Brands for A Cause: The Effect of Cause-Related Marketing on The Brand Preference of Gen Z to Clothing Brands in Metro Manila

Feliciano, Kyla Marie^a*, David, Madeline Iryle^b, Gutierrez, Elyssa^c, Miguel, Leona Anne^d, Bandojo, Agnes Jocelyn^e, Etrata, Jr., Antonio^f

College of Commerce and Business Administration, University of Santo Tomas, Manila 1015, Philippines
*Corresponding Author: kylamarie.feliciano.comm@ust.edu.ph

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Abstract

This research looks into the effect of cause-related marketing (CRM) towards the clothing brands that Generation Z chooses in Metro Manila. One of the specific goals is to find out the effect of donation proximity, type of cause, type of support, and length of support on people's choices of clothing brands. With the help of a quantitative descriptive correlational design and purposive sampling, data were taken from 408 qualified Gen Z respondents in Metro Manila who were between the ages of 18 and 26. The information was gathered using paper and online poll forms through Google Forms that used a 6-point Likert scale. The results were looked at using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The convergent validity, construct reliability, and discriminant validity was also utilized in the study to ensure reliable and valid data. The results show that donation proximity, type of cause, and length of support have significant effects on which clothing brands Generation Z likes. However, type of support did not have a significant effect on brand preferences. Type of Cause, Length of Support, and Type of Support all had small effect sizes ($f^2 = 0.064$, $f^2 = 0.160$, and 0.006, respectively). Donation proximity had a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.247$). The study's conclusion is that local causes, especially those that are close to where the donation is made, have a big effect on Generation Z's good brand preferences in the local clothing industry. People like brands that support causes that help people, animals, the environment, and health. Long-term and consistent participation in CRM activities has a big effect on brand preferences. Based on the results, clothing brands in Metro Manila should support local causes, stick to well-known problems, and offer consistent, long-term support to effectively engage Generation Z customers.

Keywords:

Cause-Related Marketing, Brand Preference, Gen Z, Clothing Brands

INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategies are a must in an enterprise to achieve different goals such as customer retention, increase in sales, etc. One may be familiar with the term cause-related marketing (CRM), which is used by different industries. CRM is derived from Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR, which has an effect on the consumer's pro-social behavior and the company's performance (Moharam et al., 2020). Today's generation is becoming more socially aware because of the different social issues affecting Filipinos. With that, businesses are also progressing and thinking of ways to support those who are affected. One strategy that businesses utilize is cause-related marketing. Brands will promote their products/services and indicate in the promotion that a portion of the profit will be donated to a certain organization

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or group (What Is Cause Marketing: Definition and Examples, 2019). In the Philippines, local brands also adopted this initiative of giving a portion of their sales to a cause. An example of this is the brand "Not Cool the Label," a face mask brand that donates its profit to pets needing assistance (Not Cool, 2014) and Colourette Cosmetics, whose profit went to donations if there is a recent disaster in the country (Colourette Cosmetics, 2022). According to Pinto and Mekoth (2019), when a consumer purchases, the business takes the initiative to contribute a predetermined amount to a chosen cause under the purchase-triggered donation type of CRM.

While the firm's primary objective is to improve sales by supporting these organizations, the brand preferences of customers are different from each other, which affects this objective. One may prefer other brands due to the features of the products or services. Others may favor brands due to their popularity. Brand preference pertains to the attachment or loyalty of a customer to a brand (Kao, 2019). Customers will choose their preferred brands over the others based on their set of considerations. According to the book of Hoyer et al. (2018), a positive attitude of a consumer to a brand will result in being remembered more often. Thus, brand preference must be considered by marketers as it shows the loyalty of their target market. Instead, marketers should focus on developing their competitive advantage and innovation to improve the marketing performance (Nuvriasari & Ririn Puspita Sari, 2023).

Numerous studies have discussed cause-related marketing and its different factors. However, a variable that still needs to be further explored is brand preference in relation to the structural elements of CRM. Furthermore, Asian countries such as the Philippines are on the 3rd out of 7th continents that have studies related to CRM. Not to mention that most of the previous studies are from developed countries rather than developing countries (Bhatti et al., 2022). There needs to be more information about the effect of CRM in the clothing industry, especially today when people are becoming more socially aware. In this study, structural elements of CRM, such as type of cause, donation proximity, type of support, and the length of support were measured to determine the brand preference of the customers toward CRM campaigns. Furthermore, the researchers have not found any study that utilized these elements wherein they show an effect on the brand preference in a CRM campaign of Generation Z in the clothing industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cause-related Marketing (CRM)

Cause-related marketing (CRM) encompasses the practice of corporations endorsing their products by means of contributing funds to charitable groups. Although businesses may utilize different strategies, CRM's goal is to assist individuals who require support while gaining profit. According to Baghi and Gabrielli (2018), consumers demonstrate a wide range of motivations when making product purchases, with certain individuals selecting popular brands. On the other hand, Yang and Yen (2018) assert that other consumers make their decisions based on their personal beliefs and values. The study conducted by Chang et al. (2022) revealed that emotional appeals, particularly when conveyed through visual content, exert a greater influence on consumer decision-making as opposed to informative content. In simple terms, CRM has a substantial effect on consumer brand preference, irrespective of the diverse factors underlying their purchasing decisions.

Brand Preference

The study of brand preference holds significant importance in the field of marketing research as it provides insights into customer preference towards selecting a certain brand. Moreover, it serves as a means to understand the underlying mechanisms of brand equity, as highlighted by Jeon et al. (2020). Consumer preferences in picking brands to support are influenced by multiple factors, such as the donation proximity, type of cause, type of support, and length of support. Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a strategic approach companies employ to enhance their brand reputation by aligning themselves with social or environmental causes. This practice has been observed to elicit consumer favoritism (Dam, 2020). Bashir et al. (2020) provide empirical evidence that substantiates this claim, demonstrating that a favorable brand image, such as one associated with environmental sustainability (referred to as a "green" brand image), serves as a catalyst for consumer engagement, hence influencing their inclination towards favoring such firms. The level of genuineness exhibited by a company in its dedication to a particular cause has significant importance in influencing consumer preference. It is imperative for marketing efforts to accurately identify and acknowledge consumer preferences in relation to corporate social responsibility (CSR) messages (Randle et al., 2019). In brief, CRM has the potential to enhance brand preference through the projection of a favorable brand image, the emphasis on alignment with brand ideals, and the demonstration of authentic support for selected causes.

Donation Proximity

According to a study conducted by Hasdiansa and Balqiah (2020), the preference for consumer brand in cause-related marketing (CRM) campaigns is notably influenced by donation proximity. Consumers tend to exhibit a preference for donations that are made to recipients in near proximity. Singh and Pathank (2020) emphasize that the implementation of user-friendly and efficient donation mechanisms plays a crucial role in cultivating a robust bond between consumers and the cause, hence stimulating active engagement. The study conducted by Handa and Gupta (2020) provides support for the effectiveness of online customer relationship management (CRM) campaigns in yielding favorable results. The study places particular emphasis on the promotion of consumer autonomy in the decision-making process. According to Choi et al. (2019), the inclusion of local recipients and the provision of prizes can boost an organization's perception of social responsibility. According to Fan et al. (2020), there exists a favorable correlation between proximity and the efficacy of CRM. This finding provides significant knowledge for firms who are strategizing CRM activities targeted at proximate factors. Thus, based on the studies, the following hypothesis is made:

H1: Donation Proximity has a positive effect on the brand preference of consumers in CRM campaigns of clothing brands in the Philippines.

Type of Cause

A study by Cui et al. (2003, as cited in Arslanagic-Kalajdzic et al., 2021) indicated that the type of cause of cause-related marketing (CRM) influences a buyer's response. Christofi et al. (2020) defined type of cause as the specific social cause or issue that an organization represents. It is divided into four broad categories, which are human, health, animal, and environmental causes, which were adopted from the study of Lafferty and Edmondson (2014). It was evaluated that most charitable causes fall into these four categories. They further explained these categories in detail. The human services cause category deals with all human issues, such as disasters, violence, and gender equality. Meanwhile, the health cause category attends to human health issues such as cancer, AIDS, and mental health. The animal cause category

pertains to any issue that affects animal welfare, such as animal cruelty and animal rights. Lastly, the environmental cause category deals with environmental issues such as deforestation, saving bodies of water and climate change. A previous study by Cui et al. (2003), as cited in (Hong et al., 2021), showed that a CRM is viewed more positively when an organization is supporting a disaster-related cause rather than an ongoing cause. The study of Aliperti et al. (2018) showed that people have a high level of involvement in supporting disaster-related causes, especially prevention-related campaigns. However, a recent study by Christofi et al. (2020) suggests that consumers' decision to support a type of cause also depends on the cause identification. Cause identification is when consumers support a cause because it is relevant to their identity (Duarte & Silva, 2018). They engage with brands because the cause that these brands support relates to their personal identity. Furthermore, there is knowledge of what they and the brand contribute to the cause. This supports the previous study of Goldsmith and Yimin (2014) that describes that consumers are would support a cause that is relevant to them because of the meaning they associate with them, affecting their attitude positively and their preference. Furthermore, the study of Fields (2013) also highlighted that marketers utilizing cause-related marketing should actively convey the link between their brand and the cause to boost the strategy's effectiveness and improve the brand preference of their consumers. Hence this study hypothesizes that:

H2: Type of cause has a positive effect on the brand preference of consumers in CRM campaigns of clothing brands in the Philippines.

Type of Support

The study by Cui et al. (2003), as cited in (Hong et al., 2021) states that a company may provide different types of support for a cause-related marketing (CRM) campaign. One of the most common types of support is monetary or transaction-based, in which donations or revenues are derived from consumer sales. Its counterpart is non-monetary or non-transaction-based, in which a business assists initiative without the involvement of sales from consumer purchases. Customers can use this element to determine their brand preference for brands that participate in CRM activities. Moreover, according to Handa and Gupta (2020), CRM support has primarily been monetary, with companies donating or spending a particular amount to a cause for each corresponding purchase made by a customer. Pieper (2019) found that customers find donations not indicated in monetary value confusing. They wanted to know exactly how much they contributed to a cause. The reason was that knowing how much they have put into supporting a cause made the experience of supporting it much more significant (Huang and Fitzpatrick, 2018). However, another type of CRM support became known wherein customers are encouraged to participate in a non-monetary or non-transactional motive. In return, the business supports or spends a particular amount for a chosen cause (Handa & Gupta, 2020). This non-monetary support can boost consumer confidence in the brand because the CRM campaign does not involve a purchase, congruent with the study of Cui et al. (2003), as cited in (Schoor, 2021). Aligned with previous findings, it is therefore hypothesized that:

H3: Type of support has a positive effect on the brand preference of consumers in CRM campaigns of clothing brands in the Philippines.

Length of Support

Cause-related marketing campaigns (CRM) duration differs depending on the goals of the companies. It can be shorter or longer. However, the duration of a CRM campaign may give

different notions to the audience. In return, it can affect the campaign positively or negatively on an individual's preference for a brand. The duration of partners was defined in the study of Vafeiadis et al. (2021) that a program within 5 years is considered long-term while a 1-month program is considered a short-term CRM program. Therefore, length or commitment can be understood as the promise of the company to continue working with the chosen partners. It is the time committed by the company to do the CRM campaign. The study by Cui et al. (2003) as cited in (Hong et al., 2021) explained that CRM that has a long-duration program will result in more favorable evaluation to it by the consumers. Similarly, in the studies of Beckman et al. (2015), credibility and lesser skepticism can be achieved if the campaign is much longer and is on repeat. The company's longer commitment results in the effectiveness of the campaign (Geißel, 2010, as cited in Peiper, 2019). In addition, the sincerity and people's attitude are affected by the longer duration of the campaign (Chéron et al. (2012); Park & Kim, 2015, as cited in Wang & O'Connor, 2022; Cui et al., 2003 and Ellen, Webb & Mohr (2006) as cited in Peiper, 2019). Not only the attitude and sincerity are affected but also the brand loyalty of the consumers (Van den Brink et al., 2006, as cited in Peiper, 2019). However, the study of Chang et al. (2021) highlights that with the right combination of cause and product type, the duration of the campaign can be effective. If products used for a specific purpose (utilitarian products) and primary cause are combined, it is much more effective if it has a long-duration campaign. If a product is not a necessity (hedonic product) and is paired with a secondary cause, it is much better to use a short duration for its campaign. In short, Chang et al. (2021) study states that it depends on factors such as combining product and cause type and the effectiveness of long and short campaign duration. It does not generally and directly imply that a long-term period is effective. The hypothesis is as follows based on the previous studies:

H4: A longer length of support has a positive effect on the brand preference of consumers in CRM campaigns of clothing brands in the Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive correlational design to investigate the elements that affected the impact of cause-related marketing (CRM) in the local clothing industry. Purposive sampling was employed to gather male and female part of Gen Z respondents, aged 18 to 26 years old, from Metro Manila who were aware of CRM. According to Etikan et al. (2016), this sampling technique will be based on the qualities of the respondents in relation to the topic. Thus, purposive sampling applies to the study as the objective is to know the effect of the structural elements of CRM on Generation Z. The researchers chose Gen Z from 18-26 years old because they are becoming more socially aware. For the location, the researchers chose Metro Manila because it is the center of commerce in the Philippines. The Raosoft calculator was used to determine the required number of respondents, with 408 respondents needed, considering a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, and a population of 13,484,462 in Metropolitan Manila (Department of Trade and Industry, 2022). Data were collected through paper and online survey questionnaires distributed using Google Forms, comprising five parts with adapted and self-made questions covering the study's variables and respondent demographics. A 6-point Likert scale was utilized for data collection, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 6 - Strongly Agree. To ensure questionnaire reliability, a pre-test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha Analysis, and was assessed by three experts (2 academicians and 1 professional). Furthermore, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were used to assess the quality of the questionnaire. All questions are unique, and the participants have the same understanding as the researcher. The data analysis helped the researchers to answer the research objectives of the study. Following primary data collection,

the researchers, in collaboration with a statistician, analyzed responses using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the primary tool to evaluate CRM's structural elements' effect on Generation Z's brand preferences. According to Hair et al. (2021), the PLS-SEM analysis aided in understanding the relationship between the dependent variable (brand preference) and independent variables. The research design capitalized on both descriptive and correlational interpretations of the respondents' results. Descriptive statistics provided insights into respondents' knowledge depth concerning the topic and elements, while correlational analysis via PLS-SEM illuminated the relationship between brand preference and CRM elements. This design allowed for a more thorough comprehension of the CRM elements' effects on Gen Z respondents' brand preferences.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 408)

Demographic	Category	F	%
Age	18 years old	57	14.0
	19 years old	35	8.6
	20 years old	60	14.8
	21 years old	89	21.9
	22 years old	65	16.0
	23 years old	30	7.4
	24 years old	20	4.9
	25 years old	19	4.7
	26 years old	31	7.6
Sex	Female	251	61.8
	Male	155	38.2
Location	Caloocan	42	10.3
	Las Piñas	7	1.7
	Makati	15	3.7
	Malabon	11	2.7
	Mandaluyong	12	3.0
	Manila	104	25.6
	Marikina	19	4.7
	Muntinlupa	14	3.4
	Navotas	17	4.2
	Parañaque	9	2.2
	Pasay	8	2.0
	Pasig	27	6.7
	Pateros	1	.2
	Quezon City	86	21.2
	San Juan	8	2.0
	Taguig	9	2.2
	Valenzuela	17	4.2

Table 1 illustrates the demographics of 18–26-year-old respondents. Most respondents are 21 years old, making up 21.9% of the sample. The 18, 20, and 22 age groups also make up 14-16% of respondents. According to the survey, 251 respondents—61.8% of the sample—are female, while male respondents make up 38.2% of the sample. The survey respondents are also distributed geographically. Manila produced the most respondents, making up 25.6% of the sample. The other major cities are Quezon City (21.2%), Caloocan (10.3%), and Pasig (6.7%). This detailed demographic profile is vital for investigating how cause-related marketing affects Metro Manila Generation Z's brand preferences.

Table 2: Respondents' brand preference for the clothing brand with CRM in terms of Donation Proximity

Donation Proximity	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
I prefer clothing brands that support local causes than international ones.	4.59	1.164	Agree
I support a clothing brand that donates to local causes because of its immediate impact.	4.74	1.095	Agree
I prefer clothing brands that support a cause near me.	4.53	1.112	Agree
I recommend a clothing brand that supports local causes.	4.86	1.072	Agree
I chose a clothing brand because my family, friends, and colleagues believe donating to the local community supports local causes.	4.56	1.077	Agree
Overall	4.66	1.10	Agree

*5.15-6.00— Strongly Agree; 4.32-5.14-Agree; 3.49-4.31-Slightly Agree; 2.66-3.48-Slightly Disagree; 1,83-2.65-Disagree; 1.0-1.82-Strongly Disagree

The findings from Table 2, shows that the Donation Proximity of cause-related marketing (CRM) on Generation Z's clothing brand preference in Metro Manila, reveal a positive disposition toward brands that support local causes. Participants preferred clothing brands that support local causes over international ones, resulting in a mean score of 4.59 (SD = 1.164), exhibiting an evident agreement. The same results extends to actively supporting clothing brands that donate to local causes due to their immediate impact and recommending those that donate to local causes, with mean scores of 4.74 (SD = 1.095) and 4.86 (SD = 1.072); this leads to an overall mean score of 4.66 (SD = 1.10), signifying a collective agreement. These results indicate that there is a positive effect of Donation Proximity on Generation Z's clothing brand preferences.

Table 3: Respondents' brand preference for the clothing brand with CRM in terms of Type of Cause

Type of Cause	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretat ion
Environmental Cause	4.40	1.151	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand paired with an environmental cause I am familiar with.	4.68	1.098	Agree
I will purchase clothing brands that pair themselves with an environmental cause even if I am not familiar with the brand.	4.38	1.133	Agree

continued

I will buy from a clothing brand that supports an environmental cause, even if I don't need the product paired with the cause.	3.99	1.299	Slightly Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that supports an environmental cause that my peers and family recommend.	4.55	1.076	Agree
Health Cause	4.41	1.149	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand paired with health causes I am familiar with.	4.66	1.054	Agree
I will purchase clothing brands that pair themselves with health causes even if I am not familiar with the brand.	4.32	1.201	Agree
I will buy from a clothing brand that supports health causes even if I do not need the product paired with the cause.	4.03	1.286	Slightly Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that supports health causes that my peers and family recommend.	4.63	1.057	Agree
Animal Cause	4.49	1.240	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand paired with animal causes I am familiar with.	4.68	1.199	Agree
I will purchase from clothing brands that pair themselves with animal causes, even if I am not familiar with the brand.	4.40	1.225	Agree
I will buy from a clothing brand that supports animal causes even if I do not need the product paired with the cause.	4.17	1.391	Slightly Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that supports animal causes that my peers and family recommend.	4.70	1.145	Agree
Human Cause	4.44	1.180	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand paired with a human because I am familiar with it.	4.66	1.083	Agree
I will purchase clothing brands that pair themselves with a human cause even if I am not familiar with the brand.	4.40	1.217	Agree
I will buy from a clothing brand that supports a human cause, even if I don't need the product paired with the cause.	4.08	1.319	Slightly Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that supports a human cause that my peers and family recommend.	4.64	1.100	Agree

*5.15-6.00— Strongly Agree; 4.32-5.14-Agree; 3.49-4.31-Slightly Agree; 2.66-3.48-Slightly Disagree; 1,83-2.65-Disagree; 1.0-1.82-Strongly Disagree

Table 3 explores Generation Z's clothing brand preferences in relation to different types of causes of cause-related marketing (CRM). Respondents prefer clothing brands aligned with environmental (Mean = 4.68, SD = 1.098), health (Mean = 4.66, SD = 1.054), animal (Mean = 4.68, SD = 1.199), and human (Mean = 4.66, SD = 1.083) causes they are familiar with. They are willing to purchase from clothing brands even if they are unfamiliar with the brand as long as they are paired with an environmental cause (Mean = 4.38, SD = 1.133), health cause (Mean

= 4.32, SD = 1.201), animal causes (Mean = 4.40, SD = 1.225), and human causes (Mean = 4.40, SD = 1.217) showing a general agreement.

The overall results suggest that participants generally agree with clothing brands supporting environmental, health, animal, and human causes, especially when they are familiar with the cause. The willingness to purchase from unfamiliar brands supporting these causes is also apparent.

Table 4: Respondents' brand preference for the clothing brand with CRM in terms of Type of Support

*5.15-6.00— Strongly Agree; 4.32-5.14-Agree; 3.49-4.31-Slightly Agree; 2.66-3.48-Slightly

Type of Support		SD	Verbal Interpretation
Monetary	4.45	1.12	Agree
I prefer clothing brands that provide monetary support for charitable/social causes to those that provide non-monetary support.	4.34	1.152	Agree
I prefer clothing brands depending on the allocated donation size.	4.17	1.170	Slightly Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that promises to donate a specific amount of money to a specific charity for each purchase.	4.47	1.079	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that is transparent with their donation amount.	4.92	1.099	Agree
I will donate/purchase from a clothing brand that has the same amount donated/purchased by my friends/family.	4.36	1.108	Agree
Non-Monetary	4.54	1.05	Agree
I prefer clothing brands that provide non-monetary support for charitable/social causes than monetary support.	4.46	1.067	Agree
I prefer a clothing brand that promises to donate a non-monetary donation to a specific charity for each purchase.	4.58	1.000	Agree
I will purchase from clothing brands that donate non-money donations to charitable causes.	4.59	1.059	Agree
I will donate goods for a clothing brand similar to what my peers or family donated.	4.50	1.072	Agree

Disagree; 1,83-2.65 - Disagree; 1.0-1.82-Strongly Disagree

The respondents' brand preference in terms of the type of support that a clothing brand with cause-related marketing (CRM) utilizes are shown in Table 4, categorized into monetary and non-monetary support. For each support type, mean values, standard deviations, and interpretation are provided. A mean score of 4.17 to 4.92 for monetary support indicates agreement among respondents. Specifically, they choose brands that offer monetary support, consider donation size, assign specific amounts for each transaction, and are transparent about donation amounts. For non-monetary support, respondents agree in choosing brands that donate in-kind goods and have mean values from 4.46 to 4.59.

Table 5: Respondents' brand preference for the clothing brand with CRM in terms of Length of Support

Length of Support	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
I will support the clothing brand with a longer duration of its CRM campaign.	4.57	1.135	Agree
I believe that the care of clothing brand is shown in the duration or length of support.	4.46	1.128	Agree
I will buy products from clothing brands with longer campaign durations.	4.41	1.125	Agree
I will support a clothing brand that donates when there are monthly sales like 9.9, 10.10, 11.11, etc.	4.65	1.142	Agree
I will support a clothing brand that is consistent/committed in their promise to donating to causes.	4.92	1.079	Agree
I believe that a longer CRM campaign duration will increase my preference for the clothing brand.	4.62	1.086	Agree
I will support the clothing brand with a longer duration of its CRM campaign if my friends and family also support it.	4.66	1.100	Agree
Overall	4.61	1.110	Agree

*5.15-6.00— Strongly Agree; 4.32-5.14-Agree; 3.49-4.31-Slightly Agree; 2.66-3.48-Slightly Disagree; 1,83-2.65-Disagree; 1.0-1.82-Strongly Disagree

With a mean of 4.41 to 4.92, as shown in Table 5, which summarizes the respondents' brand preference for a clothing brand with a longer length of support, the respondents showcase a consistent agreement about the questions regarding the variable. From the respondents' point of view, these results show that the brand's commitment is demonstrated in the length of support. Notably, the respondents show a positive attitude when the clothing brand is consistent with their promise to donate. Brand donations during sales events follow this, with a 4.65 mean. The average score of 4.61 indicates group agreement and suggests that when buying, the respondents care about the brand's commitment.

Table 6: Respondents' preference for the clothing brand with CRM

Brand Preference	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
I prefer a clothing brand with CRM to a brand without CRM.	4.36	1.124	Agree
I chose a clothing brand with CRM as my first preference.	3.98	1.117	Slightly Agree
I use a clothing brand with CRM than other brands of clothing.	3.91	1.101	Slightly Agree
I recommend a clothing brand that supports a cause.	4.76	1.128	Agree
I repurchase a clothing brand that supports a cause.	4.52	1.121	Agree
I define my choice of clothing based on the clothing brand's CRM	3.95	1.177	Slightly Agree
Overall	4.25	1.128	Slightly Agree

*5.15-6.00— Strongly Agree; 4.32-5.14-Agree; 3.49-4.31-Slightly Agree; 2.66-3.48-Slightly Disagree; 1.83-2.65- Disagree; 1.0-1.82-Strongly Disagree

Participants strongly preferred clothing brands that used cause-related marketing (CRM) (avg. 4.36, SD = 1.124), clearly favoring brands that support causes (Mean = 4.76, SD = 1.128) and would repurchase from those brands (Mean = 4.52, SD = 1.112). Though people had slightly different thoughts on which brands to prioritize (Mean = 3.98, SD = 1.117) and

what to wear (Mean = 3.95, SD = 1.177), the general mean of 4.25 (SD = 1.128) shows that most people agreed. Even though people have different tastes, this shows that a lot of people like brands that support social issues.

Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 7: Latent variable coefficients

Construct	Items	Item Loading	p-value	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	Ave. Variances Extracted
Brand Preference				0.837	0.881	0.552
	BP1	0.740	<.001			
	BP2	0.791	<.001			
	BP3	0.771	<.001			
	BP4	0.707	<.001			
	BP5	0.751	<.001			
	BP6	0.693	<.001			
Donation Proximity				0.876	0.91	0.669
	DP1	0.801	<.001			
	DP2	0.875	<.001			
	DP3	0.804	<.001			
	DP4	0.860	<.001			
	DP5	0.801	<.001			
Type of Cause				0.927	0.948	0.820
	Environmental Cause	0.905	<.001			
	Health Cause	0.911	<.001			
	Animal Cause	0.887	<.001			
	Human Cause	0.920	<.001			
Type of Support				0.870	0.939	0.885
	Monetary	0.941	<.001			
	Non-Monetary	0.941	<.001			
Length of Support				0.900	0.921	0.626
	LS1	0.831	<.001			
	LS2	0.774	<.001			
	LS3	0.827	<.001			
	LS4	0.751	<.001			
	LS5	0.787	<.001			
	LS6	0.804	<.001			
	LS7	0.761	<.001			

Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), the researchers checked the correctness of their factors. The results in Table 7 show strong construct reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.837 to 0.900, which is higher than the acceptable level. All item loading were statistically significant (p <.001) and above the 0.5 level for convergent validity. They

ranged from 0.693 to 0.920 for different factors. The internal consistency was high, as shown by composite reliability values between 0.881 and 0.939. The average variance recovered was also high, ranging from 0.552 to 0.885, which was higher than the standard. By following these rules to the letter, the researchers proved that their measurement tool could be trusted for future study.

Discriminant Validity

Table 8a: Correlation between square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE)

Relation of square roots of the AVE with the inter-construct squared correlation					
Brand Preference	Donation Proximity	Type of Cause	Type of Support	Length of Support	
0.818	0.686	0.664	0.666	0.629	
0.686	0.906	0.725	0.708	0.566	
0.664	0.725	0.941	0.756	0.551	
0.666	0.708	0.756	0.792	0.601	
0.629	0.566	0.551	0.601	0.743	
	0.818 0.686 0.664 0.666	Preference Proximity 0.818 0.686 0.686 0.906 0.664 0.725 0.666 0.708	Preference Proximity Cause 0.818 0.686 0.664 0.686 0.906 0.725 0.664 0.725 0.941 0.666 0.708 0.756	Preference Proximity Cause Support 0.818 0.686 0.664 0.666 0.686 0.906 0.725 0.708 0.664 0.725 0.941 0.756 0.666 0.708 0.756 0.792	

Diagonal values are the square roots of AVE, and off-diagonals are inter-construct squared correlations.

Table 8b: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios

Construct			HTMT Ratios		
	Donation Proximity	Type of Cause	Type of Support	Length of Support	Brand Preference
Donation Proximity					
Type of Cause	0.762				
Type of Support	0.750	0.792			
Length of Support	0.750	0.776	0.842		
Brand Preference	0.738	0.644	0.636	0.695	

Note: Ratios are Good if < .90, best < .85

Discriminant Validity tells that all of the variables, namely Brand Preference, Donation Proximity, Type of Cause, Type of Support, and Length of Support used in the study, do not overlap with each other, resulting in reliable results. This assessment serves as the affirmation that during the commencement of the survey, the respondents understand the questions, and there is no confusion as each latent variable is unambiguous and unique. Also, the assessment confirms that there are no overlapping questions with other variables (Kock, 2017).

For the AVE, the diagonal containing the value (the one with the shaded color) should not be lower than the other off-diagonal values (without shade). For HTMT, a lower value than 0.85 is reliable (Fornell & Locker, 1981). The tables above indicate that the research instrument is within the standards, which helps gain insights more confidently as the AVE of each variable is higher than the other off-diagonal values, and the values for HTMT are lower than 0.85.

Evaluation of Structural Model

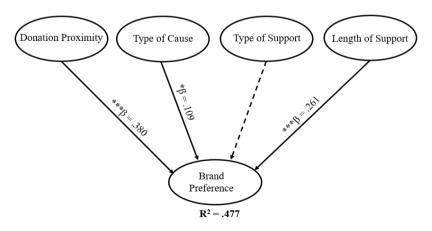
Table 9: Model fit and qual	ity indices of the	emerging model
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Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.190, p < .001	p < .05	Significant
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.471, p < .001	p < .05	Significant
Average block VIF (AVIF)	3.021	<u>≤</u> 3.3	Ideally
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.578	<u>≤</u> 3.3	Ideally
Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1.000	= 1.00	Ideally
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1.000	= 1.00	Ideally
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	= 1.00	Ideally
Standardized threshold difference sum ratio (STDSR)	1.000	= 1.00	Ideally
Standardized mean absolute residual (SMAR)	0.067	<u>≤</u> 0.10	Acceptable

The emerging model's fit and quality indices are shown in Table 9. The indices assessed the emerging structural model's validity. Significant values (p-value <.05) for the Average path coefficient (APC = 0.190) and Average R-squared (ARS = 0.471) indicate that external variables significantly predict and explain the endogenous variable (Kock, 2017). In addition, the Average block VIF (AVIF= 3.021) and Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF = 2.578) have ideal values, indicating that the model's latent variables have no multicollinearity.

Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR = 1.000), R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR = 1.000), Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR = 1.00), Standardized threshold difference sum ratio (STDSR = 1.000), and standardized mean absolute residual (SMAR = 0.067) meet the criteria for acceptance (Kock, 2017), suggesting the model is suitable for the data These indices showed that no hypothesized causality problem or path is improbable or reversed. This makes the model compatible (Kock, 2017).

Emerging Model



Note: *** significant at p <0.001; ** significant at p <0.01, * significant at p <0.05; — → insignificant at p > 0.05

Figure 1: Emerging model of cause-related marketing and brand preference

The purpose of the study is to determine the effect of the structural elements of CRM on the brand preference of the participants, as depicted in Figure 1.

Path Effect **Exogenous Endogenous** P -value Effect Size Description Interpretatio Coefficient Size Interpretation (f^2) (Cohen, 1988)** **(B)** H₁ is H1: Donation Brand 0.380 < 0.001 0.247 Medium Significant Preference **Proximity** supported H2: Type of → Brand 0.109 0.013 0.064 Small Significant H₂ is Preference Cause supported 0.01 NA H3: Type of → Brand 0.422 0.006 Insignifican H3 is not **Support** Preference supported H4: Length → Brand < 0.001 0.261 0.16 Medium Significant H4 is of Support Preference supported

Table 10: Summary of path analysis

Cohen's Effect Size: **0.02 – small, 0.15 – medium, 0.35 – large

Table 10 shows the path analysis conducted with one segment. The researchers analyzed the path coefficients and their probability values to determine whether cause-related marketing (CRM) structural elements have any effect on customers' preference for the clothing brand with CRM.

Effect of Donation Proximity on Customers' Preference of The Clothing Brand With CRM

The study's results show that there is a strong positive relationship between how people feel about Donation Proximity (β = .380, f2 = 0.247, p < 0.001) and their preference to buy clothes from brands that use cause-related marketing (CRM). The positive β -coefficients and high level of importance (p-value < .05) make this clear. It means that as respondents' feelings about Donation Proximity get better, their chances of liking a clothing brand with CRM also rise. With a f² value of .247, the data also show that how respondents felt about Donation Proximity had a modest effect on their preference to buy from clothing brands that are driven by CRM. This means that the fact that about 24.7% of respondents chose clothing brands that focus on CRM is because of how they felt about Donation Proximity (Cohen, 1988). So, these results support hypothesis 1, which shows that Donation Proximity has a big effect on the respondent's preference of clothing brands that use CRM.

Effect of Type of Cause on Customers' Preference of The Clothing Brand With CRM

The study's findings showed the positive impact of the Type of Cause (β = 0.109, f^2 = 0.064, p = 0.013) on customers' preference of the clothing brand with cause-related marketing (CRM). This means that as the Type of Cause improves, it results in enhancement in respondents' preference of clothing brand with CRM. Furthermore, the Type of Cause contributes to customers' preference of the clothing brand with CRM to a small but significant degree, denoted by an effect size (f^2) of 0.064. This indicates that approximately 6.4% of the variance in respondents' preference of the clothing brand with CRM can be attributed to the Type of Cause, according to Cohen's classification (1988). Therefore, these results firmly support Hypothesis 2, supporting that the Type of Cause has a significant effect on the respondents' preference of the clothing brand integrated with CRM.

Effect of Type of Support on Customers' Preference of The Clothing Brand With CRM

The study found no significant effect of Type of Support ($\beta = 0.010$, f2 = 0.006, p = 0.422) on customers' preference for clothing brands using cause-related marketing (CRM). The data

shows that the relationship being evaluated is not statistically significant because the p-value is over 0.05. Data also shows that the Type of Support does not have an effect on customers' CRM preference of clothing brand. The data do not support Hypothesis 3. Hence, Type of support doesn't have a positive effect on the brand preference of consumers in CRM campaigns of clothing brands in the Philippines. This insight helps professionals and researchers study consumer brand preference for CRM-using clothing brands.

Effect of Length of Support on Customers' Preference of The Clothing Brand With CRM

The results indicate that the likelihood of the respondents choosing the clothing brand is when there is an increase in the length of support. This is backed up by the β -coefficients and the significant significance level of 0.001, which is less than the required p-value of 0.05. The (β = 0.261, f2 = 0.160, p < 0.001) showcases that there is a positive effect of length of support with cause-related marketing (CRM). The 0.160 effect size (f2) or 16% exhibits that the respondent's preference of clothing brand is due to the length of support, and it has a slight effect based on Cohen's criteria. Hence, H4 is supported, which means the length of support is a significant variable that has a positive effect on customers' clothing brand preference with a CRM.

The result of donation proximity with (β = .380, f2 = 0.247, p < 0.001) supported hypothesis 1 (H1) of the study that there is a positive effect on the brand preference of clothing brands. According to the study of Anuar & Adam (2017), a CRM campaign with local causes makes the customers view the campaign positively. This proves that local causes, such as the proximity of donations, has a positive effect on customer's response. The study of Choi et al. (2016) also showed that local businesses do better in emerging markets when they interact with local causes. This could be attributed to a country who are strongly nationalistic resulting in favorable attitudes towards companies that support local companies. Also, the study of Hasdiansa & Balqiah (2020) solidified that donation proximity, especially national donation, is a vital factor since there is a more favorable attitude from the respondents. With these studies, the donation proximity is proven to be effective in a CRM campaign.

DISCUSSION

Brand Preference

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) has a relative effect on clothing industry. This means that most of the respondents like companies that support social problems. Respondents who answered have a very good view of brands that use CRM. Bashir's (2020) study backs up these results by focusing on how green brand pictures affect consumer preference and how important it is for customers to understand what brands mean to them. This is supported even more by Bhakar's (2013) study, which focuses on CRM's part in creating a positive company image. Both studies stress how important CRM is for changing customers' opinions and preference, especially when it comes to how people feel about brands that support social causes.

Type of Cause

Respondents are more likely to prefer brands who support environmental, health, animal, and human causes that they are familiar with. This result is in line with the previous study of Pandey et al. (2023), wherein it reported that customers are more likely to form positive attitudes with a brand that are associated with the cause that they support, leading to increased preference and willingness to purchase from the clothing brand. Similarly, the study of Jublee et al. (2023)

shows that a clear association between a brand and a cause results in increased perception of a brand. The results of this study also showed that participants generally prefer clothing brands that support causes within these four types. This is aligned with the study of (Lafferty & Edmondson, 2014), who discovered that customers tend to create favorable attitudes towards brands that support these causes, particularly the health and human causes.

Type of Support

The finding for Type of Support shows that respondents favor both monetary and non-monetary support from clothing brands using CRM to support social causes. The mean values for monetary support range from 4.17 to 4.92, indicating positive perception of brands that supply monetary support. This result is supported by Handa and Gupta (2020), who found that CRM support was predominantly monetary. According to Huang and Fitzpatrick (2018), monetary donations have a more significant effect on consumers' brand perceptions. However, mean scores for non-monetary support range from 4.46 to 4.59, also demonstrating a preference for brands that contribute in-kind goods to causes. According to Cui et al. (2003), as referenced in (Schoor, 2021), in-kind or non-monetary help is preferred. Contrary to expectations, the Type of Support does not have a significant effect on customers' preferences for CRM-linked clothing brands (p = 0.422), refuting Hypothesis 3. This supports the previous study of Pieper (2019) who found that the type of support lacks positive effect if they find the value being donated confusing. Respondents exhibit neutrality and acceptance toward any form of support similar to the finding of Lee and Johnson (2019), where it shows that consumers will still prefer a brand as long as it engages in CRM activities, regardless of the CRM strategy the brand employs.

Length of Support

For the length of support, a more extended campaign can gain a more positive view, and if it is on repeat, it results in lesser skepticism and more credibility towards the campaign (Beckman et al., 2015). The study of Beckman & Noll can be taken as a way to remove people's skepticism about the goal of CRM, which makes the participants view the campaign positively and has an effect on the customer's brand preference. The result is also supported by the study of Geißel (2010) as cited in (Peiper, 2019), which explains that CRM effectiveness is attributed to the company's commitment if it has a long-term duration. This is the same as the study of Cui et al. (2003) as cited in (Hong et al., 2021), which explains that a more favorable evaluation can be achieved if the CRM has a long duration. The result is somewhat opposite to the study of Chang et al. (2021), that there are various combinations, such as cause type and product, to say if the longer duration of the campaign is much more effective than the shorter duration. Overall, the results give additional support to the study of Bhatti et al. (2020), which shows that the time frame in the CRM campaign has a significant effect on the consumer's view of the campaign. The study of Steffen & Günther (2013) also supports the results. The length of support gathered a collective agreement from the respondents regarding the brand preference for clothing brands.

CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive data analysis reveals a robust association between cause-related marketing (CRM) and customer preferences in clothing brands. The study establishes that a positive attitude prevails among respondents towards clothing brands actively engaged in social issues, emphasizing the effect of customer perception on preferences. Utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and a data of 408 people, this study looks into the

effect between CRM structural elements and Generation Z's clothing brand preferences in Metro Manila. The study shows that Donation Proximity, Type of Cause, Type of Support, and Length of Support has a significant effect on brand preference. The results show that people are leaning towards supporting local causes rather than foreign ones. The type of cause proves influential, with customers exhibiting a preference for clothing brands supporting familiar causes such as environmental, health, animal, and human issues. Moreover, both monetary and non-monetary support from brands in CRM programs receive favorable responses, reinforcing the importance of brands' contributions to charitable and social causes. Furthermore, long-term and consistent participation in CRM efforts greatly has an effect on Gen Z's preference of clothing brands. The structure model analysis confirms that Donation Proximity and Type of Cause greatly has a positive effect on customers' preferences. This shows how important these CRM factors are in influencing brand preference among Generation Z in Metro Manila's clothes market. However, contrary to previous findings, the study refutes the hypothesis that links the type of support to consumer preferences. The statement implies that respondents' value and recognize both monetary and non-monetary support equally. The study emphasizes the importance of established and continuous participation in CRM for clothing brands to develop robust customer preferences.

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