

THE ROLE OF 'CAUSE INVOLVEMENT' IN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is an exchange-based transaction in which the company invests its portion of earnings in causes. A study on cause involvement of interconnected, sustainable development goals (SDGs) across different cause categories in CRM campaigns is lacking. This research investigates the variation in cause involvement across different categories of SDG causes. The study used a mixed approach: a qualitative study followed by a quantitative study. The first qualitative research thematically categorized the causes of SDGs into social, economic, and environmental categories. Another qualitative investigation interviewed domain experts by telephone, resulting in ten prominent causes. Further, a quantitative analysis using MANOVA indicated that SDG cause involvement differed for individual causes, resulting in high, medium and low involvement causes in CRM campaigns. The study pointed out that the cause involvement of SDG causes has a higher impact than their interconnectedness in a CRM campaign.

Keywords: Cause-related marketing, Sustainable Development Goals, cause involvement, cause category.

Introduction

Cause-related Marketing (CRM) is a form of corporate social responsibility where a brand partners with a non-profit organization (Lafferty et al., 2004), supporting causes (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), benefiting both the brand and the non-profit organization (HBR, 2011). A successful CRM strategy involves selecting the right cause and those important to customers, which will improve brand preferences and purchasing (HBR, 2011).

The SDGs present new business opportunities and long-term objectives (Pedersen, 2018). CRM campaigns that promote SDGs may provide companies with a new way to achieve long-term goals. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of interconnected, universal goals that aim to achieve sustainable development (Bali Swain & Ranganathan, 2021; Raman et al., 2023). The U.N.'s SDGs, which focus on sustainability, equitable education, inequality, nutrition, environmental degradation, economic growth, climate change, pollution, deforestation, and so on, are interconnected for future sustainability (Browne, 2017). The existing literature states that the SDG causes are interconnected, bringing out that an SDG cause interacts positively with all other SDG causes.

The personal relevance of the cause depicted as cause involvement is crucial for effective CRM campaigns (Grau & Folse, 2007). Self-identity theory aids consumers in identifying with a cause and extending their support to CRM campaigns that support such causes (Vanhamme et al., 2012).

The literature underscores the significance of comprehending cause involvement variations across various cause categories of SDG causes, thereby necessitating a comprehensive examination of cause involvement within the interconnected SDG causes, which is crucial for making effective CRM campaign decisions. Does the brand's association with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) solely focus on its interconnectedness or cause involvement? This study fills a gap in the existing literature by examining the influence of the U.N.'s SDG cause involvement across various categories of cause-related marketing campaigns. To date, no empirical study has been conducted to address this gap in the existing literature.

The interconnected nature of SDGs necessitates a thorough analysis of the cause involvement of these SDG causes in cause-related marketing campaigns. Hence, this study investigates the cause involvement of the UN's SDG causes in social, economic and environmental categories as a part of CRM campaigns through a mixed approach; a qualitative study followed by a quantitative study is used to test the research question. We then discuss the results and implications for the brand and the UN SDG's causes.

The qualitative analysis helps categorize SDG goals into social, economic, and environmental categories and identify major SDG causes that companies should support in their CRM campaigns. The quantitative study identified the cause involvement of these SDG goals in CRM campaigns.

Conceptual background and research question development

CRM is a strategy where companies collaborate with charitable organizations, donate to charity from consumer transactions, and mutually benefit each other (Grau & Folse, 2007; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Lafferty & Edmondson, 2014 research explores only the health, human, environmental, and animal cause categories, while Gregory et al., (2020) study suggests expanding decision involvement beyond natural resources. The literature demands an exploration of further cause categories.

In September 2015, 193 countries signed the global goals of the U.N.'s SDG for 2030. (Pedersen, 2018). The linkage of SDG to businesses that cater to people's needs effectively aids in creating a successful business model (Pedersen, 2018). In order to achieve the SDG, the companies have to take different steps to connect their strategy with SDG, and their fit needs to be considered (Pedersen, 2018). A successful business model could be achieved by connecting SDG's with CRM strategy. The campaign participation rate increases significantly among those actively involved in a cause (Grau & Folse, 2007).

The right cause for partnership in CRM campaigns should be chosen based on familiarity with the cause (Lafferty et al., 2004). Consumer contributions significantly depend on their personal relevance to the cause in CRM (Broderick et al., 2003). The interconnected nature of SDGs necessitates an analysis of the difference in cause involvement among identified cause categories when companies provide support as a part of their CRM campaign. As a result, the following research question arises: RQ: In the context of cause-related marketing campaigns, will there be a difference in cause involvement of individual SDG causes in different categories when they are interconnected?

Method

A mixed method approach was used in this study, with a qualitative study followed by a quantitative study. The mixed approach was executed to bring more clarity on whether the cause involvement rather

than the interconnectedness played a crucial role.

The thematic analysis executed in Qualitative Study 1 gave in-depth knowledge of the 17 SDG causes and their targets. Further interaction in Study 2 with domain experts gave a deeper understanding of the cause involvement of these SDG causes in CRM campaigns. The qualitative study found prominent causes where the company could extend support as a part of its CRM campaign.

The quantitative study in study 3 that followed dwelled on the cause involvement of individual SDG causes and their cause categories.

Qualitative study

The qualitative study was executed as study 1, followed by study 2. Study 1 resulted in cause categories and thematic analysis of 179 targets of SDG causes, which gave a deep knowledge of the causes under each SDG. From this, we went to study 2, where the telephonic interview with ten domain experts and thematic analysis revealed ten prominent causes that the companies could extend support as a part of their CRM campaign.

Study 1

The study bifurcated the 17 SDG causes into social, economic and environmental categories with expert discussions following John Elkington's triple-bottom-line approach. The goals classified in the social category are good health and well-being (SDGs 3), quality education (SDGs 4), gender equality (SDGs 5), clean water sanitation (SDGs 6), reduced inequalities (SDGs 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDGs 11), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDGs 16). The goals separated as an economic category are no poverty (SDGs 1), zero hunger (SDGs 2), affordable and clean energy (SDGs 7), decent work and economic growth (SDGs 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDGs 9), responsible consumption and production (SDGs 12) and partnership for the goals (SDGs 17). The goals grouped into environmental categories are climate action (SDGs 13), life below water (SDGs 14) and life on land (SDGs 15).

Results

A thematic analysis of Braun & Clarke (2006) was executed for 169 targets. Each target description of individual SDGs was analysed in depth, and each was coded under the umbrella of 17 sustainable development goals. The codes generated gave an in-depth understanding of the issues or causes addressed in each SDG by 2030. Table 2 illustrates the causes addressed in each SDG.

Table 2: UN Sustainable Development Goals		
Goals	Description	Keywords
Goal 1	No Poverty	Poverty Eradication
		Poverty reduction
		Protection system and resource assessment for poor and vulnerable
		Climate Sustainability and mobilization of resources for Poor
		Policy frameworks for poverty eradication

Goal 2	Zero Hunger	End Hunger
		Nutritious food for children, adolescent girls, women & old age.
		Increase in agricultural productivity
		Sustain climate change to improve land and soil quality.
		Utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge
		Enhance the productivity of agriculture.
		Export measures of agriculture
		Timely access to market information on food reserves
Goal 3	Good health and well-being	Reduce mortality
		Reduce neonatal mortality
		End AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases, waterborne diseases and communicable diseases
		Reduce premature mortality and promote mental health.
		Drug abuse and alcohol prevention
		Reduce road traffic accidents.
		Reproductive health
		Universal health coverage
		Reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals, air, water, soil pollution & contamination.
		Tobacco control
		Provide access to medicines for all.
		Increase health financing
		Reduction of health risks
Goal 4	Quality Education	Quality pre-primary, primary & secondary education for all girls & boys and their childhood development.
		Affordable & quality education in technical, vocational & universities
		Technical & vocational skills for employment, jobs & entrepreneurship
		Eliminate gender disparities; Access to all levels of education & vocational training for vulnerable, inclusive of disabled, indigenous persons & children.
		Youth & adults achievement of literacy & numeracy.

		Cultures contribution to sustainable development
		Safe and non-violent learning environment for all
		Increase in the number of scholarships.
		Increase in quality of teachers
Goal 5	Gender Equality	Gender equality for women & girls
		Eliminate trafficking & exploitation.
		Avoid early, child and forced marriages and female genital mutilation
		Recognise & value unpaid care & domestic work and shared responsibilities within families.
		Participation of women in decision-making in political, economic and public life, reproductive health
		Reproductive health
		Equality for women in ownership of land, financial services, natural resources
		Empowerment of women
		Policies for the empowerment of women & girls
Goal 6	Clean water Sanitation	Affordable drinking water for all
		Equitable sanitation & hygiene for all
		Improve water quality
		Reduce water scarcity
		Integrated water resources
		Water-related ecosystems
		Harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse
		Local community support for water & sanitation management
Goal 7	Affordable and clean energy	Affordable, reliable and modern energy services
		Renewable energy
		Improvement in energy efficiency
		Clean energy
		Upgrade technology
Goal 8	Decent work and economic growth	GDP growth
		Higher levels of economic productivity
		Growth of MSME

		Sustainable consumption & production
		Equal pay for equal work
		Increase youth employment
		Reduce human trafficking and child labour.
		Labour rights: safe & secure working environment for migrants
		Promote sustainable tourism
		Banking, insurance & financial services
		Trade-related technical support
		Global strategy for youth employment
Goal 9	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Economic development and human well-being
		Sustainable industrialization
		Access to financial services and affordable credit
		Clean & environmentally sound technologies
		Enhance scientific research to upgrade technological capabilities.
		Financial, technological & technical support to least developed countries
		Domestic technology development, research & innovation
		Access to information & communications
Goal 10	Reduced Inequalities	Sustain income growth
		Empower & promote social, economic & political inclusion.
		Equal opportunities & reduced inequalities
		Greater equality
		Regulation & monitoring of global financial markets
		Developing countries' decision-making enhancement in global markets
		Well-managed migration policy
		Special treatment for least developed countries
		Assistance to financial flows
		Reduce transaction costs of migrants.

Goal 11	Sustainable cities and communities	Housing and slum upgradation
		Road safety
		Sustainable urbanization
		Protect & safeguard the world's cultural & national heritage.
		Reduce water-related disasters
		Air quality & Municipal waste management
		Universal health coverage for women, children, old persons & persons with disability
		Development planning – national and regional
		Disaster risk management
		Building sustainable buildings
Goal 12	Responsible consumption and production	Sustainable consumption & production
		Efficient use of natural resource
		Reduce food loss
		Sound management of waste
		Reduce waste generation
		Adoption of sustainable practices
		Procurement practices
		Awareness of sustainable development
		Strengthen scientific and technology capacity.
		Sustainable tourism
Goal 13	Climate Action	Encourage wasteful consumption
		Strengthen adaptive capacity - climate hazards & natural disasters
		Climate change mitigation and measures
		Operationalize the Green Climate Fund
Goal 14	Life below water	Effective climate change-related planning
		Reduce marine pollution
		Healthy oceans
		Address ocean acidification
		Regulate harvesting & end overfishing; avoid unregulated fishing.
		Conserve coastal & marine areas.
		Sustainable management of fisheries
		Marine biodiversity

		Access to small-scale artisanal fisheries
		Sustainable use of oceans
Goal 15	Life on land	Conservation of terrestrial ecosystem
		Increase afforestation
		Restore degraded land & soil.
		Conservation of mountain ecosystem
		Reduce degradation of natural habitats.
		Utilization of genetic resources
		End poaching and trafficking of flora and fauna
		Water Ecosystem
		Poverty reduction strategy
		Sustainably use biodiversity & ecosystems.
		Conservation & reforestation
		Sustainable livelihood opportunities for species
Goal 16	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Reduce violence and related death
		End abuse, trafficking, and violence of children
		Justice for all
		Recovery of stolen assets
		Reduce corruption & bribery.
		Transparent institutions
		Participatory decision-making
		Global governance
		Legal identity
		Public access to information
		Prevent violence, terrorism & crime.
		Sustainable development
Goal 17	Partnerships for the goals	Finance
		Technology
		Capacity Building
		Trade
		Systemic Issues

Source (s) : <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> & Author's own creation

The above table comprehensively illustrates the numerous causes further analysed in Study 2

Study 2

In this attempt, the study conducted an initial telephone interview with ten social work experts (5 practitioners, four researchers & academicians and one researcher & a practitioner) to identify the relevant causes from different cause categories. The time for each interview was 45 to 60 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in English.

Practitioners

Most practitioners suggested providing skill-based education that caters to their needs, incorporating modern technologies and not compromising quality for all individuals. They feel that sexually abused victims need more support. So they added that the need of the hour is to incorporate sex education and anti-addiction awareness as part of the education curriculum. They were concerned about the elderly and their shelter homes, too. There should also be more initiatives for people with disabilities and those suffering from domestic violence and depression. They put forth to tackle the broken families, especially the mental health of children and financial aid to the minorities.

They spoke of bringing up women's empowerment by selling their products like bean bag caps to children who have cancer and providing employment opportunities for those who faced domestic violence and financial freedom. They specified that the tribal community intervention and their menstrual hygiene should be handled, and also their life should be protected from wildlife attacks.

Most participants agree that waste management should be tackled, especially e-waste, hotel and household waste, and more awareness should be given. Some specified the need for measures to be taken to handle deforestation. They added the need for the prevention of natural resources and the supply of quality water. Few mentioned that there should be more encouragement and policies for renewable energy. Others pointed out that the requirement for policies that cater to diabetic patients and malnutrition among children should be provided. One general practitioner specified the need to take care of the healthy living of migrant workers. Few added that primary needs like food, health, and home should be met, especially for street children.

Practitioners noted that the critical area that needs support at an international level should be disaster management, such as floods, earthquakes, and issues of poverty, as well as climate change.

Academicians and Researchers

The academician, a researcher, vouched that there should be more focus on tier-one causes that meet basic needs like food, water, and shelter. The basic needs could be met by building houses rather than shelter homes, bringing out public campaigns for building wells and developing a public distribution system to tackle nutritional deficiency and address malnutrition in children. The tier-two cause that he pointed out had been education. He added that tier 3 causes should be security needs such as gender equality. He mentioned the struggle for clean drinking water, especially in coastal areas and the traces of materials in water leading to cancer and demanded proper water filtration. He added the need for technology-integrated farming and the incorporation of polyhouses with more focus on organic farming. He specified that the vulnerable sections, like differently abled, marginalized communities, and those with mental illness, require more support.

Most researchers mentioned the need for child development through summer camps and career

orientation at the school level. A researcher vouched for deforestation and the preservation of biodiversity. She pointed out the need for more awareness of constitutional rights, empowerment of marginalized groups, and welfare of migrant labourers. She also pointed out the rehabilitation of minorities like Ex-prisoners, HIV aids, disabled, elderly, and visually challenged. Another researcher had been of the option of bringing in more drug therapies by providing technical and financial support to eradicate drug abuses at the grassroots level, especially at school and college levels. Being a woman in the research field, she vouched for gender equality. She also pointed out the need to bifurcate the SDG based on John Elkin's triple bottom line concept and more reach on SDGs on an international level.

Analysis

Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis was executed to code these causes and identify sub-themes from the personal interviews. Initially, the statements put forth by the experts were transcribed manually and coded systematically. Then, the codes were organized into existing SDG themes and reviewed to check whether the themes matched the codes extracted. The themes and subthemes derived are depicted in Table 2:

Category	Themes	Sub Themes
Social	Quality Education and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal attention for students above grade 6. ➤ Skill-based education for minorities. ➤ Incorporation of Modern technologies into the new education system. ➤ Quality and equal standard of education. ➤ Sex education at the school level, especially in grades four and five, as well as tribal areas. ➤ Provision of anti-addiction awareness at the school level. ➤ Special schools for mentally disabled students. ➤ Provision of summer camps and Career at the school level.

Social	Sustainable Cities and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preventive measure programs for those who are sexually abused. ➤ Provision for elderly. ➤ Community intervention ➤ Tribal area lifestyle modification ➤ Provision of fencing people in tribal communities to protect their crops from wildlife attacks. ➤ Community development programs. ➤ Programs for people with disabilities. ➤ More requirements of mentally retarded homes. ➤ Shelter homes for those who faced domestic violence, vulnerable, widows, single parents and street children. ➤ Empowerment of marginalized groups. ➤ The welfare of migrant labourers. ➤ Rehabilitation of minorities. ➤ More support for vulnerable sections.
Social	Good health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring Menstrual hygiene among girls in tribal areas. ➤ Assuring the mental health of children from broken families. ➤ Diabetic prevention programs. ➤ Preventive measure programs for drug abuse. ➤ Provision of drug therapies. ➤ Eradicate the usage of drugs at the grassroots level by providing technical and financial support. ➤ Future treatments on health sectors. ➤ Ensuring healthy living of migrant workers. ➤ Manage Stress and depression.

Social	Clean water sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provision of quality drinking water in rural sectors and coastal belt. ➤ Behavioural change for consuming quality water. ➤ Provision of water filters.
Social	Peace and Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Initiatives to handle the trauma of sexual abuse. ➤ Awareness of constitutional rights.
Social	Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion of gender equality.
Economic	Responsible consumption and production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proper waste management ➤ Monitoring system for hotel waste management. ➤ Tackling sea pollution. ➤ Proper household waste management. ➤ Child cancer ➤ Preventing natural resources. ➤ Provision of organic farming and technologically integrated farming. ➤ Incorporation of polyhouse.
Economic	Decent work and economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide finance to women entrepreneurs to encourage them to produce items like bean bags and caps for children who have cancer. ➤ Employment opportunities for those who face domestic violence. ➤ Provision of financial support for the upliftment of minorities and women.
Economic	Zero hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meeting basic needs like food, especially for street children. ➤ Addressing issues of malnutrition.
Economic	Affordable and cleanenergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage the usage ofrenewable energy.

Environmental	Life on land	➤ Preventing deforestation
Environmental	Life below water	➤ Enhance marine biodiversity ➤ Reduce marine pollution

Source: Author's own creation

Results

The top 10 causes with equal representation of social, economic and environmental causes were selected using a pivot table. The thematic analysis results show that the top most social category causes are granting global access to public spaces for differently abled (Goal 11 – sustainable cities and communities), providing quality and equitable education (Goal 4 - quality education), ensuring women's safety and aftercare (Goal 5 – gender equality), drug abuse (goal 3: Good health and well- being) whereas the top most economic category causes as addressing malnutrition concerns in children and youth (Goal 1 – zero hunger), managing chemical, plastic and electronic waste (Goal 12 – responsible consumption and production), providing employment opportunities (Goal 8 – decent work and economic growth) while the prominent environmental category cause includes tackling the climate change and increase in temperature (Goal 13 – climate action), halt deforestation and promoting sustainability (Goal 15 – life on land) and protecting marine life from pollution (Goal 14 – life below water).

Quantitative Study

Following this, a quantitative study was executed to examine the cause involvement of the ten prominent causes of SDG derived from a qualitative study. The cause involvement of the prominent SDG causes was examined when companies extended their support to these causes as a part of a CRM campaign.

Analysis

The level of involvement for these cause categories in the CRM campaigns was examined using qualitative analysis. In this attempt, 60 offline participants who are researchers in various domains were randomly assigned five causes, and they were instructed to give their rating based on the cause involvement scale proposed by Grau & Folse (2007). They were assigned five causes randomly as it was expected that quick turnaround time would reduce the likelihood of responder fatigue. The highlight of any issue with the questionnaire could be identified with 10 participants in the survey at random (Burns et al., 2014). Before the start of the main survey, the initial ten respondents were questioned about how simple it was to grasp the instructions provided and whether the scale items were clear to them. After incorporating the relevant changes, they were instructed to give their rating based on the cause involvement scale proposed by Grau & Folse (2007).

Results

The cause involvement scale's reliability was examined, and the four items evaluating cause involvement generated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.878, depicted in Table 3, indicating a highly reliable scale.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.878	.882	4

Source(s): Author's own creation

Levene's test and normality assumptions were carried out as depicted in Table 4, and the homogeneity of variance assumptions is met as the $P > 0.05$.

Table 4: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Cause Involvement	Based on Mean	1.583	9	290	.120
	Based on Median	1.121	9	290	.347
	Based on the Median and with adjusted df	1.121	9	253.493	.348
	Based on trimmed mean	1.456	9	290	.164
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.					
a. Dependent variable: Cause Involvement					
b. Design: Intercept + Causes					

Source(s): Author's own creation

A univariate ANOVA was conducted initially with 60 participants to determine a statistically significant difference between individual SDG causes and cause involvement in CRM campaigns, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Univariate Tests								
Dependent Variable: Cause Involvement								
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power^a
Contrast	19.266	9	2.141	2.967	.002	.084	26.706	.969
Error	209.208	290	.721					
The F tests the effect of Causes. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.								
a. Computed using alpha = .05								

Source(s): Author's own creation

There was a significant effect on the level of cause involvement ($F(9,290)=2.967$, $P=0.002$) in CRM campaigns due to individual SDG causes.

Post Hoc was executed, which showed a significant difference between high (vs medium vs low) involvement of SDG causes in CRM campaigns. The estimated marginal means are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Estimated Marginal Means				
Dependent Variable: Cause Involvement				
Causes	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Quality Education	3.875	.155	3.570	4.180
Universal access to disabled	3.792	.155	3.486	4.097
Malnutrition	3.675	.155	3.370	3.980
Deforestation	3.783	.155	3.478	4.089
Waste Management	4.442	.155	4.136	4.747
Drug Abuse	3.483	.155	3.178	3.789
Employment Opportunities	3.942	.155	3.636	4.247
Women Empowerment	3.992	.155	3.686	4.297
Climate Change	4.192	.155	3.886	4.497
Marine Pollution	3.842	.155	3.536	4.147

Source(s): Author's own creation

Comparing the estimated marginal means in Table 6 showed that the highly involved SDG causes are waste management of chemical, plastic and electronic waste (mean=4.442) in the economic category, change of climate and increase in temperature (mean=4.192) in the environmental category and empowerment of women (mean=3.992) in the social category. Whereas moderately involved SDG causes are employment opportunities (mean=3.942) in the economic category, quality and equitable education (mean=3.875) in the social category, sea/marine pollution (mean=3.842) in the environmental category and the provision of public spaces for disabled persons (mean=3.792) in the social category. While low involved causes are halting deforestation and increasing sustainability (mean=3.783) in the environmental category, malnutrition in children and youth (mean=3.675) in the economic category and prevention and treatment of substance abuse (mean=3.483) in the social category.

The results indicate that the cause involvement of SDG causes varies when companies extend support as a part of their CRM campaign. The quantitative analysis found that while all causes in each category were prevalent, their involvement altered when corporations supported them as part of their CRM strategy. The results indicate that consumers perceived causes differently in CRM campaigns.

Discussion

Expert discussion panels and Braun & Clark thematic analysis led to the bifurcation of SDG causes into social, economic, and environmental categories, and the determination of SDG causes that companies could support in their CRM campaigns. The interconnectedness of SDG causes has made it a relevant universal goal to test its effectiveness in cause-related marketing campaigns. In a nutshell, the qualitative study revealed the top social, economic, and environmental causes companies should promote in their CRM campaigns.

Further, a quantitative study measured the level of cause involvement when companies extend support to these causes as part of their CRM campaign. The interconnectedness of SDG causes pointed out that SDG causes are interrelated, making it necessary to test whether the cause involvement of these SDG causes as part of their CRM campaign varied.

This study found significant differences in cause involvement across various cause categories of SDG in the CRM campaign. This study aligns with previous research that shows that a cause's personal relevance matters (Grau & Folse, 2007). This study results depict that the highly involved charitable causes were represented as highly involved SDG causes are waste management of chemical, plastic and electronic waste (Goal 12—responsible consumption and production) in the economic category, change of climate and increase in temperature (Goal 13 – climate action) in the environmental category and empowerment of women (Goal 5 – gender equality) in the social category; moderately involved SDG causes are employment opportunities (Goal 8 – decent work and economic growth) in the economic category, quality and equitable education (Goal 4 - quality education) in the social category, sea/marine pollution (Goal 14 – life below water) in the environmental category and the provision of public spaces for disabled persons (Goal 11—sustainable cities and communities) in the social category and low involved causes are halting deforestation and increasing sustainability (Goal 15 – life on land) in the environmental category, malnutrition in children and youth (Goal 1 – zero hunger)

in the economic category, and prevention and treatment of substance abuse (Goal 3: Good health & well-being) in the social category.

Thus, SDG causes involved in CRM campaigns over rules regardless of their interconnection. So, companies should prioritize high-involvement causes in CRM campaigns above medium and low-involvement ones.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has limitations, but they present opportunities for future research. Further studies could bring innovative business practices that could support SDG causes.

Further qualitative and quantitative studies could bring out behavioural change campaigns that support these SDG goals that could affect public health and the environment, and more emphasis could be given to cause promotions.

Our studies focus on different levels of cause involvement, but future research should explore product involvement's (high vs low) influence in CRM campaigns supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conclusion

The success of a CRM campaign in accomplishing sustainable development goals shows that CRM is a very effective, innovative method. To conclude, the effectiveness of achieving sustainable development goals through a CRM campaign gives a more profound understanding that CRM is a highly effective innovative strategy for achieving sustainable development goals. Two qualitative studies were conducted. First, qualitative research provided a complete perspective of each sustainable development goal's causes and categorized these goals into social, economic, and environmental categories. Secondly, the interview with domain experts identified ten causes that could be supported in CRM campaigns from social, economic and environmental categories. Further quantitative analysis showed that the cause involvement of these SDG causes varies. The findings from the study indicate that cause involvement dominates their interconnection.

Declaration of interest

The authors disclosed no possible conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval

This article contains no studies performed by authors with human participants or animals.

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