Review

A Systematic Review of Experimental Studies Investigating the Effect of Cause-Related Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention

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Abstract: Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a globally popular marketing technique due to its value to multiple stakeholders such as the companies, the consumers, the non-profit organizations, and the society. The key to successful CRM is the consumer purchasing the cause-related product, and experimental methodology was adopted mostly during this process. Therefore, this paper systematically reviewed the CRM literature that measured consumers' purchase intentions using the experimental methodology. A systematic literature research was undertaken examining five databases and 68 qualified articles were identified. The results showed that CRM in most qualified studies is manipulated as a tactical marketing program and the products are mainly low-cost and low involvement. Moreover, the CRM is more effective than the ordinary marketing or sales promotion strategy, such as discount and coupons. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of the CRM program (e.g., donation amount, cause type, message framing) have shown positive outcomes but mixed effects are persistent. Recommendations for implementing CRM programs and for future research were discussed.

Keywords: cause-related marketing; purchase intention; systematic review; determinants; effects

1. Introduction

Both corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate citizenship theories require the company not only to achieve economic goals but also to contribute to the sustainable development of society [1,2]. Further, consumers in the 21st century are increasingly aware of socially responsibility, have higher CSR expectation and hope to participate in CSR activities [3]. In this context, it is critical for the companies to attract socially responsible consumers and meet their needs while keeping their business profitable and sustainable.

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a marketing approach that has been proven to be capable of benefitting the company, the consumers, and the society simultaneously. It refers to the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities in which one firm commits to donate a specific amount to a non-profit organization (NPO) or social cause when customers purchase their products [4]. CRM provides multiple benefits to the company, the consumers, NPOs, and society. Benefits for the company include positioning the company and branding differentially [5], increasing sales and market share [6], establishing long-term customer relationships (e.g., customer satisfaction, loyalty and repurchase) [7], and enhancing image and reputation [8,9]. Consumers fulfil their needs not only for product/service but also for goodwill and prestige [10]. NPOs receive more funding, thus helping more people, more often [11]. Causes are also improved or developed [12]. Therefore, the CRM strategy has

been widely adopted by companies all over the world. According to the IEG (Innovation Excellence Growth) Sponsorship Spending Report (2019) [13], CRM generated sponsorship has increased from USD 630 million [14] to USD 2.23 billion in the last two decades [13].

The key to successful CRM is the consumer purchasing the cause-related product, which is the prerequisite for corporate donation to the cause [15,16]. Therefore, over the past decades, managers and scholars paid much attention to how to elicit consumer positive reaction to CRM. Companies have operationalized CRM's formulation and communication in diversified ways. For example, CRM initiatives could take different forms of donation frame (product, USD 1 per sale, 5% of price) [17], cause category (educational, environmental, health, etc.) [18], and brand dominance disparity (cause-focused, product-focused) [19]. Research developed understanding of the mechanism of consumer reaction to CRM, including what factors and how would they influence consumer perception and behavioral intention [20]. Hassan and AbouAish (2018) [21] classified tactical and strategic CRM according to four CRM dimensions: duration, cause–brand fit, invested resources and top management involvement.

Academic research on CRM has begun to grow since early 2000 and the research questions also deepen gradually. In 2006, Gupta and Pirsh [22] reviewed the available CRM literature and summarized its definition, benefits and potential risks. Since then, more and more articles have explored how CRM works from all the perspectives of firm, consumers and NPOs. In the last 10 years, there were three review articles about CRM [20,23,24]. They focused on the cause used, the interactive process (e.g., response, feedback) among the three stakeholders and the theoretical foundations separately. The results showed that numerous articles explored consumer response such as attributed motives, attitude, and purchase intention (PI), and experimental methodology was adopted mostly during this process [23]. Despite the ample research on the topic of CRM and the existence of the three review articles, to date evidence about CRM influencing consumer purchase intention has not been synthesized. This article responds to this gap and seeks to contribute to the literature by synthesizing the determinants of what factors can impact the effect of CRM on the experimental CRM studies, which are the most common research method in this field and represent the highest level of evidence generated [25] but lack systematic scrutiny in the field.

Therefore, this paper systematically reviewed the CRM literature that measured consumers' PI using the experimental methodology. The systematic literature review is an available tool to identify the relevant research and assess their quality. This paper has two aims: first, to draw a compressive picture of what current CRM practices are and their effectiveness; second, to investigate the determinants of consumers' PI to CRM-related products. On these bases, this paper provides guidance for companies to develop effective CRM programs so as to promote the sustainable development of business and society.

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses the systematic review methodology, which allows researchers to establish the current state of knowledge within a discipline and to identify any potential theoretical gaps and avenues for future research by identifying, evaluating and interpreting all available articles relevant to a particular research question, or topic area or phenomenon of interest [26]. Despite the fact that this methodology was created to review and synthesize studies in the health care domain, it is becoming more and more common in the business and management domain (see for instance [27] on green marketing, and [28] on trade show marketing). The principal concern of a systematic review is to summarize primary empirical evidence on a particular topic area using an unbiased and objective review procedure [29]. In the following sections, the searching process, the article selection criteria, and the data extraction are described in detail.

Following the systematic literature review procedure [30], five databases were searched, namely EBSCO (Elton B. Stephens. Company, Scholarly Journals), Emerald, Ovid, ProQuest (All databases), Web of Science, using the following terms:

*cause-related marketing * or cause-brand alliance * or charity-linked brand * or product charity bundle * AND experiment * or trial * or study * or questionnaire * or survey **

The selected databases were chosen based on their significant relevance to business and marketing disciplines. The use of * allows for singular or plural word forms to be identified. A total of 1053 were retrieved from 5 databases. Records gathered from databases may vary due to different specializations of different databases and their relation to the search terms. See Table 1 for more details.

Table 1. Databases and articles retrieved in initial search.

Database	Number of Articles Retrieved
EBSCO (Scholarly Journals)	292
Emerald	0
Ovid	144
ProQuest (All databases)	372
Web of Science	245
Total	1053

All downloaded records were collated using Endnote 8.0. As multiple databases may include the same journals, duplicate records had to be removed, reducing the number of unique articles to 525. Next, unqualified records including conference papers, dissertations and book sections were removed. Titles and abstracts were then reviewed and irrelevant articles (not mentioning CRM) were excluded, which reduced the number to 364. Records related to CRM, not in English, reviews and conceptual papers, case studies, qualitative studies using interview and quantitative research using questionnaire or survey were excluded, leaving 130 experimental studies. The studies varied widely in the measurement of how consumers react to the CRM campaign, including consumer perception [31], attitude [32], willingness to pay [33], PI and others. The qualified articles are those that measured PI, which is the immediate determinant of buying behavior [34]. So, the experimental studies not measuring PI were also excluded. A total of 68 qualified articles remained following the exclusion criteria. The review process is summarized in Figure 1.

The following data were extracted and analyzed from the included papers:

1. Study characteristics, including experiment locations, theory used, sample size, etc.
2. Experiment conditions, including product types, whether the company/brand is fictitious, the social causes, and the donation size.
3. Experimental variables, including all kinds of independent variables (the determinants of PI, such as brand awareness, company motivation, message framing, etc.), dependent variables (other than PI), any moderators/mediators (if any), as well as the effects on PI.

All data were extracted from the include studies by the lead author and a random 10% of the papers were again extracted by the second author. The final data were then compared and cross-checked to ensure reliability. Discrepancies were minor and were resolved by discussing with the third author.
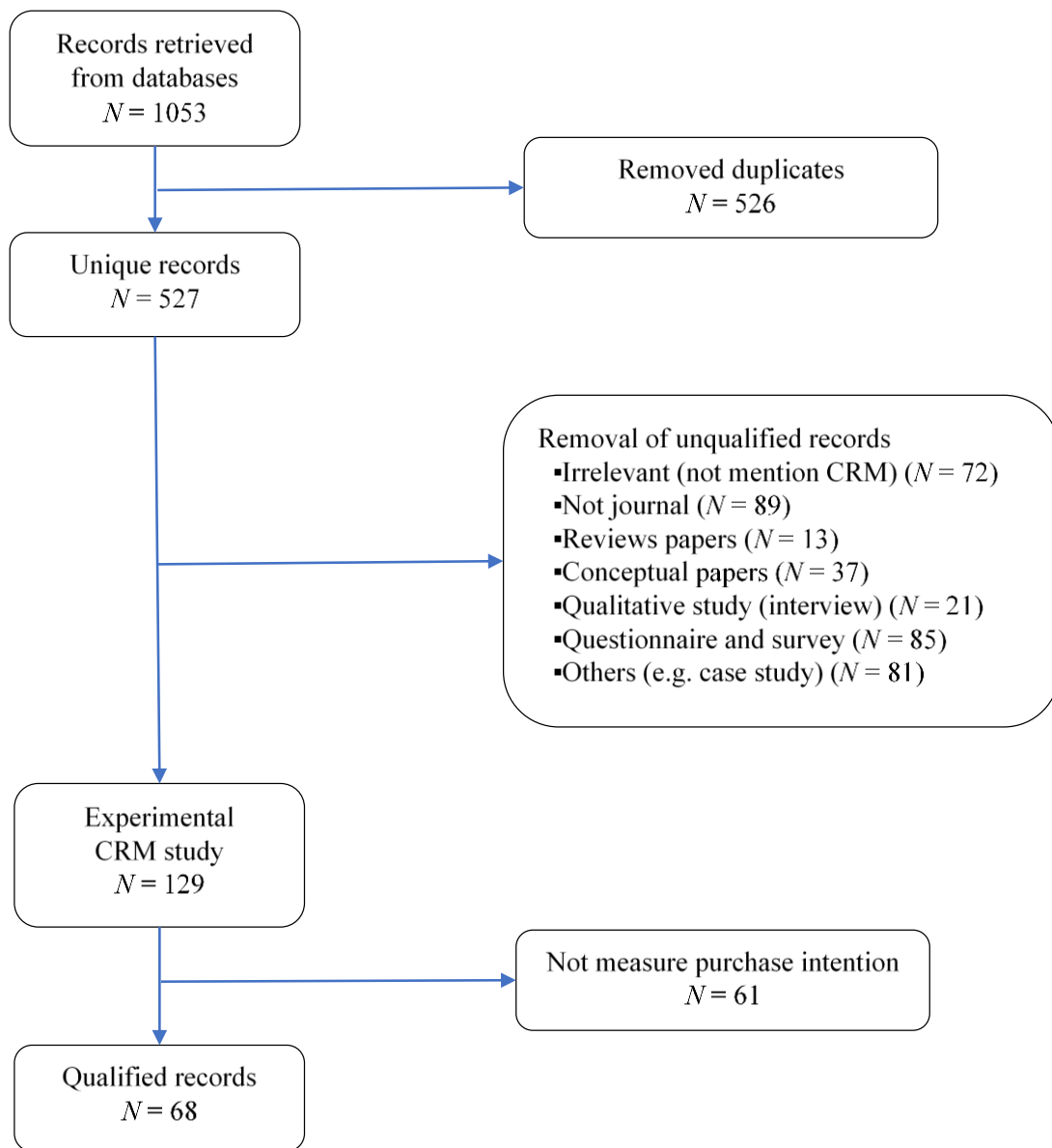
Figure 1. Flowchart of the literature exclusion process.

3. Results

3.1. Study Characteristics

There was a total of 68 qualified articles that researched CRM with experiment and measured consumer PI as the dependent variable. The number of experiments in each article was diverse. Half of the qualified papers conducted one experiment ($n = 35$), while others conducted more than one experiment (up to five). It is worth noting that the multiple-experiment articles did not necessarily measure PI for every experiment. For example, Chen (2016) [35] conducted five studies but only measured PI in the fifth study. In these cases, we only show the study that measured PI. Therefore, there are 102 experiments in total (see Table 2).

Table 2. Study characteristics of the final qualified papers.

No.	Lead Author, Year	Location	Theory(s) Used	Product Type(s)	Company	Cause Type(s)	Donation Type/Size
1	Aghakhani, 2019 (S1) [36]	Canada	N/A	Orange juice	Fictitious	Humanitarian aid, health	USD 0.5 per sale
1	Aghakhani, 2019 (S2) [36]	Canada	Attribution	Orange juice	Fictitious	Humanitarian aid, health	5% of sales
2	Arora, 2007 (S1) [37]	USA	Utility theory	Bottled water	True, fictitious	N/A	USD 0.15, 0.30, 0.45 per sale
2	Arora, 2007 (S2) [37]	USA	N/A	Bottled water	True, fictitious	N/A	USD 0.15 per sale
3	Bae, 2016 [38]	USA	ELM, perceptual fluency theory	Shampoo	Fictitious	Environmental	USD 1 per sale
4	Baghi, 2017 (S1) [39]	Italy	Rational choice, information integration theory	Sunglasses, printer, massage coupon, train transit pass	N/A	Health	5% of price
4	Baghi, 2017 (S2) [39]	Italy	Perceptual fluency, associative theory	Dental check-up, paper napkins, massage coupon, ice cream	N/A	Health, food/nutrition, Humanitarian aid	5% of price
5	Baghi, 2013a [40]	Italy	Signaling theory	Pen	True	Educational	5% of sales
6	Baghi, 2013b [41]	Italy	Signaling theory	Doll	True	Humanitarian aid	5% of sales
7	Baghi, 2018 (S1) [19]	Italy	Signaling theory	Mug, notebook	True	Humanitarian aid	5% of sales
7	Baghi, 2018 (S2) [19]	Italy	Signaling theory	Chocolate	True	Humanitarian aid	5% of sales
8	Barone, 2000 (S1a) [42]	USA	PKM	Television	Fictitious	N/A	N/A
8	Barone, 2000 (S1b) [42]	USA	PKM	Television	Fictitious	N/A	N/A
8	Barone, 2000 (S2a) [42]	USA	Utility theory	PC	Fictitious	N/A	N/A
8	Barone, 2000 (S2b) [42]	USA	Expectancy value model	PC	Fictitious	N/A	N/A
9	Barone, 2007 (S2) [43]	USA	Consistency theory	Pet supply, drugstore	Fictitious	Health	N/A
9	Barone, 2007 (S3) [43]	USA	Information integration	Pharmaceutical products	Fictitious	Animal, health	N/A
10	Bester, 2012 [44]	South Africa	ELM	Fish fingers	True	Food/nutrition	Product
11	Boenigk, 2013 [45]	Germany	Attribution theory	Lodging	True	Food/nutrition	1%, 25% of price
12	Chang, 2011 [46]	Taiwan, China	ELM	Shampoo, toilet paper, compact disc, movie ticket, bottled water, yoghurt	Fictitious	Food/nutrition	5%, 25% of price
13	Chang, 2012 (S1) [31]	Taiwan, China	Cognitive dissonance, affect theory	Shampoo, toilet paper, ice cream, movie ticket	Fictitious	Educational	10% of price
13	Chang, 2012 (S2) [31]	Taiwan, China	Consistency theory	Smartphone	Fictitious	Health	5% of price

Table 2. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Location	Theory(s) Used	Product Type(s)	Company	Cause Type(s)	Donation Type/Size
14	Chang, 2008 [47]	Taiwan, China	ELM	Shampoo, toilet paper, printer, e-dictionary, compact disc, movie ticket, stereo system, DVD player	Fictitious	N/A	5%, 25% of price
15	Chang, 2018 (S1) [48]	Taiwan, China	Accessibility-diagnosticity framework	MP3	Fictitious	Health	5% of price
15	Chang, 2018 (S2) [48]	Taiwan, China	N/A	Granola bar	Fictitious	Food/nutrition, educational	5% of price
16	Chen, 2014 [49]	China	Information integration theory	Dry batteries	Fictitious	Environmental, educational	1%, 5% of profits
17	Chen, 2016 (S5) [35]	China	N/A	Sunglasses, baby food and care, bank, tea	True	Educational	5% of sales
18	Choi, 2017 [50]	USA	Signaling, cognitive dissonance theory	Mug	N/A	Humanitarian aid	5% of profits
19	Choi, 2019 [51]	USA	Attribution, associative theory	Fast food	True	Humanitarian aid, health	N/A
20	Cui, 2003 [52]	USA	Attribution theory	Grocery	Fictitious	Humanitarian aid, health	5% of sales
21	Das, 2016 (S1) [53]	USA	Consistency theory	Coffee, toothpaste	Fictitious	Health, food/nutrition	USD 0.60 per sale, a portion of price
21	Das, 2016 (S2) [53]	USA	Cognitive bias theory	Cookies	Fictitious	Food/nutrition	USD 1 per sale, a portion of price
22	Elving, 2013 [54]	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Attribution, legitimacy, associative, consistency theory	Toilet paper	Fictitious	Sanitation, food/nutrition	USD 0.30 per sale
23	Folse, 2014 (S1) [55]	USA	PKM	Frozen pizza	True	Educational	USD 10, product
23	Folse, 2014 (S2) [55]	USA	Distributive justice theory	Frozen pizza, notebook	Fictitious	Educational	USD 10, product
24	Folse, 2010 (S1) [56]	USA	Attribution theory	Shampoo	True	Health	USD 0.05, 0.2, 0.8, 3.2 per sale
24	Folse, 2010 (S2) [56]	USA	PKM	Shampoo	True	Health	USD 0.75, 2.25, 6.75 per sale
24	Folse, 2010 (S3) [56]	USA	Social exchange theory	Shampoo	True	Health	USD 1, 4 per sale
25	Grau, 2007 (S1) [57]	USA	Signaling theory	Lotion	Fictitious	Health	N/A
25	Grau, 2007 (S2) [57]	USA	Attribution, frame theory	Calcium supplements	True	Health	USD 0.50 per sale
26	Hagtvedt, 2016 (S2) [58]	USA	N/A	Watch	True	Food/nutrition, educational, health	N/A
26	Hagtvedt, 2016 (S3) [58]	USA	N/A	Jeans	Fictitious	Food/nutrition	N/A

Table 2. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Location	Theory(s) Used	Product Type(s)	Company	Cause Type(s)	Donation Type/Size
27	Hajjat, 2003 [59]	Oman	ELM	Fruit drink	Fictitious	Humanitarian aid	0.1%, 5% of sales
28	Hamby, 2016 (S2a) [60]	USA	CLT	Toothpaste, ice cream	Fictitious	Educational	Product, equal cash per sale
28	Hamby, 2016 (S2b) [60]	USA	CLT	Socks, sunglasses	Fictitious	Humanitarian aid	USD 12.99 per sale
28	Hamby, 2016 (S3) [60]	USA	CLT	Shoes	True	N/A	Product, equal cash per sale
29	Hamlin, 2004 [61]	New Zealand	N/A	Milk	True	Health, animal	USD 0.05 per sale
30	He, 2016 (S1) [62]	UK	Social cognitive theory	Shower gel	True	Food/nutrition, sanitation, educational, environmental	2% of price/sales
30	He, 2016 (S2) [62]	UK	Social cognitive theory	Shower gel, bottled water	True	Food/nutrition, sanitation, educational, environmental	2% of price/sales
31	Howie, 2018 (S1) [63]	USA	Cognitive dissonance theory	Hair care	True	Environmental	N/A
31	Howie, 2018 (S2) [63]	USA	Neutralization theory	Hair care	True	Environmental	N/A
32	Huang, 2018 (S1) [64]	USA	Social exchange theory	Credit card	N/A	Environmental	0.5%, 1%, 1.5% of sales/profits
32	Huang, 2018 (S2) [64]	USA	Symbolic interaction theory	Credit card	N/A	Environmental	1% of sales/profits
33	Human, 2012 [65]	South Africa	Social exchange, equity theory	Glue stick	True	Educational	USD 0.2, 1 per sale
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S1) [66]	Australia	Attribution theory	Speakers	True	Cultural	USD 5 per sale
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S2) [66]	Australia	Associative theory	Shoes	True	Health	USD 5 per sale
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S3) [66]	Australia	Value theory	Shoes	True	Health	USD 5 per sale
35	Kerr, 2013 [67]	USA	Consistency theory	Chocolate	Fictitious	Food/nutrition, health, animal	USD 3 per sale, a portion of price
36	Kim, 2016 [32]	USA	Self-categorization theory	Restaurant	Fictitious	Food/nutrition, health	N/A
37	Kleber, 2016 (S1) [68]	Austria	N/A	Concert ticket, caviar, watch, notebook, transportation ticket, stove, refrigerator, game console	N/A	N/A	15% of price
37	Kleber, 2016 (S2) [68]	Austria	N/A	Thermos, lamp, washing machine, refrigerator	N/A	Humanitarian aid	7% of price
38	Koschate-Fischer, 2016 (S4) [69]	Germany	Temporal contiguity principle	Bottled water	True	Health	USD 0.05, 0.25, 0.40 per sale
39	Kull, 2016 (S3) [70]	USA	Cognitive dissonance theory	Lodging	True	N/A	A portion of price
40	Kuo, 2015 (S1) [71]	USA	Perceptual fluency theory	Lemonade	True	Health	5% of sales
40	Kuo, 2015 (S2) [71]	USA	Perceptual fluency theory	Lemonade	True	Health	N/A

Table 2. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Location	Theory(s) Used	Product Type(s)	Company	Cause Type(s)	Donation Type/Size
40	Kuo, 2015 (S3) [71]	USA	Perceptual fluency theory	Lemonade	True	Health, food/nutrition	N/A
41	Lafferty, 2007 [72]	USA	Consistency theory	Shampoo	Fictitious	Animal	N/A
42	Lafferty, 2009 (S1) [73]	USA	Social identity theory	Shampoo	True	Health, animal	N/A
42	Lafferty, 2009 (S2) [73]	USA	Consistency theory	Shampoo	True	Animal	N/A
43	Lafferty, 2014 [18]	USA	Self-categorization theory	Cereal	True	Environmental, health, animal, humanitarian aid	Donation per sale until USD 250,000
44	Lee, 2013 [74]	USA	Consistency, social identity theory	T-Shirt	Fictitious	Educational, health	USD 1 per sale
45	Lii, 2011 [75]	Taiwan, China	Social identity theory, SOR	Shoes	True	Humanitarian aid	USD 10 per sale
46	Lii, 2012 [76]	Taiwan, China	Social identity, SOR social exchange	Smartphone	True	Humanitarian aid	USD 16 per sale
47	Lii, 2013 [77]	Taiwan, China	Social exchange, affect theory, CLT	Watch	True	Health	USD 10 per sale
48	Manuel, 2014 [78]	USA	ELM, functional attitude theory	Bottled water	Fictitious	Environmental	USD 0.10 per sale
49	Melero, 2016 [79]	Spain	N/A	Milk, printer, chocolate, MP3	True	Environmental, food/nutrition	3% of price
50	Mendini, 2018 (S4) [80]	USA	Attribution theory, ELM, RFT	Audio	True	Educational, humanitarian aid	x% of price
51	Minton, 2016 (S2) [81]	USA	Cueing theory	Cookies	N/A	Health, environmental	A portion of sales
51	Minton, 2016 (S3) [81]	USA	Spreading activation theory	Cookies	N/A	Health, food/nutrition	A portion of sales
52	Mizerski, 2001 [82]	Australia	ELM, TPB	Alcohol	N/A	Health, educational,	A portion of price
53	Nelson, 2017 [83]	USA	Weak theory	Sunblock	True	Health	USD 0.10 per sale
54	Olsen, 2003 (S4) [84]	Canada	N/A	Printer	Fictitious	N/A	1%, 10% of price/profits
55	Robinson, 2012 (S1b) [85]	USA	N/A	Calculator	Fictitious	Health, educational	5% of sales
55	Robinson, 2012 (S2) [85]	USA	N/A	Calculator	Fictitious	Health, educational	5% of sales
55	Robinson, 2012 (S3) [85]	USA	N/A	Notebook	Fictitious	Environmental, educational	5% of sales
55	Robinson, 2012 (S4) [85]	USA	N/A	Shampoo	Fictitious	Environmental, educational	5% of sales
56	Sabri, 2018 [86]	France	Negativity effect theory	Water filter pitchers, coffeemaker	Fictitious	Food/nutrition	USD 0.30, USD 6.75 per sale
57	Samu, 2009 (S2) [87]	India	Information integration theory	Baby food and care	True	N/A	10% of price

Table 2. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Location	Theory(s) Used	Product Type(s)	Company	Cause Type(s)	Donation Type/Size
58	Schindler, 2017 [88]	Germany	Attribution theory	Smartphone	True	Health	USD 23 per sale
59	Sony, 2015 [89]	Thailand	N/A	Printer paper	Fictitious	Environmental	N/A
60	Tangari, 2010 (S1) [90]	USA	CLT	Nutritional supplement	True	Health	50% of price
60	Tangari, 2010 (S2) [90]	USA	Protection motivation theory	Nutritional supplement	N/A	Health	N/A
61	Tucker, 2012 [91]	USA	ELM	Toilet paper	True	Environmental	USD 0.05 per sale
62	Vaidyanathan, 2013 [92]	Poland	Consistency theory	Lotion	Fictitious	Environmental	USD 0.65, 1.30 per sale
63	Van Quaquebeke, 2017 [93]	Germany	N/A	Bottled water, parcel service	Fictitious	N/A	USD 0.05 per sale
64	Vilela, 2016 (S1) [94]	USA	Gender schema theory	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
64	Vilela, 2016 (S2) [94]	USA	Gender schema theory	Cereal	True	Educational	USD 0.10 per sale
65	Wiebe, 2017 [95]	Canada	CLT	Grocery	N/A	Educational, health	USD 5 per sale
66	Yoo, 2018 (S1) [96]	Korea	CLT	Bottled water	Fictitious	Educational, health	5%, 40% of price
66	Yoo, 2018 (S2) [96]	Korea	CLT	Coffee	Fictitious	Educational, health	5%, 40% of price
67	Youn, 2018 [16]	USA	CLT	Printer, yoghurt	Fictitious	Environmental	A portion of sales
68	Zhang, 2019 [97]	USA	Self-presentation, power theory	Restaurant	N/A	Educational, health	N/A

Notes: ELM: Elaboration Likelihood Model; SOR: Stimulus–Organism–Response; TPB: Theory of Planned Behavior; CLT: Construal Level Theory; RFT: Regulatory Focus Theory; PKM: Persuasion knowledge model.

Among the 68 qualified papers, nearly half of the studies were conducted in the USA ($n = 33$), followed by China ($n = 9$), Italy ($n = 4$), Germany ($n = 4$), Canada ($n = 3$), Australia ($n = 2$), South Africa ($n = 2$), and one in UK, Spain, France, Austria, Netherland, New Zealand, South Korea, India, Thailand, Poland and Oman. Overall, most studies were conducted in developed countries ($n = 55$) and China is the developing country that most interested in CRM research.

Among the 102 experiments/studies, these studies were based on 41 theories from the fields of psychology, sociology, advertising, economics, management, etc. The most used theory was attribution theory ($n = 10$), followed by elaboration likelihood model (ELM) ($n = 9$), consistency theory ($n = 9$), social exchange theory ($n = 5$), signaling theory ($n = 5$), information integration theory ($n = 4$), associative theory ($n = 4$), cognitive dissonance theory ($n = 4$), social identity theory ($n = 4$), perceptual fluency theory ($n = 3$), and the persuasion knowledge model (PKM) ($n = 3$). It is also noteworthy that popular behavioral explanatory theories such as social cognitive theory and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) only appeared once. The most used theory was attribution theory ($n = 10$), which specifies how the social perceiver used information to arrive at causal explanations for events [98]. The second most used theory was ELM and consistency theory, which were both adopted in nine studies. The ELM of persuasion is a dual process theory describing the change of attitude [99]. The consistency theory, which was also named congruency theory [31,72], includes the cue consistency [43,53,67], cognitive consistency [73], and commitment-consistency principle [92].

Overall, the product used in the experiments was diverse. In particular, most studies used the specific product(s) (e.g., chocolate or shampoo) ($n = 50$), a few studies adopted a product category (e.g., groceries) ($n = 11$) or service (e.g., parcel service) ($n = 7$). More specifically, the most used product was shampoo ($n = 8$), followed by bottled water ($n = 7$), toilet paper ($n = 5$), printers ($n = 5$). Other products such as notebooks ($n = 4$), ice cream ($n = 3$), and chocolate ($n = 3$) were also used in the included studies. It is noteworthy that most of the chosen products are low-cost, low involvement products, with only a few exceptions (e.g., smartphones ($n = 3$) and refrigerators ($n = 2$). The broad product categories included baby food and care ($n = 2$), groceries ($n = 2$), pet supplies ($n = 1$), banking ($n = 1$), drug stores ($n = 1$), nutrition supplements ($n = 1$), restaurants ($n = 1$), fast food ($n = 1$), pharmaceutical products ($n = 1$). The service types include lodging ($n = 2$), dental check-ups ($n = 1$), credit cards ($n = 1$), parcel services ($n = 1$) and massage coupons ($n = 1$).

The social cause was also diverse including health ($n = 30$), educational ($n = 18$), food/nutrition ($n = 15$), environmental ($n = 14$), humanitarian aid ($n = 14$), animal ($n = 6$), sanitation ($n = 2$) and cultural ($n = 1$). The health-related cause mainly referred to the medical research of many diseases, such as breast cancer, skin cancer. The humanitarian aid category referred to providing help to those affected by traffic accidents, the victims of disasters, and orphaned children around the world. The congruency between the products and the social cause was high. For example, the company combining the sales of notebook with a children educational program, or the water company donating to the environmental cause.

The number of studies that used a true company ($n = 29$) as experimental stimuli was slightly more than that of those using a fictitious company ($n = 26$). There are five studies that used both a true and fictitious company so as to increase the experimental validity. Moreover, eight studies did not indicate the company or brand information. About the donation, most studies used monetary donation ($n = 60$) and only three studies used nonmonetary donation (i.e., product). Furthermore, there are five studies which did not detail the donation size or type, and just said "make a donation". The monetary donation includes donating a specific amount of cash for per sale ($n = 28$) and donating a portion of the price ($n = 18$), sales ($n = 13$) or profits ($n = 4$). Both the donation sizes of cash and percentage were diverse, ranging from USD 0.05 to USD 23 and 0.1% to 50%, respectively. Overall, the most used donation size was 5% of sales ($n = 8$), followed by 5% of price ($n = 6$), USD 0.05/per sale ($n = 5$), USD 1/per sale ($n = 5$). Few donation sizes were larger than those.

3.2. Determinants and Effects on PI

The sample of 68 papers included 102 studies that presented a variety of independent variables that may affect PI. Overall, forty-seven percent of studies (*n* = 48) found positive effects of different variables on PI, while fifty-three percent of studies (*n* = 54) found mixed, negative or not significant effects.

One of the main independent variables evaluated is the presence or absence of CRM. Five studies showed positive effects of the presence of CRM [37,39,45,81] and only two studies found mixed and not significant effects, showing strong evidence of the effect of CRM on PI. Additionally, donation related variables that may affect PI were evaluated. Eleven studies assessed the effect of the donation amount, finding positive results in three cases [56,84], mixed results in five cases and negative in one case. Similarly, seven studies examined donation type (cash or product) finding positive results in two cases [55] while five found mixed, negative or not significant effects. Likewise, four studies evaluated donation framing (percentage of price or portion of total sales) and only one found positive effects on PI [84].

Another important independent variable in the sample is fit or congruency, which refers to the relation between the company and the cause (or other variables). As Elving (2013) [54] explains, "a company might choose a CSR domain that is directly related to it—which is referred to as 'fit'—or one that is unrelated to it (p. 278)". There were three main types of fit found in the sample studies: company–cause fit [53], product–cause fit [53] and brand–cause fit [87]. Company–cause fit yielded positive outcome in three, yet mixed results in another three studies. Similarly, three studies that evaluated product–cause fit found positive results while five studies found mixed or not significant effects. Additionally, two brand–cause fit evaluations yielded positive effects while two studies were not significant.

On the other hand, the effect of the type of product and type of cause on PI was evaluated. The priority of hedonic product over utilitarian product on PI was found in one study [47], while opposite results were found in two studies and mixed effects in three studies. Similarly, the type of cause had positive effects on PI in only one study [52], while not significant effects were found in two studies. Finally, having the choice of cause to contribute to and the effect on PI was also assessed [85]. Only one study found positive results while the rest found mixed effects [70]. Further independent variable effects on PI were evaluated, and can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Effects of cause-related marketing factor(s).

No.	Lead Author, Year	Independent Variable(s)	Moderator(s)	Mediator(s)	Effect(s) on PI
1	Aghakhani, 2019 (S1) [36]	Termination of CRM	Fit (brand–cause)	N/A	Negative
1	Aghakhani, 2019 (S2) [36]	Termination of CRM decision motivation, decision source	Decision motivation, decision source	N/A	Mixed, mixed
2	Arora, 2007 (S1) [37]	Presence of CRM	N/A	N/A	Positive
2	Arora, 2007 (S2) [37]	Presence of CRM	Consumer participation effort, promotion payoff destination, brand awareness	N/A	Positive
3	Bae, 2016 [38]	CRM ad appeal	Cause involvement	Visual fixation duration, company credibility, attitude toward CRMP	Positive
4	Baghi, 2017 (S1) [39]	Presence of CRM	N/A	Guilt	Positive
4	Baghi, 2017 (S2) [39]	Product type, fit (product–cause)	Fit (cause–product)	Guilt	Mixed, mixed
5	Baghi, 2013a [40]	(for-/non-profit) Brand awareness	N/A	N/A	N.s., positive
6	Baghi, 2013b [41]	(for-/non-profit) Brand awareness	N/A	N/A	Positive, positive
7	Baghi, 2018 (S1) [19]	Brand prominence disparity	N/A	Product attitude	Positive
7	Baghi, 2018 (S2) [19]	Brand prominence disparity	Brand type ((non)luxury)	Product attitude	Mixed
8	Barone, 2000 (S1a) [42]	Company motivation	Performance trade off	N/A	Positive
8	Barone, 2000 (S1b) [42]	Company motivation	Price trade off	N/A	Positive
8	Barone, 2000 (S2a) [42]	Company motivation	Performance trade off	N/A	Mixed
8	Barone, 2000 (S2b) [42]	Company motivation	Price trade off	N/A	Mixed
9	Barone, 2007 (S2) [43]	Fit ((retailer) company–cause)	Affinity with cause	N/A	Positive
9	Barone, 2007 (S3) [43]	Fit ((retailer) company–cause), affinity with cause	Retailer motivation, affinity with cause	N/A	Mixed, positive
10	Bester, 2012 [44]	Cause involvement, message framing	N/A	N/A	Positive, n.s.
11	Boenigk, 2013 [45]	Presence of CRM, donation amount, product price	Product price	N/A	Positive, positive, mixed
12	Chang, 2011 [46]	CRM ad appeal, product type,	Product type, donation amount	N/A	Mixed. mixed
13	Chang, 2012 (S1) [31]	Brand prominence disparity	Product type	N/A	Mixed
13	Chang, 2012 (S2) [31]	Cause value framing	Product type,	N/A	Mixed
14	Chang, 2008 [47]	Product type, donation amount, donation framing, product price	Product price, donation framing	Guilt, pleasure, amount of thoughts	Positive [1], negative, mixed, negative

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Independent Variable(s)	Moderator(s)	Mediator(s)	Effect(s) on PI
15	Chang, 2018 (S1) [48]	Donation type	Fit (product–cause)	N/A	Mixed
15	Chang, 2018 (S2) [48]	Donation type	Fit (product–cause), product type	N/A	Mixed
16	Chen, 2014 [49]	Corporate ability, CSR	Fit (company–cause)	Attitude toward company, product, CRMP	Positive
17	Chen, 2016 (S5) [35]	CSR type	Self-construal	N/A	Positive [2]
18	Choi, 2017 [50]	Status-seeking, guilt	Recognition	N/A	Mixed
19	Choi, 2019 [51]	Brand equity, Perceived fit, complementary fit (company–cause)	Brand equity	N/A	Mixed, mixed, mixed
20	Cui, 2003 [52]	Cause type, cause proximity, donation length/frequency, gender	N/A	N/A	Positive, n.s., positive, positive [3]
21	Das, 2016 (S1) [53]	Fit (product–cause), donation qualifier	Product type	N/A	Mixed, mixed
21	Das, 2016 (S2) [53]	Fit (product–cause), donation qualifier	Purchase type	N/A	Mixed
22	Elving, 2013 [54]	Fit (company–cause), reputation	Companies' prior reputation	Skepticism	Positive, n.s.
23	Folse, 2014 (S1) [55]	Donation type	Consumer participation effort	Company motivation	Positive [4]
23	Folse, 2014 (S2) [55]	Donation type, fit (company–cause, product–cause)	N/A	Company motivation	Positive [4], positive, positive
24	Folse, 2010 (S1) [56]	Donation amount, purchase quantity requirement	N/A	Company motivation, perceived CSR	N.s., negative
24	Folse, 2010 (S2) [56]	Donation amount, purchase quantity requirement	Consumer participation effort	Company motivation, perceived CSR	Positive, negative
24	Folse, 2010 (S3) [56]	Donation amount, purchase quantity requirement	N/A	Company motivation, offer elaboration, perceived CSR, brand attitude	Positive, negative
25	Grau, 2007 (S1) [57]	Cause involvement, donation proximity	Cause involvement	N/A	Positive, mixed
25	Grau, 2007 (S2) [57]	Message framing	Cause involvement	Evaluation of CSR	N.s.
26	Hagtvedt, 2016 (S2) [58]	Brand type, the presence of CRM	N/A	Guilt	Positive [5], mixed
26	Hagtvedt, 2016 (S3) [58]	Store brand type	N/A	Guilt	Positive [5]
27	Hajjat, 2003 [59]	Type of marketing	Cause involvement, donation amount	N/A	Mixed

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Independent Variable(s)	Moderator(s)	Mediator(s)	Effect(s) on PI
28	Hamby, 2016 (S2a) [60]	Donation type, product type	Product type	N/A	N.s., mixed
28	Hamby, 2016 (S2b) [60]	Donation type	Product type	Perceived helpfulness, perceived monetary value of the donation	N.s., n.s.
28	Hamby, 2016 (S3) [60]	Donation type	N/A	Perceived helpfulness, perceived personal role, imagery of the beneficiary	Negative [4]
29	Hamlin, 2004 [61]	Fit (product–cause)	N/A	N/A	Positive
30	He, 2016 (S1) [62]	Consumer moral identity centrality, brand social responsibility image, brand familiarity	Brand social responsibility image	N/A	Mixed, positive, positive
30	He, 2016 (S2) [62]	Consumer moral identity centrality, brand emotional attachment	Brand emotional attachment	N/A	Mixed, positive
31	Howie, 2018 (S1) [63]	Campaign effort	N/A	Perceived cause importance, CSR	Negative
31	Howie, 2018 (S2) [63]	Campaign effort	Choice of cause	Perceived cause importance, CSR	Mixed
32	Huang, 2018 (S1) [64]	Donation amount	N/A	N/A	Mixed
32	Huang, 2018 (S1) [64]	Donation framing	Individual's propensity to volunteer, environmental concern	N/A	Mixed
33	Human, 2012 [65]	Donation amount, recipient's familiarity and brand presence	N/A	N/A	N.s.
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S1) [66]	Celebrity social responsibility	N/A	Co-branding authenticity	Positive
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S2) [66]	Celebrity social responsibility	N/A	Co-branding authenticity, co-branding fit (celebrity-product)	Positive
34	Ilicic, 2019 (S3) [66]	Celebrity social responsibility	Consumer self-transcendence value	Co-branding authenticity	Positive
35	Kerr, 2013 [67]	Fit (product–cause), donation framing	Need for cognition	N/A	Mixed
36	Kim, 2016 [32]	Cause type, message type	N/A	N/A	N.s., positive [6]
37	Kleber, 2016 (S1) [68]	Donation framing, product type, product price	Consumer numerical ability	N/A	Mixed, negative [1], negative
37	Kleber, 2016 (S2) [68]	Donation framing, product price	Consumer numerical ability	N/A	Mixed, negative
38	Koschate-Fischer, 2016 [69]	Donation amount	Timing of the donation	Attributed company motives, perceived price fairness	Mixed
39	Kull, 2016 (S3) [70]	Presence of cause choice in CRM	Brand image	Empowerment, engagement	Mixed
40	Kuo, 2015 (S1) [71]	Fit (product–cause)	N/A	Perceived company motives	Positive
40	Kuo, 2015 (S2) [71]	Fit (product–cause)	N/A	Affective response toward charity	Positive

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Independent Variable(s)	Moderator(s)	Mediator(s)	Effect(s) on PI
40	Kuo, 2015 (S3) [71]	Fit (company–cause)	Type of fit (company–cause)	Perceived company motives	Mixed
41	Lafferty, 2007 [72]	Fit (brand–cause), corporate credibility	Corporate credibility	N/A	N.s., positive
42	Lafferty, 2009 (S1) [73]	Cause importance, brand familiarity	Brand familiarity	N/A	Mixed, mixed
42	Lafferty, 2009 (S2) [73]	Fit (brand–cause), brand familiarity	Brand familiarity	N/A	N.s., n.s.
43	Lafferty, 2014 [18]	Cause category, cause cognizance	Brand familiarity, cause importance	N/A	N.s., positive
44	Lee, 2013 [74]	Fit (brand–cause)	Team identification; cause organizational identification	Attitude toward CRMP	Positive
45	Lii, 2011 [75]	CSR type	N/A	Consumer–company identification	Positive [3]
46	Lii, 2012 [76]	CSR type	CSR reputation	Consumer-company identification, brand attitude	Positive
47	Lii, 2013 [77]	CSR type	Brand social distance, cause spatial distance	Company credibility, brand attitude	Positive
48	Manuel, 2014 [78]	Functional fit (CRM message–consumer participation motive), consumer skepticism, perceived message quality	Consumer skepticism, perceived message quality	N/A	Mixed, negative, positive
49	Melero, 2016 [79]	Fit (product–cause), product type	N/A	N/A	N.s., negative
50	Mendini, 2018 [80]	Type of fit	N/A	Trust, skepticism	Positive [7]
51	Minton, 2016 (S2) [81]	Presence of CRM	N/A	N/A	Positive
51	Minton, 2016 (S3) [81]	Cause type, consumer health interest, nutrition knowledge	Consumer health interest, nutrition knowledge	N/A	N.s.
52	Mizerski, 2001 [82]	Type of CRM	N/A	N/A	N.s.
53	Nelson, 2017 [83]	The timing point before/after seeing the CRMP	Gender, brand usage	N/A	Mixed
54	Olsen, 2003 (S4) [84]	Donation amount, donation framing	N/A	N/A	Positive, positive [8]
55	Robinson, 2012 (S1b) [85]	Choice of cause in CRM	N/A	N/A	Positive
55	Robinson, 2012 (S2) [85]	Choice of cause in CRM	Collectivism	Perceived personal role	Mixed
55	Robinson, 2012 (S3) [85]	Choice of cause in CRM	Perceptual fit (company–cause)	Perceived personal role	Mixed
55	Robinson, 2012 (S4) [85]	Choice of cause in CRM	Goal proximity	Perceived personal role	Mixed
56	Sabri, 2018 [86]	Type of CRM	N/A	Skepticism toward the altruistic and sincere motives	Mixed

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	Lead Author, Year	Independent Variable(s)	Moderator(s)	Mediator(s)	Effect(s) on PI
57	Samu, 2009 (S2) [87]	Fit (brand–cause), (brand/cause) dominance	N/A	N/A	Positive, mixed
58	Schindler, 2017 [88]	Persuasion strategy	Communicator's experience regarding social engagement	Perceived company motives	Mixed
59	Sony, 2015 [89]	Green strategy	N/A	N/A	Positive
60	Tangari, 2010 (S1) [90]	Temporal framing within the CRM ad	Consumers' temporal orientation	N/A	Mixed
60	Tangari, 2010 (S2) [90]	Consumers' temporal orientation	Temporal framing within the CRM ad, temporal framing of the societal need	Attitude toward CRMP	Mixed
61	Tucker, 2012 [91]	Ecological ad appeal	Individual environmental protection attitude, behavior, perceived consumer effectiveness	Ad involvement, ad credibility, attitude toward the ad, brand	N.s.
62	Vaidyanathan, 2013 [92]	Donation amount, donation source, commitment	N/A	Perceived value	Mixed, positive [9], positive
63	Van Quaquebeke, 2017 [93]	Presence of CRM	Ethical leadership	Self-congruence	N.s.
64	Vilela, 2016 (S1) [94]	Gender	N/A	N/A	Positive [3]
64	Vilela, 2016 (S2) [94]	Presence of CRM, gender	N/A	Elaboration thoughts	Mixed
65	Wiebe, 2017 [95]	Proximal framing of CRM appeal,	Perceived consumer effectiveness	N/A	Negative
66	Yoo, 2018 (S1) [96]	Donation amount	Construal level	Perceived benefits, perceived monetary sacrifice	Mixed
66	Yoo, 2018 (S2) [96]	Donation amount	Construal level; presence of emoticon	Perceived benefits, perceived monetary sacrifice	Mixed
67	Youn, 2018 [16]	Temporal duration	Self-construal, product involvement	Attributed company altruistic motives	Negative
68	Zhang, 2019 [97]	Type of CRM	Type of social power state, type of companion	N/A	Mixed

Notes: [1]. N.s. = not significant; positive of product type: hedonic > utilitarian; [2]. positive of CSR type: philanthropy > sponsorship > CRM; [3]. positive of gender: female > male; [4]. positive of donation type: cash > product; [5]. positive of brand type: luxury > value; [6]. positive of message type: textual claims including visuals > excluding visuals; [7]. positive of fit type: taxonomic > thematic; [8]. positive of donation framing: percentage of profit > percentage of price; [9]. positive of donation source: company pays > own money. Fit: The Fit category includes the variable named as "congruency", "matching" in several studies. Donation amount: include the variable named as "donation size", "donation magnitude". CRM: cause-related marketing; CRMP: cause-related marketing program; CSR: corporate social responsibility.

4. Discussion

CRM is a globally popular marketing technique due to its value to multiple stakeholders such as the companies, the consumers, the non-profit organizations, and society [20,24,100]. Consumers' participation in purchasing related products or services, is the key to successful CRM practices [56]. Experiments on what factors can impact the effect of CRM have been conducted with a multitude of different determinants and their inter-relationships. This study thus provided a systematic review of experimental CRM research that measured PI. More specifically, this study provides a comprehensive overview of what the common CRM practices are and how other determinants can impact the effects of CRM on consumer PI. The main findings and recommendations in terms of CRM practices and research are below.

Firstly, the CRM in most qualified studies is manipulated as a tactical marketing program, which make a monetary donation and continues for a short time. This is consistent with the initial practice that firms generally assign greater importance to product sales (tactical, short-term outcome) than to improving/building image (strategic, long-term outcome) [101]. However, with the increase in the company's experience with CRM, strategic and social outcomes are assigned more importance and become equally important with PI [20]. Thus, companies should consider including CRM campaigns into their long-term marketing strategies. On the other hand, future research can empirically examine or systematically review the effect of CRM on consumer brand loyalty, recommendation intention, etc.

Secondly, substantial diversification was observed within the products and the causes. The products are mainly low-cost, low involvement, such as shampoo and chocolates. The high-familiar, high-involvement causes (e.g., educational, environmental, health) are supported by more companies, more frequently than the low-familiar, low-involvement causes (e.g., animal, cultural). Over time, the high-involvement causes will be more and more familiar with the public, and vice versa for the low-involvement causes [19]. This does not align with the sustainable development, which argues that every social issue is vital [102]. Therefore, marketers should also make efforts to improve people's awareness to the low-familiar, low involvement social causes.

Thirdly, this review also found that the theory use in CRM was heterogenous. Popular behavioral explanatory theories such TPB and social cognitive theory was seldom used. Most of the theories were used to explain how CRM works but did not specify how to utilize the theory to maximize the effects of CRM. For example, in the review by Christofi et al. (2018) [103], the authors argued that social exchange theory can explain the cause proximity in CRM as consumers identify with firms which can fulfill their self-enhancement. Other theories such as social identity theory or ELM serve the same purpose. Future research can consider experiments with theoretical constructs (e.g., self-efficacy, norms, etc.) to test whether theory use can boost the effects of CRM.

Fourthly, a substantial amount of studies demonstrated the effectiveness of CRM. In particular, the presence of CRM was proven to increase consumer PI toward the product or service. In addition, CRM is more effective than an ordinary marketing or sales promotion strategy, such as a discount and coupons. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of the CRM program (e.g., donation amount, cause type, message framing) have shown positive outcomes but mixed effects are persistent. For example, the mostly studied variable [23], cause–brand fit can have a positive, negative, or nonsignificant effect on consumer PI when varying company reputation [50]. Companies thus should carefully evaluate CRM campaigns with diverse donation formats before implementation to tailor specific characteristics that would appeal to target audiences with diverse values and backgrounds.

Fifthly, there is also little customization observed in the included studies. A customization strategy allows customers with heterogeneous preferences to be related with the product. With the advancement of interactivity in smartphones and internet, there exists more channels for the company to interact with the customers in order to offer more diversified and more customized types of causes and types of donations. For example, the customers will be able to select the cause they find most affiliated with, or the amount they wish to donate, based on certain criteria were met (e.g., the volume

of sales exceed certain amount), which are extremely popular on modern crowdfunding platforms (e.g., kickstarter) but were seldom implemented in the CRM discipline.

5. Conclusions

To draw a comprehensive narrative evidence for the effectiveness of a CRM campaign, this study systematically reviewed the CRM literature that measured consumers PI using the experimental methodology. This research makes several contributions to the CRM literature. First, it presents a comprehensive review of the experimental study on CRM and, in line with Lafferty et al. (2016) [20], the categorization of diverse independent variables that affect PI. In contrast with other systematic reviews [20,23,34], this research focuses on one of the main marketing strategy goals, PI, providing researchers and practitioners with focused insights of the effectiveness of diverse CRM variables that they may employ in their campaign design. Second, it draws a compressive picture of current CRM practices, including the company/brand, product, cause, and donation information. Previous review articles about CRM mainly focus on characteristics of the company, product, and cause, such as how corporate reputation (high/medium/low), product type (hedonic/utilitarian), and cause–brand fit (high/low) impact consumer response to and the effectiveness of CRM. Our study also presents the specific product (e.g., shampoo, chocolate) and social cause (e.g., environmental, healthy) by extracting the components of the CRM campaign in the experiment. This, on the one hand, could guide the experiment design of future research in this field. On the other hand, this provides guidance for brand managers to design and communicate CRM programs in order to achieve more effective CRM campaigns which in turn will benefit multiple stakeholders and the whole world's sustainability in the long term.

Although this research has enabled us to paint a compressive picture of what current CRM practices are and their effectiveness, we cannot avoid its limitations: firstly, this study only provides a comprehensive narrative evidence synthesis, and does not generate one overall estimate of effect, such as calculating the heterogeneity metrics. Future studies could consider using the method of meta-analysis to assess heterogeneity of difference cause-related marketing experiments as well as providing quantifiable insights on the impacts of CRM on customer purchase intention. Secondly, this study adopted purchase intention rather than the actual purchase behavior to represent the effectiveness of CRM, although the purchase intention is the most direct predictor of purchase behavior. Future research could examine consumers actual purchasing behavior by observing and calculating consumers choosing behavior toward CRM-related product with different determinants. Thirdly, this study found that the majority of the determinants are micro-level factors, such as corporate, product, and social cause, etc. How about the macro-level factors? For example, is CRM strategies correlated with the socio–economic characteristics of the different countries? Future research could explore and answer this question. Finally, the results revealed that majority of the factors are related with CRM campaign content (cause, product, etc.) and/or communication (CRM ads), while little attention is paid to the information disclosure (e.g., the total donation amount and how they are spent) about CRM. Future studies could explore what and how the factors of CRM information disclosure impact consumer response.

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