the following hypotheses;

H7.1: There is a significant difference between age groups in predicting consumers’ attitude towards firms (H7.1a), and purchase intention (H7.1b)

H7.2: There is a significant difference between educational levels in predicting consumers’ attitude towards firms (H7.2a), and purchase intention (H7.2b)

H7.3: There is a significant difference between men and women in terms of attitude toward firms (H7.3a) and purchase intention (H7.3b)

H8: There is a negative relationship between consumers’ skepticism, and consumers’ attitude towards firms (H8a), and purchase intention (H8b)

Different theories have been used to explain the effects of CRM. The most widely used theories in the literature were attribution theory (Folkes, 1984), theories on prosocial behavior such as; social exchange theory and equity theory (Bagozzi, 1975; Walster et al., 1978), and theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Ajzen, 1991). Attribution theory used by Ellen et al. (2000) and Groza et al. (2011) to successfully predict the consumers’ inferences about the company motives from the aspects of the offer.

Theories on prosocial behavior (e.g. social exchange theory and equity theory) used by Ross et al. (1992) and Landreth (2002) to understand the reasons underlying the prosocial behavior of people. Theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior used by Myers et al. (2012) and Hadley (2016) to investigate the consumers’ purchase behavior. Theory of reasoned action predicts the consumer’s behavioral intention from their attitudes and subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Shaw & Shiu, 2003). The results of Kareem Kolkailah et al. (2012) show a significant positive correlation between consumers’ attitude towards socially responsible companies and their behavioral intentions. The study examines the different factors affecting the formation of the consumers’ attitude towards responsible firms and their purchase intention, and the relationship between attitude towards the firm and purchase intention. Consequently, the theory of reasoned action will best fit with the purpose of the current research. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

H9: There is a positive relationship between consumers’ attitude towards firms and their purchase intention

3. Research Methodology

The current study used a qualitative research methodology; in-depth interviews followed by a
focus group because it is the recommended methodology for such type of research approach (exploratory). The reason for using the interview as a research method was its ability to permit people to talk freely about topics and to collect detailed views from them (Creswell, 2013). With regards to the focus group, it allows open discussion and interaction between individuals to stir the most important issues for the related topic. The main objective of the exploratory study is to validate the research model and develop hypotheses. Thus, this study would help in adapting the research framework to the Egyptian context and determining the most essential dimensions that shape the effective CRM campaigns in Egypt.

The study employs thirteen in-depth interviews followed by one focus group (seven participants) with consumers using on-demand ride services. For interviews, the participants were selected with a relatively heterogeneous on the demographic characteristics of interest (age, gender, educational and income levels). Unstructured in-depth interview was chosen to fit with the nature of the study that tries to understand consumers’ thoughts and attitudes (Malhotra, 2008) that affect their purchase behavior in a CRM context. The in-depth interviews lasted between 20 to 30 minutes, while the focus group took about 50 minutes using a series of open-ended questions. The interview questions were adopted from previous studies and modified to fit the study objectives (see Appendix A). The number of those interviews and focus group were based on the theoretical sampling process, which means that the data collected, organized and analyzed until no new or relevant data could be uncovered (Seale, 1999).

3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The strategy used here was content analysis through three steps for analyzing data as follows:

1) Organizing and preparing data for analysis: which refers to transcribing and scanning interviews to choose the most relevant sentences to the research problem, these sentences are deemed as the unit of analysis and was arranged according to each participant.

2) Reading data: the chosen sentences were written down and what was analyzed only is the manifest content. Some words and sentences were extracted from interviews scripts and others were written by the researcher but have the same meaning of the participants’ sentences. However, analyzing latent content wasn’t a part of the study due to the researcher’s lack of experience in analyzing this type of content.

3) Analyzing data: Theme oriented analysis, which is a subjective one, was preferred here as it perfectly matches the nature of the research in understanding the consumers’ engagement in CRM initiatives and the structure of the related campaigns. The analysis was conducted through the following:

Open data coding: in which a codebook was developed that includes definitions of the research variables and other variables revealed in the interviews by the participants. A specific number was assigned to each variable. The numbers representing variables were given to the sentences documented before, and the repetition of the numbers was recorded to determine the most effective variable and the least ones. Then, all the interviews scripts were written in one column below each other, as each interview was written in a row and giving
each variable a column opposite to the interviews scripts. All sentences and words that refer to each coded variable were determined. Eventually, interpretations, results, and comments emerged from the data analysis were documented to determine whether they match or contradict the findings of the previous studies and if there are any new research questions raised.

3.2 Exploratory Study Results

For a better understanding of the successful CRM campaign structure that affects behavioral intentions of consumers, in-depth interviews and focuses group was conducted with participants using on-demand ride services in Egypt (e.g Uber & Careem). This exploratory work has resulted in some temporal assumptions which are supported by the literature, as it shows the effect of attitude towards sponsoring firms on their purchase intention which support the principles of theory of reasoned action (Ajezen & Fishbin 1980), and previous studies such as (Lafferty et al., 2002; Karem Kolkailah et al., 2012).

The results of the exploratory study show the great effect of attitude towards sponsoring firms on purchase intention which support the principles of the theory of reasoned action (Ajezen & Fishbin, 1980) and previous studies such as (Lafferty et al., 2002; Karem Kolkailah et al., 2012). It was noted that almost all respondents have greatly emphasized the major effect of campaigns’ feedback on their helping behavior “Companies should show me what has been done using the donations collected”, “I will trust the company promises only if it updates me with the campaign progress”. They believe that being informed and updated with the campaign’s achievement on a regular base and how well their donations help those worthwhile causes, would influence their attitude and purchase intention.

In addition, participants agreed that their involvement in the cause and how they feel the importance of those causes personally affects their attitudes toward the firms “Companies need to direct their efforts towards those who need health care and educational support”, “It is preferable to support any cause that helps in satisfying a personal needs such as feeding or sheltering needy people”. Moreover, the effect of consumer’s participation effort on the CRM campaigns effectiveness hasn’t received any approval from the participants in the exploratory study. They believe that increasing the degree of the participation effort required from consumers may lead to a negative impact on consumer responses.

There are conflicting views shown by participants on the impact of the company- cause fit on their supporting to those firms “the congruence between cause and company isn’t important, however ensuring that the donations are delivered to those who really need them is more important”. Almost half of the participants think that there is a positive impact and the other half consider no impact of fit on consumer responses to those initiatives. This inconsistency was reflected in the literature as well.

The majority of the interviewed consumers show the great importance of how altruistic attribution and credibility affects their responses (attitudinal and behavioral) in the CRM context. They show that companies with altruistic motives are more preferable for participants than others having egoistic motives. Two participants believe that since the
company is doing good, it doesn’t matter whether their motives are firm serving or public serving “Since any private company is working for profit, then it should have self-interest motives even if it is using CRM initiatives as a promotional strategy”. Also, companies that enjoy credibility at the societal level are more supported by participants who search for firms helping worthwhile causes.

Finally, participants have different views regarding the effect of socio-demographic factors. Some participants confirm that people with high income and educational levels are more concerned with CRM issues, however, others consider people with lower income and educational levels are more interested in those issues as they feel more involved and closer to those needy people “I think people having low income are more willing to participate in those initiatives than others with high-income levels as they will feel how those needy people suffer”.

With regard to the age, participants suppose that the youth are more inclined to those firms than the elder. Nevertheless, they all agreed that women are more involved in those initiatives than men due to their emotional nature. With regards to the personality characteristics, Egyptians are found to be highly skeptical “I am skeptical from philanthropy initiatives done by organizations”. They don’t trust donation promises done by companies unless it is supported by actual evidence, this confirms with the CSR literature as well (Ellen et al., 2006; Karem Kolkailah et al., 2012).

4. Conclusions and Implications for Theory and Practice

The aim of this study is to shed the lights on the main factors found in the literature and approved by the exploratory findings to be relevant to Egyptians’ purchase behavior from the firms partnering with virtuous causes. To be specific, those variables are; cause involvement, degree of participation effort required from consumers, company-cause fit, corporate credibility, altruistic attribution, campaign feedback, socio-demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age, and educational level) and consumers’ skepticism, affecting consumer’s attitude toward the firm and purchase intention. To the best of our knowledge, there is a little work on investigating the attitude towards firms and how it affects the purchase intention especially in the service industries such as on-demand ride services.

The current study has some managerial implications for marketers in Egypt. As it was obviously shown that Egyptians are highly skeptical, policymakers should consider all the factors that reduce consumers’ skepticism and enhance their trust in socially responsible firms. Also, campaign feedback has shown a considerable impact on how people respond to CRM initiatives. This means that companies, that intended to use this kind of marketing, should inform their customers with the campaign updates on a regular base. People need to know how their monies (donations) have been used and whether it reached who deserve it as promised by the company or not. Thus, companies can depend on different ways of visual advertising such as; TV ads, social media, and billboards to show consumers the real campaign achievements every now and then without overstating the reality.

Also, it is recommended that companies may give consumers the chance to participate in
deciding which cause needs to support the most. This may reflect the responsiveness of the firm to the consumers’ desires and strengthen the company relationship with customers. Marketers also shouldn’t pass over the role of the perceived corporate motives that affect how consumers view the company intentions. Definitely, any company is seeking self-interests; however, consumers need to feel how companies are concerned with social benefits as well. Thus, it is recommended for socially responsible firms to show that in all CSR practices not only CRM initiatives. When those companies show respect for their employees, protect the environment, having ethical and legal responsibilities, this would enhance consumers’ attitude and perception about the company altruistic attribution which in turn provide more favorable responses towards CRM. Finally, decision-makers should focus on the important social causes that will help the society the most such as; health and education causes, as this issue was of great concern for consumers.

With regards to the public policy implications, the government can have a vital role in supporting socially responsible companies by praising them for their real social efforts on public media and journals. This will directly boost those companies reputation and enhance trust in such companies. Also, it helps in reducing consumers’ skepticism towards the implementation of the promised charitable plans done by companies. Also, the ministry of social solidarity, ministry of education and media should build awareness on how consumers’ support to CSR practices is essential for community development and welfare.

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**Appendix A**

**Interview guide**

- Introduction about the research.
- How do you perceive the campaigns combining donations with product purchase?
Among the campaigns applied in Egypt, do you recall anyone?

What are the factors that motivate you to involve in such campaigns (e.g. company-related variables, cause-related variables…)?

Have you ever bought a product/service engaging in such campaigns?

From your experience, how can we improve the campaign’s effectiveness?

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