



A STUDY ON ASSESSING THE RELEVANCE OF CAUSES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT'S CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the intricacies of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) campaigns, the research aims to gauge their alignment with the distinct socio-cultural nuances of Coimbatore District. Given CRM's transformative potential in marrying corporate objectives with societal good, this study aims to probe public perceptions of Cause-Marketing Campaigns and discern local community preferences in relation to marketed causes. A sample size of 129 individuals, spanning various occupational sectors, was engaged using descriptive statistics, ANOVA analysis, and correlation analysis. The findings unveiled a dominant sentiment of respondents discussing marketed causes within their community, pointing towards the community's active engagement in CRM. Despite a noticeable alignment between individual beliefs and marketing campaigns, there exists a discernible mismatch between personal cause preferences and the causes predominantly marketed. Recommendations emphasize the need for campaigns to bridge this disconnect by better aligning with genuine community concerns. Age emerged as a pivotal factor in shaping CRM perceptions, whereas education predominantly influenced local community preferences. The study concludes by underlining the profound influence of both personal beliefs and communal dialogues on cause-marketing perceptions and highlights the opportunity for marketers to harness this synergy for more impactful CRM campaigns in Coimbatore District.

Keywords: Cause-Related Marketing, Cause Marketing Analysis, Coimbatore Marketing Strategies, Brand-Cause Partnerships, Social Impact Marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

Cause-related marketing (CRM) has emerged as a transformative strategy that marries corporate profit objectives with societal benefits. By aligning with causes that resonate with consumers, companies not only enhance their brand image but also contribute positively to societal issues. However, the effectiveness of CRM often hinges on the relevance of the chosen causes to the target audience. A mismatch can lead to a disconnect, possibly negating the intended benefits and potentially undermining a brand's credibility. Coimbatore District, with its rich tapestry of socio-cultural dynamics, presents a unique landscape for CRM initiatives. As one of the major industrial hubs in Tamil Nadu, it houses a diverse population with varied consumer patterns and preferences. It becomes essential for marketers to comprehend the social pulse of this region to select causes that truly resonate with the local populace.

The study delves deep into this paradigm. It seeks to understand the interplay between cause-marketing efforts and the local sentiments of Coimbatore District. By doing so, it aims to unravel which causes strike a chord with the local community and which ones may fall on indifferent ears. Given the increasing emphasis on socially conscious marketing and corporate social responsibility, such an assessment holds immense value. Companies looking to venture into the Coimbatore market, or those already operating there, can leverage these insights to tailor their CRM initiatives more effectively. This not only optimizes their marketing efforts but also ensures that their investments in societal causes yield tangible impacts both for their brand and the community at large. In essence, this study serves as a compass, guiding marketers through the intricate maze of Coimbatore's cause-marketing landscape, ensuring their efforts are both meaningful and impactful.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In the modern age of technology and consumerism, the digital marketplace and its strategies are evolving rapidly. Gowri (2019) reminisced about traditional marketing methods where goods were directly sold to consumers through physical outlets. With technological advancements, telemarketing and online sales became more prevalent, changing customer attitudes towards online marketing, as seen in Coimbatore District.

BhupendraSingh's (2019) study explored the perception of consumers towards Cause-Related Marketing (CRM). The findings suggest that consumers largely favor causes related to health and education, with CRM positively impacting their view of organizations and products. CRM strategies resonate with consumers who feel they contribute to societal welfare, emphasizing the importance of partnering with the right NGO for businesses.

Lerro et al. (2019) examined Millennials' attitudes towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the food industry, revealing a significant willingness among this demographic to support companies with strong CSR initiatives. Trust and loyalty were identified as key factors influencing consumer support for such initiatives.

Exploring the sports marketing dimension, Baek et al. (2020) analyzed the influence of CRM in sport merchandise purchasing decisions. Findings showed that fans with higher altruistic tendencies were more inclined to support CRM campaigns of their favorite teams, emphasizing the impact of consumer psychology in CRM effectiveness.

Sadhasivam and Begum (2018) ventured into the realm of place branding, focusing on Coimbatore. Their study highlighted the city's appeal to businesses based on its brand value and image, suggesting that cities can, indeed, be considered brands, influencing business investment decisions.

Lastly, the digital evolution's influence on consumer behavior was emphasized by Sathyapriya and Sekar (2020). Their study in a specific geographic location revealed that despite varying educational backgrounds and incomes, customers are increasingly favoring digital channels for purchasing a wide range of products, from electronics to convenience goods, underscoring the burgeoning power and potential of digital marketing.

2.1 RESEARCH GAP

While there has been considerable research focusing on the changing dynamics of the digital marketplace, consumer attitudes towards online marketing, and the general effectiveness of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) strategies, a distinct gap exists in understanding the local nuances of the Coimbatore District's cause-related marketing landscape. Previous studies, like those conducted by BhupendraSingh (2019) and Lerro et al. (2019), have discussed CRM and corporate social responsibility in broader terms without focusing specifically on local preferences and causes that resonate with the Coimbatore community. Sadhasivam and Begum (2018) touched upon the branding appeal of Coimbatore as a city, but the relationship between the city's unique cause preferences and marketing strategies remains underexplored. There's a compelling need to delve deeper into Coimbatore's local cause preferences and understand how these preferences shape and are shaped by the district's marketing initiatives. This research aims to bridge that gap by examining the relevance and impact of specific causes in Coimbatore's marketing efforts and gauging the perception of marketed causes in relation to the preferences of the local community.

2.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the public perceptions and impact of Cause-Marketing Campaigns.
2. To identify the perception of Marketed Causes in Relation to Local Community Preferences in Coimbatore District.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In pursuit of comprehending the relevance of causes within Coimbatore District's Cause-Related Marketing landscape, a descriptive research design was employed. The study encapsulated a sample size of 129 individuals from diverse occupational sectors in the district. Leveraging a convenience sampling technique, these participants, hailing from a range of backgrounds, were engaged for data collection. The primary analytical tools deployed in this study were Descriptive Statistics – to offer a summarized view of the collated data, ANOVA Analysis – to discern any significant disparities among participants' responses based on demographics like age, educational background, and occupation, and Correlation Analysis – to understand the relationships between different variables. By integrating these methods, the research aspires to shed light on the dynamics and preferences that shape consumers' affiliations with cause-related marketing campaigns in Coimbatore District.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table no.4.1 : Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Factors	Options	No. of Respondents	Percent	Total Percent
Age Group	Below 24 years	35	27.1	100%
	25 to 35 years	44	34.1	
	36 to 45 years	28	21.7	
	Above 45 years	22	17.1	
Educational Level	School/ Diploma Level	29	22.5	100%
	UG	43	33.3	
	PG	47	36.4	
	Others	10	7.8	
Occupation	Student	25	19.4	100%
	Business Owner/Entrepreneur	38	29.5	
	Private Sector Employee	37	28.7	
	Public Sector/Government Employee	20	15.5	
	Others	9	7.0	

INTERPRETATION: The survey predominantly captures the perspectives of young adults aged between 25 to 35 years, which constitute 34.1% of respondents. In terms of education, postgraduates are the most represented at 36.4%, while only a small fraction, 7.8%, falls under other educational categories. Occupation-wise, business owners/entrepreneurs and private sector employees lead with 29.5% and 28.7% respectively, and the least represented group is the 'Others' category at just 7.0%. This suggests a well-educated demographic with a significant portion involved in entrepreneurship or private sector jobs.

Table no.4.2: Public Perceptions and Impact of Cause-Marketing Campaigns

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The marketing campaigns align with my beliefs	2.42	1.22
Marketing effectively highlights the cause's significance	2.32	1.21
Cause-marketing influences my buying choices	2.37	1.22
Cause-marketing feels genuine, not just a branding strategy	2.36	1.24
I support brands that match my favoured causes	2.37	1.21
Cause-marketing visibly benefits the community	2.38	1.22
I discuss the marketed causes with peers and family	2.47	1.19
Campaigns encourage my active involvement in the causes	2.42	1.22
Marketed causes resonate with community values	2.40	1.20
Brands not using cause-marketing miss a deep community connection	2.40	1.22

INFERENCE : From the above table 4.2, the descriptive statistics for the public perceptions and impact of cause-marketing campaigns are ranked from 'I discuss the marketed causes with peers and family' stood at first with the highest mean score 2.47, followed by 'Campaigns encourage my active involvement in the causes' stood at second with the mean score 2.42, 'The marketing campaigns align with my beliefs' stood at second with the mean score 2.42, 'Marketed causes resonate with community values' stood at third with the mean score 2.40, 'Brands not using cause-marketing miss a deep community connection' stood at third with the mean score

2.40, 'Cause-marketing visibly benefits the community' stood at fourth with the mean score 2.38, 'I support brands that match my favoured causes' stood at fifth with the mean score 2.37, 'Cause-marketing influences my buying choices' stood at fifth with the mean score 2.37, 'Cause-marketing feels genuine, not just a branding strategy' stood at sixth with the mean score 2.36, and finally 'Marketing effectively highlights the cause's significance' stood at seventh with the mean score 2.32.

Table no.4.3: Perception of Marketed Causes in Relation to Local Community Preferences

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Marketed causes generally align with my personal preferences	2.41	1.21
The causes most frequently advertised reflect the community's values	2.40	1.23
I often find a mismatch between my preferred causes and those that are heavily marketed	2.67	1.25
Most of the popular brands promote causes that the community genuinely cares about	2.34	1.21
The causes I feel strongly about are rarely highlighted in mainstream marketing	2.67	1.23
Brands that align their marketing with local preferences tend to be more successful in the community	2.40	1.23
Marketed causes often feel out of touch with the community's real concerns	2.66	1.25
I'm more inclined to support campaigns that focus on causes I personally believe in	2.37	1.22
Local community discussions often mirror the causes presented in mainstream marketing	2.43	1.22
I wish brands would focus more on the causes that the local community deems important	2.40	1.23

INFERENCE:

From the above table 4.3, the descriptive statistics for the perception of marketed causes in relation to local community preferences are ranked from 'I often find a mismatch between my preferred causes and those that are heavily marketed' stood at first with the highest mean score 2.67, followed by 'The causes I feel strongly about are rarely highlighted in mainstream marketing' stood at first with the mean score 2.67, 'Marketed causes often feel out of touch with the community's real concerns' stood at second with the mean score 2.66, 'Local community discussions often mirror the causes presented in mainstream marketing' stood at third with the mean score 2.43, 'Marketed causes generally align with my personal preferences' stood at fourth with the mean score 2.41, 'The causes most frequently advertised reflect the community's values' stood at fifth with the mean score 2.40, 'Brands that align their marketing with local preferences tend to be more successful in the community' stood at fifth with the mean score 2.40, 'I wish brands would focus more on the causes that the local community deems important' stood at fifth with the mean score 2.40, 'I'm more inclined to support campaigns that focus on causes I personally believe in' stood at sixth with the mean score 2.37, and finally 'Most of the popular brands promote causes that the community genuinely cares about' stood at seventh with the mean score 2.34.

Table No.4.4

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between demographic factors and public perceptions regarding cause-marketing campaigns' impact.

		ANOVA					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
Age Group	Between Groups	21.227	25	.849	4.309	.006	Significant
	Within Groups	119.161	103	1.157			
	Total	140.388	128				
Educational Level	Between Groups	21.559	25	.862	1.067	.393	Not Significant
	Within Groups	83.247	103	.808			
	Total	104.806	128				
Occupation	Between Groups	36.427	25	1.457	1.086	.372	Not Significant
	Within Groups	138.193	103	1.342			
	Total	174.620	128				

INFERENCE:

Based on the ANOVA results in table no.4.4, age group shows a significant association with public perceptions of cause-marketing campaigns' impact, with a p-value of 0.006. This suggests differing perceptions across age groups. Conversely, both educational level and occupation do not demonstrate a significant relationship with these perceptions, given their respective p-values of 0.393 and 0.372. Thus, while age appears to influence perceptions on cause-marketing, education and occupation do not play a decisive role.

Table No.4.5

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between demographic factors and the perception of marketed causes concerning local community preferences

		ANOVA					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
Age Group	Between Groups	31.084	24	1.295	1.232	.233	Not Significant
	Within Groups	109.304	104	1.051			
	Total	140.388	128				
Educational Level	Between Groups	16.500	24	.687	3.390	.021	Significant
	Within Groups	88.306	104	.849			
	Total	104.806	128				
Occupation	Between Groups	45.850	24	1.910	1.543	.070	Not Significant
	Within Groups	128.770	104	1.238			
	Total	174.620	128				

INFERENCE: Based on Table No.4.5, age doesn't significantly influence perceptions of marketed causes concerning community preferences, with a p-value of 0.233. However, educational background plays a vital role, as evidenced by a significant p-value of 0.021, suggesting varying perceptions based on education. Meanwhile, occupation doesn't considerably affect these perceptions, as indicated by a p-value of 0.070.

Table No.4.6

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant correlation between the public's perception of cause-marketing campaign impacts and their views on marketed causes in terms of local community preferences.

Correlations			
		Public Perceptions and Impact of Cause-Marketing Campaigns	Perception of Marketed Causes in Relation to Local Community Preferences
Public Perceptions and Impact of Cause-Marketing Campaigns	Pearson Correlation	1	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	129	129
Perception of Marketed Causes in Relation to Local Community Preferences	Pearson Correlation	.609**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	129	129

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

INFERENCE : Based on Table No.4.6, there's a positive correlation of 0.609 between the public's perception of the impact of cause-marketing campaigns and their views on marketed causes concerning local community preferences. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level with a two-tailed p-value of .000. This suggests that as one variable increases, the other is likely to increase as well. Given the significant correlation, the null hypothesis stating no significant correlation between the two variables can be rejected.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The majority of respondents were young adults aged 25-35 years (34.1%). Most were postgraduates (36.4%), and significant portions were business owners or worked in the private sector. Regarding cause-marketing perceptions, the most prominent sentiment was that respondents often discussed marketed causes with peers and family (mean score of 2.47). There's also a noticeable alignment between marketing campaigns and individual beliefs.

A common feedback was a perceived mismatch between personal cause preferences and those predominantly marketed (mean score of 2.67). There was a call for greater alignment with genuine community concerns. Age plays a significant role in shaping perceptions about cause-marketing campaigns (p-value of 0.006). However, education and occupation do not show a decisive influence. For local community preferences, educational background emerges as a significant influencer (p-value of 0.021), while age doesn't.

A strong positive correlation (0.609) exists between perceptions of cause-marketing impacts and views on marketed causes' alignment with community preferences. Overall, the study reveals the importance of age and education in shaping perceptions about cause-marketing, with a strong interrelationship between public views on marketing impacts and community preferences.

5.1 SUGGESTIONS

To optimize the effectiveness of cause-marketing campaigns, it's essential to recognize the weight of communal discussions around marketed causes, as highlighted by the dominant sentiment of respondents discussing such causes with peers and family. The alignment observed between marketing campaigns and individual beliefs indicates a potential avenue for further engagement. However, addressing the evident mismatch between personal cause preferences and widely marketed ones is crucial. Tailoring campaigns to align more closely with genuine community concerns can bridge this gap. While age notably influences cause-marketing perceptions, it's equally vital to factor in the substantial role of education in determining views on local community preferences. The strong correlation between perceptions of cause-marketing impacts and views on their alignment with community preferences emphasizes the need for a holistic approach, catering to both individual and community sentiments.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study underscores the critical interplay between personal beliefs and marketing campaigns in shaping perceptions about cause-marketing. A clear avenue exists for deepening engagement by tapping into communal discussions around marketed causes. However, a palpable disconnect persists between personal cause preferences and mainstream marketing initiatives. By prioritizing genuine community concerns and integrating them into marketing strategies, there's potential to bridge this divide. Notably, while age significantly influences these perceptions, educational background stands out as a key determinant in shaping views about local community preferences. The evident correlation between perceptions of cause-marketing impacts and their alignment with community values accentuates the importance of aligning marketing efforts with both individual and collective sentiments.

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