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An assessment of the literature on cause-related marketing: implications for international competitiveness and marketing research

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Abstract

Purpose – A substantial, albeit scattered, body of research evidence is accumulating in the cause-related marketing (CRM) research stream. Thus, there is a need of a systematic overview of extant literature to map and holistically understand the CRM domain.

Design/methodology/approach – To address this issue and make progress in this important area, the authors systematically review and critically examine the state of academic research on CRM.

Findings – Based on a systematic review of 105 journal articles published over the past 30 years, the results reveal that CRM research is a vibrant and rapidly growing domain in the broader marketing field. This assessment exercise also shows that the current state of knowledge about CRM is characterized by persisting knowledge gaps, conflicting empirical results, theoretical inconsistencies, as well as by the absence of international marketing research on the CRM domain.

Originality/value – Therefore, the authors critically evaluate the extant CRM research with the aim of increasing its coherence, quality, scope, impact and international dimension. Based on this evaluation, the authors develop an ambitious research agenda that addresses a number of promising research paths embracing different international perspectives. Finally, the authors discuss the contributions to the literature and the implications for both academics and practitioners.

Keywords Cause-related marketing, Systematic review, Critical appraisal, International marketing research, Research agenda

Paper type Literature review

1. Introduction

Nearly 30 years after the publication of the first article on cause-related marketing by Varadarajan and Menon (1988), the concept is a valuable marketing tool widely deployed (Robinson *et al.*, 2012; Christofi *et al.*, 2018; He *et al.*, 2019). Defined as the marketing practice of donating a specified amount from product sales to designated charitable causes (Robinson *et al.*, 2012), CRM is reported as the fastest-growing strategy of sponsorship spending in the USA, with average annual growth rates that exceed 12% (Koschate-Fischer *et al.*, 2012). Some recent examples of CRM include Samsung, which donated 1 euro to a breast cancer foundation for each sale of special pink phone accessories (De Vries and Duque, 2018), and the Product (RED) campaign, in which firms such as Gap and Apple donated up to 50% of profits from designated brands to support AIDS patients in Africa (Robinson *et al.*, 2012). In addition, a growing body of research is acknowledging the role of CRM as a viable business tool that

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may enhance a company's sales performance and corporate reputation, and that may serve as a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage (e.g. Larson *et al.*, 2008; Liu, 2013; Duarte and Silva, 2018).

Given that all theories and concepts must undergo repeated attempts at empirical falsification before they can be acknowledged as "true" (Godfrey and Hill, 1995), one might assume that the CRM concept owes its significance to well-documented assessments of the theoretical and/or empirical support for its core tenets. Surprisingly, this is not the case. In fact, although there are many individual tests of CRM's fundamental hypotheses in the literature, a scholarly review of the results of this research strand is limited. In particular, although there are reviews of the broader field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the literature (e.g. Vaaland *et al.*, 2008; Peloza and Shang, 2011 and Aguinis and Glavas, 2012), only two studies provide a partial review and critical appraisal of the rapidly increasing research concerning the CRM domain. Specifically, Guerreiro *et al.* (2016), provides a summary of the most discussed topics in the CRM field in the period 1988–2013, by applying a text mining approach, and Lafferty *et al.* (2016) conduct a systematic review of the empirical literature on CRM from 1988 to 2016.

In contrast to these efforts, the present this study seeks to advance our understanding of the CRM concept by conducting a descriptive analysis of the extant literature between 1988 and 2018, as well as to provide various suggestions for further research concerning CRM and international marketing. It should be noted that the focus is not to provide a comprehensive overview of extant literature of the growing body of CRM domain or to cite every study in this research area. Rather, attention is given in this research effort to extending knowledge developed in the general CRM area to the domain of international marketing with the view to identifying and discussing promising avenues of future investigation. International market operations have become increasingly important for the survival, growth and long-term viability of modern business organizations, as a result of growing globalization of markets and production, intensifying competition worldwide and rapid technological developments (e.g. Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006; Steenkamp, 2019). Given that international markets and marketing practices are likely to differ from domestic market conditions and practices across developed and emerging economies (e.g. Samiee and Chirapanda, 2019; Spyropoulou *et al.*, 2018), the study of CRM within the context of international marketing will add to the literature base, pinpoint interesting future research directions in the area, and help managers responsible for the development and success of company operations in foreign markets.

Closely following the methodology developed by Tranfield *et al.* (2003), as well as the guidelines for conceptual contributions in marketing provided by Yadav (2010) and MacInnis (2011), this study contributes to the literature in multiple ways. First, we systematically review the extant literature on CRM, drawing from a variety of disciplines, and assess the manner in which the CRM domain is conceptually developing and is empirically tested. Second, we create a knowledge map of the extant literature and we highlight various theoretical, contextual and methodological issues that exist in this important area. Third, we present various knowledge gaps and inconsistencies, as well as the absence of international marketing research and the importance of CRM in the global marketplace. Towards this direction, we provide directions for further developing the field and avenues of future investigation. Fourth, we develop a comprehensive multi-dimensional framework that organizes extant literature, provides the theoretical basis for scholars to further expand the boundaries of the domain and serves as a guiding tool for practitioners who want to use CRM initiatives to enhance understanding of their relevance to and importance in the local and global marketplace. Finally, we elaborate on the value of CRM in international marketing research and provide fruitful research directions for international marketing researchers.

We organize the rest of this article as follows: First, we begin with an overview of the review methodology used and the rationale behind it. We then conduct a descriptive analysis of the field, followed by a thematic illustration of the extant literature. In doing so, we highlight the various shortcomings of the CRM domain that emerge from the review results. Following this, we elaborate on the value of CRM in International Marketing Research and provide several research paths to advance knowledge of CRM principles and thinking within the international marketing field. Finally, we identify the study's contributions to the literature as well as the implications for both academics and practitioners.

2. Methodology

2.1 Choosing a literature review methodology

To investigate all aspects of the extant literature in a thorough and pragmatic manner, we adopt a systematic review methodology (Christofi *et al.*, 2019). Systematic reviews apply an explicit algorithm to search and critically analyze the existing wisdom (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Crossan and Apaydin, 2010). Such reviews are dissimilar from narrative reviews because they apply a reproductive and scientific procedure that aims to eliminate bias through thorough literature searches (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; de Menezes and Kelliher, 2011). In parallel, systematic reviews differ from meta-analyses because the latter concentrate on empirical studies and especially on the aggregate correlation structures of their data (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; de Menezes and Kelliher, 2011). Thus, we decided to conduct a systematic review rather than a meta-analysis because this type of review makes it possible to include all the empirical and nonempirical studies available (Van De Voorde *et al.*, 2012), thereby giving a representative overview of the whole body of quantitative and qualitative empirical research, as well as theoretical contributions on CRM. In general, systematic reviews aim to create collective insights through the theoretical synthesis of findings, thereby increasing methodological rigor and developing a reliable knowledge base from which to orient future research (Macpherson and Holt, 2007). Specifically for academics, systematic reviews enhance the quality of review procedures and results by implementing transparent protocols and replicable processes (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Crossan and Apaydin, 2010; Katsikeas *et al.*, 2016). For practitioners, this method helps create a reliable knowledge base by accumulating knowledge from multiple studies (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Crossan and Apaydin, 2010). Although this methodology entails various difficulties, such as the vast amount of material for review and the difficulty of synthesizing data from various disciplines (Pittaway *et al.*, 2004), we adjudged that it was significant to have a methodology that could manage the breadth of the CRM domain.

2.2 Logic behind the systematic review process

We followed Tranfield *et al.* (2003) three-stage procedure of (1) planning, (2) execution, and (3) reporting, as well as various state-of-the-art systematic reviews in the business field (i.e. Christofi *et al.*, 2017; Christofi *et al.*, 2018; Leonidou *et al.*, 2018; Vrontis and Christofi, 2019) but certain methods were adjusted. During the planning and execution stages, we first defined the research objectives and review protocols. Then, we accessed, retrieved, and judged the quality and relevance of the research in accordance with the topic. At the third stage, we conducted a descriptive and thematic analysis of the extant literature to report the findings, identify gaps, and ground propositional conclusions for future directions in CRM research. Because the aim of this review, beyond the descriptive analysis of the extant literature, was a comprehensive overview and a theoretical consolidation of the CRM domain, a corresponding data analysis method was used. In other words, we favored breadth over depth, and thus, we choose to apply a descriptive rather than statistical methodology to analyze the review results. Among the various qualitative analysis methodologies, the explanation-building and pattern-matching (the researcher must look for gross matches and mismatches) techniques (Yin, 1994) conducted by Crossan and Apaydin (2010) were also chosen for this review. The overall review process and results are summarized in Appendix 1.

3. Conducting the systematic review

3.1 Planning and execution

A systematic review is navigated by a review question (de Menezes and Kelliher, 2011) that shapes and guides the overall review procedure. In this study, the review question is "What work has been done in the CRM domain thus far?" Next we focus on the outline of the exact nature of the research objectives in relation to the review question and the primary purpose of the study. As a result, the objectives of the present review are intentionally broad and somewhat standard for such types of comprehensive reviews: to inventory and critically appraise the extant CRM research to advance the quality, scope, and impact of future CRM studies; to identify possible shortcomings and knowledge gaps in the extant literature; and to develop an agenda for future research. Prior to undertaking the systematic review, we conduct a scoping study to access the size and relevance of literature and to delimit the CRM domain (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003). This initial investigation assists in the development of the focus for the subsequent stages.

This study's search strategy aims, as far as possible, to minimize bias and be widespread through the use of general search terms in multiple databases, cross-reference between researchers, and with the application of specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. We choose EBSCO Host, Science Direct, and Emerald as search databases for our review. This choice is based on the fact that they provide the greatest coverage coupled with functionality and full article access. Then, taking into consideration, that researchers might have used the term cause-related marketing in different ways, we employ a general selection requirement for the initial pool to minimize the possibility of excluding relevant studies. For the initial search of the electronic databases we use the following basic search strings: "Cause-Related Marketing" OR "Cause Marketing". We search the Titles, keywords/subject terms, and abstracts parts of the studies, and the numbers of articles returned are recorded. In addition, we do not limit the search to a specific publication period but instead we include all relevant studies irrespective of their publication dates.

Moreover, we expand the review to include literature from all business disciplines. Following the methodology of Ordanini *et al.* (2008), Crossan and Apaydin (2010), Keupp *et al.* (2012), and Laufs and Schwens (2014), the review is restricted to published peer-reviewed academic articles because these can be viewed as validated knowledge and most probably have the highest impact on the discipline (e.g. Keupp *et al.*, 2012; Ordanini *et al.*, 2008). Books, book chapters, conference proceedings, periodicals, working papers and other non-refereed publications are excluded from the review, as such research usually goes through a less rigorous peer-review process, and they are less readily available (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2005; Laufs and Schwens, 2014).

Clearly this approach provides a precise and representative context of relevant academic research. The initial sample of potentially relevant articles retrieved using the search strings in the selected databases is 2722. This large number of studies is not entirely surprising given the general nature of the search strings. It is not unusual in literature reviews to have a large number of manuscripts on the first round of searching (see Pittaway *et al.*, 2004; Bakker, 2010). In increasingly more fine-tuned stages of the analysis, the number is systematically reduced.

Literature selection process. Next, we remove non-article publications that cannot be examined using the same analytical constructs as those for journal articles, such as objectives and methodology. Articles that are not written in English, do not focus on CRM and/or appear irrelevant (i.e. judgments of irrelevancy are made on the basis of whether there is an indication in the title that the article falls into the broader field of CSR), or are duplicate studies are also excluded. The elimination of articles using such principles is mainly based on title reading. This step resulted in the exclusion of a total of 2278 studies. However, it must be noted that in a good number of articles, non-comprehensive titles make it difficult to understand the studies' relevancy to the CRM domain. This creates the need to review the abstracts of a large number of articles.

In cases in which the title does not provide, with maximum clarity, the field or focus of the study, we do not exclude the study but, instead, leave it for additional processing in the next stage. We apply this in order to eliminate the possibility of excluding relevant studies. The remaining 444 articles are reviewed according to the inclusion criteria. Specifically, we include both theoretical and review papers because they provide the definitional and theoretical foundation of the review. Conceptual papers are also included in order to ensure coverage and examination of all conceptual thinking in the field. Moreover, all empirical papers that adopt both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are included in order to capture all empirical evidence without the possibility of excluding significant and highly relevant studies. Furthermore, this review includes forthcoming articles as well as articles in press in order to provide coverage of the most current research. Finally, we incorporate all geographic regions in which the empirical studies took place to ensure cross-cultural comparisons, as well as all industries in order to examine how knowledge is applied within and across industry sectors.

It must be noted that the selection criteria of the current review intend to crystallize and define the incorporated literature. By specifying distinct inclusion and exclusion criteria we minimize the risk of reviewer bias. Only studies that meet all the inclusion criteria specified in the review protocol are selected. The strict criteria we apply in this systematic review are closely linked to the desire to base the review on the best-quality evidence. Additionally, at this step, we study the abstracts of all articles to ensure they are relevant to the research question and the review's objectives. This stage resulted in a preliminary list of 272 studies. At this point, we also use manual cross-referencing to identify additional studies that had been overlooked by the search databases, and this additional step results in an addition of 7 more studies.

Next, we review and critically assess the quality of an article as high (3), medium (2), low (1), or absent (0) depending upon its score on each of the quality criteria presented in Appendix 2. If the article fully satisfies a criterion, it gets a score of 3. If the article partially satisfies a criterion, it receives a score of 2. If it minimally satisfies a criterion it receives a score of 1, and if it does not satisfies the criterion or there is no information regarding the criterion it receives a score of 0. The final selection of papers pass the quality assessment process if they have an average score above or equal to 2. Thus, an empirical article with a highly original conceptual contribution has the possibility to be included in the review even if the empirical stage suffers from quality problems. The quality checklist used in this study is designed according to the guidelines given by Popay *et al.* (1998) and, subsequently, by Pittaway *et al.* (2004). At this point, the quality checklist is given to an independent academic researcher to check the robustness and clarity of the quality criteria used. The aim of the quality appraisal is to assess the validity of the studies and select high-quality studies with low risk of bias or error. The external academic researcher also repeats the quality assessment of the preliminary list of 272 studies to identify any oversights in the final study selection. The independent academic researcher's results are cross-checked with those of the study's authors, and after mutual agreement based on the quality criteria set, the number of manuscripts (the list of which is available upon request) is reduced to 180. Finally, to further ensure the quality of the work, we follow the quality practices of other systematic reviews (e.g. John and Lawton, 2018; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018), and we also apply a second quality step: we focus on studies published in 3 and 4 star publication outlets according to the ABS Academic Journal Guide. The same quality appraisal process is applied for the identified papers from both the search output from the databases and cross-referencing. The final sample of the review includes 105 studies.

Once the final decision has been made regarding the studies to be included in a review, data can be extracted from the selected studies. This process can be performed through data extraction forms that reduce human error and document the process (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; White and Schmidt, 2005). Therefore, for the final stage of the review process we develop a data extraction form that aids in reading and in the descriptive and thematic analysis of the reviewed field. The data extraction form attempts to divide the core elements of the studies into eight categories according to the research question and review objectives: (1) publication details (author, journal, year of publication); (2) type of paper (theoretical, conceptual, review, meta-analysis, empirical); (3) scope of study; (4) methodology applied (qualitative, quantitative, mixed); (5) sample information (sample size, industry type from which the sample was drawn); (6) geographic location (country from which the sample was drawn); (7) key results; and (8) research gaps and avenues for future research.

3.2 Reporting and dissemination

3.2.1 Descriptive analysis. Assessing the quality of research and synthesizing and reporting the findings using a variety of methodologies is a challenging task (Macpherson and Holt, 2007). Thus, to minimize subjective interpretation biases and ensure a high-quality review, the independent academic researcher again read all the selected articles and independently analyzed all the elements included on the data extraction form. The individual assessments were then combined and synthesized. If there were disagreements (which is natural), the issue was resolved with dialogue. With the resulting classification and information, we are able to construct a map of prior research in the domain in terms of frequency, density, and emerging patterns and preferences.

This systematic review has no time delimiters, but approximately 73% of the selected articles is published during the last decade; in fact, 44 papers 90 (42%) are published during the last five years (see Figure 1). The evidence clearly indicates that this is a growing area of research.

The research is also published in a wide variety of publications (25 journals). Appendix 3 shows that the European Journal of Marketing accounts for the largest single portion, with 15 articles (14%), followed by the Journal of Business Research with 12 articles (12%), and the Journal of Business Ethics with 11 articles (10%). Other journals that feature considerably in

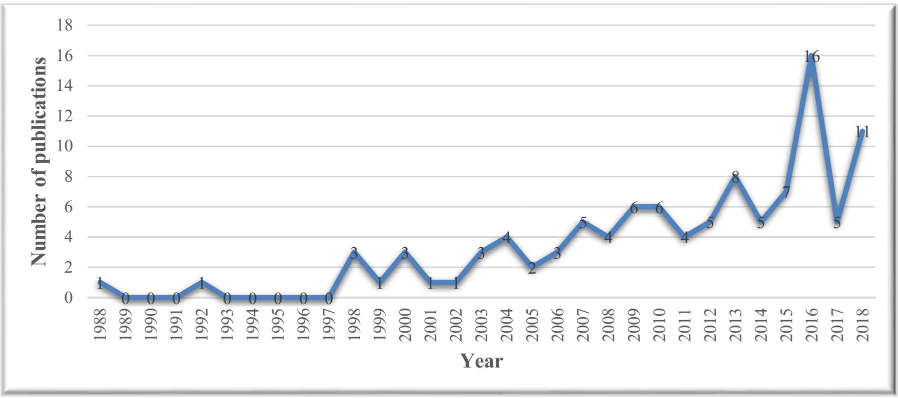

Figure 1.
Evolutionary development of the cause-related marketing literature

Note(s): This figure illustrates the number of CRM studies published every year since the first publication in 1988 until 2018, before the writing of this paper (January 2019) the review include the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, the *Journal of Advertising*, the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, the *Journal of Retailing and Psychology & Marketing* with 6 articles each. All other articles are distributed over a range of marketing, general management, social science and hospitality journals.

Among our consideration set, theoretical papers comprise 8% (8). The largest share is accounted for by empirical papers (94, 89%). We also identify 3 (3%) literature reviews, however, no meta-analyses are found. In terms of the methods employed in the research, quantitative methodologies are used in 88% (83) of the empirical studies, whereas qualitative methodologies comprise only 7% (6) of the sample. A similarly small portion of studies, 5% (5), use mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. The sample sizes in the studies are considerably different, with as few as 48 respondents (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2015) and as many as 40,800 individuals (Dubé *et al.*, 2017). The majority of the quantitative studies report surveys with between 100 and 500 respondents. In terms of interviews, the studies' sample sizes also differ to a significant degree, with as few as 43 interview respondents (Liu *et al.*, 2010) and as many as 160 (Liston-Heyes and Liu, 2013). Another characteristic of these empirical studies is the samples used: almost half (45 studies, 48%) of the studies use students who complete a questionnaire or are used in experimental settings. In terms of sector, there is an appreciable bias toward manufacturing, with 29% (27) of studies. The retail sector accounts for 6% (6 studies) respectively. An equally small portion of studies reports on multiple sectors. Furthermore, and despite the changing structures of developed economies, it is concerning that only 7 studies (7%) report solely on the service sector. Forty-eight studies (51%) do not indicate their industrial focus. Appendix 4 summarizes the industries that the empirical articles focus on.

Continuing, Appendix 5 shows the countries from which the study populations of the empirical studies in this review are drawn. In total, the empirical studies examine CRM in 18 economies, with the most studies (including papers with a focus on multiple economies which accumulates to 101 empirical studies by 94 empirical papers), 46 (46%), focusing on USA, followed by 8 from the UK (8%), 6 from Canada (6%), and 4 from Germany (4%). In terms of geographic region (continents), North America and Europe receives the most attention, with studies from the UK and Germany being most common in the latter, followed by Asia, where studies of China and Taiwan dominate (3 studies each). The least frequently studied continent is Australia/Oceania, whereas no CRM study is identified as coming from South America and Africa. Meanwhile, only three studies (3%) from among the selected empirical papers are conducted with study populations from different economic contexts (i.e. Choi *et al.*, 2016; Kim and Johnson, 2013; La Ferle *et al.*, 2013), and another 14 studies give no indication of their geographic coverage. To identify any interesting degrees of influence in terms of research approaches, correlation analyses between locations and methodologies is conducted. The outcome confirms that research out of the USA is quite different compared with that from Europe, with North America tending almost absolutely toward quantitative methods (94%) and only one study adopting a mixed methods approach, whereas Europe toward a quantitative (59.4%) but also with some qualitative (18%) and mixed method (9) approaches. Adding to this, Asia tends toward quantitative methods only (100%). As regards to the 3 multi-country studies, all adopt quantitative approaches. With regard to Australia/Oceania, it is clear that no generalizable conclusions can be extracted from relevant research because it represented only 1% of the sample.

Mapping the field in CRM research by means of descriptive analysis is an important first step toward seeing all the parts of the fragmented literature combined. To understand how they fit together to form a whole, a thematic analysis follows in the next section.

3.2.2 Thematic analysis. We conduct a thematic analysis of this body of literature (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003) that lead us to (1) classify the literature into three distinct perspectives, with stakeholder focus (see Pracejus *et al.*, 2003) being the grouping criterion; (2) further classify results of each perspective according to the authors' primary focus; and (3) compare and contrast these perspectives according to key findings. The subsequent subsections present these three outcomes. Meanwhile, we first rationalize the need for classifying the extant literature and detail the analytical procedures that lead to these outcomes.

Categorizing the literature. Categorization is a process that plays out across various contexts (Vergne and Wry, 2014). Although the boundaries between categories cannot always be clear, categories nonetheless play a crucial role in imposing cohesion on the social world by apportioning items into groups (Wittgenstein, 2010; Vergne and Wry, 2014). As such, they are formulated by perceptions and through shape cognition, thereby helping individuals to rapidly and efficiently process huge amounts of information (Wittgenstein, 2010; Vergne and Wry, 2014). Toward this aim, an important objective of this review is to synthesize the literature in a meaningful way. The studies included in the review investigate hundreds of dependent and independent variables from various perspectives as well as various contextual, moderating and mediating dimensions. However, the findings can be grouped into a reduced number of more general categories based on their substantive conceptual meanings (Leonidou *et al.*, 1998). The aim is to balance the risk of having too many determinants for and perspectives of CRM success, as well as micro- and macro-level dimensions that are specific but lack parsimony, against the risk of having too few categories, which would have been parsimonious but may have lacked meaning.

As a starting point, we read the 105 studies carefully to identify the main CRM insights and research questions that each emphasizes and investigates, respectively. This allows us to develop three distinctive clusters of studies differentiated by the different types of CRM stakeholders they emphasized. Giving these clusters appropriate theoretical labels, we divide the literature into three distinct perspectives: for-profit (donor), nonprofit and consumer. In most cases, determining where each study and its results fell is relatively straightforward once sufficiently robust perspectives are formed. However, a small number of studies draws on arguments from multiple perspectives. Nevertheless, for these studies we extract the key findings and classify each into the appropriate perspective, and we further categorize the results within each perspective according to their primary focuses. Below, we detail the three perspectives, and we compare and contrast them according to their key results. Also, Table 1provides the dependent variables and the independent variables of the empirical studies of all three clusters.

The for-profit perspective. The for-profit (donor) perspective incorporates all literature on for-profit organizations, which are the donors in the cause-related marketing relationship. CRM studies that fall into this perspective generally explore either the determinants (independent variables) or the outcomes (dependent variables) of CRM on the donor companies. Overall, the for-profit perspective comprise 86 empirical studies, 7 of which focus on multiple stakeholders. In Table 1, we observe that certain dependent variables are researched more intensively, namely, corporate image, consumers' purchase intentions, and positive attitudes toward CRM campaigns. Second, the majority of studies mainly focus on the positive outcomes of CRM on the donor. For the aforementioned reasons, we classify the dependent variables and its respective independent variables into five categories according to the focus of the dependent variable: (1) organization level (e.g. corporate image); (2) brand level (e.g. brand preference); (3) product level (e.g. price premium for a product); (4) employee level (e.g. selling confidence); and (5) For profit organization's competitors level (customer profitability for a focal brand's main rival). Finally, in Table 1, we also observe that a number of independent variables are more researched than others, such as large donation amounts/ high donation magnitudes, and brand-cause/charity fit.

In addition, this review reveals that a portion of the research addresses and empirically tests various moderators. For instance, Koschate-Fischer *et al.* (2012) examine a number of moderating variables, such as the customer's warm glow motive, cause involvement, and

Table 1. Antecedents and outcomes within the cause-related marketing context

	For-Profit Organization
	Organizational Level
High utilitarianism (consumer shopping orientation) Individualistic mindset CSR message with low processing fluency (for individuals low in need for cognition) Taxonomic CRM partnerships (implies that the partners share common features)	→ Increased skepticism towards the CRM claim
Familiarity with CRM campaigns Collectivistic mindset High hedonism (consumer shopping orientation) CSR message that is difficult (low processing fluency) to process (for individuals high in need for cognition) CSR message with high processing fluency (for individuals low in need for cognition) Thematic CRM partnerships (similarity refers to partners that interact in the same context)	→ Reduced skepticism towards the CRM claim
Status of the cause (the degree to which it is viewed as significant and important by consumers) Company-cause fit Proactive community engagement of the company	→ Perceived sincerity of a cause sponsor (consumers' evaluation of a company's motives underpinning a CRM initiative-altruistic versus self-interested)
Consumers' perception of the organization's prestige The number of years the individual has participated in the event promoted by the organization Consumers' primary motivation for participation in the event	→ Consumer's organizational identification with an NPO
High levels of processing motivation of the ad by consumers Brand-cause fit	→ Perceptions of nonprofit endorsement
High donation amount	→ Perceptions of fair pricing
Company-cause fit	→ Positive consumer evaluation of the company's CRM effort
Novelty of CRM campaigns Consumer attribution of altruistic company motivations Company-community fit (local companies-local communities)	→ Corporate Image

(*continued*)

	For-Profit Organization
Collectivistic mindset CM campaign adopts an international scope Company participation in a CRM campaign Low benefit-salience of CRM activity	
Proactive community engagement of the company	
Linking a product with a cause	→ Sales Performance
Linking a product with a cause	→ Sales Performance of other products of the firm (via a spillover effect)
Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions – Stakeholder-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions – Strategic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions – Egoistic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions – Values-driven attributions Economic-Oriented Aspects of a Firm's Competitive Positioning – Perceived Service Quality Prosocial consumers Consumers exposed to a CRM essence parody (–)	→ Word-of-mouth
Novelty of CRM campaigns Consumer attribution of altruistic company motivations Company-community fit (local companies-local communities) Collectivistic Mindset	→ Advertising Effectiveness
Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Stakeholder-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Strategic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Egoistic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Values-driven attributions Economic-Oriented Aspects of a Firm's Competitive Positioning - Perceived Service Quality Prosocial consumers	→ Consumer Trust towards the corporate sponsor
Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Stakeholder-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Strategic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Egoistic-driven attributions (–) Consumer Perceptions of a Firm's Motives for Engaging in CSR Actions - Values-driven attributions	→ Patronage intentions

(continued)

	For-Profit Organization
Thematic CRM partnerships (similarity refers to partners that interact in the same context)	→ Purchase Intentions
Firm size: small firms	
Consumers who are stimulated by the guilt appeal of a CRM promotion - (condition: When a consumer's goodwill is recognized publicly)	
Consumers with the desire to elevate their social status (status seeking) - (condition: When a consumer's goodwill is recognized publicly)	
Self-serving company attributions (for consumers with strong resultant self-transcendence values) (–)	
Other-serving company attributions	
Perceptual congruence between a firm and cause	
Positive attitude towards the cause/ NPO	
Self-oriented consumer conspicuous donation behavior	
Other-oriented consumer conspicuous donation behavior (–)	
Hedonic product	
Messages with textual claims that include visuals	
Existing brand social responsibility image	
Brand emotional attachment	
Emotional arousal, pleasure and visual attention towards the product (hedonic product)	
Pleasure, donation amount and brand logo visual attention (utilitarian product)	
Donation type: nonmonetary giving strategy (High product-cause fit)	
Donation type: monetary giving strategy (Low product-cause fit)	
Donation type: nonmonetary giving strategy (Low product–cause fit for a utilitarian product)	
Donation type: monetary giving strategy (Low product–cause fit for a hedonic product)	
Company-cause fit	
Large donation amount	
Large purchase quantity (–)	
Brand-cause fit	
High corporate credibility	
Consumers' identification with the charity (Consumer-cause affinity)	
Giving consumers the option to choose the cause of a CM campaign	
Moral emotions (ego and other-focused moral emotions)	
Younger consumers	
Temporal frame (ad is framed in terms of a proximal corporate response) - for consumers that are present oriented	
Societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in distal terms - for consumers that are future oriented	

(*continued*)

Table 1.

Table 1.

	For-Profit Organization
Societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in proximal terms - for consumers that are present oriented	
Donation framing: in absolute money terms	
Low-priced products promoted with a cause	
Donation amount expressed as a percentage of a sale price (for high-priced products)	
Higher level of consumer skepticism toward CRM (–)	
Hedonic or frivolous products	
Linking of an organization's product with a donation	
Customization in a CRM campaign (consumers select the cause)	
Status of the cause (the degree to which it is viewed as significant and important by consumers)	
Personal involvement with the cause (consumers' identification with a particular cause)	
Positive consumers' attitude to the company	
Perceived ubiquity (consumers' assessment of the focus and clarity of positioning in a company's CRM initiatives) (–)	
Perceived sincerity of a cause sponsor	
Consumers exposed to a CRM essence parody (–)	
Buy-one Give-one (BOGO)-format promotions	
Product-cause fit	
Concrete donation quantifier	
Conducting a CRM campaign	
Consumer perceptions of company corporate social responsibility	
Novelty of CRM campaigns	→ Positive attitudes toward the CRM offer
Consumer attribution of altruistic company motivations	
Company-community fit (local companies-local communities)	
Donation situation: disaster related causes (not ongoing cause)	
Incongruency of donations with the firms core business	
High effort exerted by the for-profit organization for the cause marketing offer implementation	
Brand-cause fit	→ Positive attitudes toward the CRM campaign
Campaigns that involve a primary need	
High consumers' public self-consciousness	
Sense of personal and social responsibility	
Consumers' high interpersonal trust	
Religious belief	
Strong social networks	
External locus of control	
High level of advertising skepticism	

(*continued*)

	For-Profit Organization
Societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in distal terms - for consumers that are future oriented	
Societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in proximal terms - for consumers that are present oriented	
Local causes	
Positively framed messages	
Consumers that possess interdependent self-construals	
Other-serving company attributions	
Self-serving company attributions (for consumers with strong resultant self-transcendence values) (–)	
Consumers with the desire to elevate their social status (status seeking) - (condition: When a consumer's goodwill is recognized publicly)	
Consumers who are stimulated by the guilt appeal of a CRM promotion - (condition: When a consumer's goodwill is recognized publicly)	
Advertising message with a CRM component	→ Positive perceptions towards the company
Firms with a reputation for social irresponsibility	
Donation framing: in absolute money terms	
Gender: target female consumers	
Prosocial consumers	
Domestic firms	
Consumers exposed to a CRM essence parody (–)	
Donation type: nonmonetary giving strategy (High product-cause fit)	
Donation type: monetary giving strategy (Low product-cause fit)	
Donation type: nonmonetary giving strategy (Low product–cause fit for a utilitarian product)	
Donation type: monetary giving strategy (Low product–cause fit for a hedonic product)	
Messages with textual claims that include visuals	
Positive pre-existing attitudes towards the company	→ Positive attitudes towards the CRM alliance
Positive pre-existing attitudes towards the charity	
Prior attitudes toward the cause and the brand	
Brand-name fit	
Cause focus: human services category	
Charity auctions (items linked with charities: CRM)	→ Continuing to bid in future charity auctions even after losing one
Perceptual congruence between a firm and cause	→ Company-cause fit
High exposures to a CRM advertisement	→ Increased familiarity towards CRM campaign
Consumers' trust in CRM in general	→ Trust in a CRM campaign

(continued)

Table 1.

Table 1.

		For-Profit Organization
Consumers' trust in a CRM campaign	→	Customer loyalty to the for profit organization
Brand-cause fit	→	Positive attitude towards the ad
Perceptions of cause importance	→	Consumer perceptions of company corporate social responsibility
Consumers given the option to choose the cause (consumer choice of cause)		
Company-cause fit	→	Sense of relationship strength between the company and charity organizations
Consumers' balanced attitudes by judgment-type interaction		
		Brand level
A focal brand's cause marketing initiative	→	Customer profitability for a focal brand
Brand-cause fit	→	Positive perceptions towards the brand
High corporate credibility		
Temporal frame of a corporate response		
Temporal frame (ad is framed in terms of a proximal corporate response) - for consumers that are present oriented		
Societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in distal terms - for consumers that are future oriented		
Prior consumer attitudes towards the brand		
Linking of an organization's product with a donation		
Consumer-cause affinity		
Customization in a CRM campaign (consumers select the cause)		
Messages with buy content		
Consumer choice of cause		
Consumers' self-schema (their identity-values)–cause fit	→	Brand Preference/ choice
Positive consumers' perceptions for company's motives to support the cause		
Brand's motivation to support causes		
High donation size (if the consumer faces no financial trade-off)		
Hedonic or frivolous products		
Practical products (when linked with small donations)		
Messages with buy content		
High donation size (if the consumer faces no financial trade-off and donation framing is nonmonetary)	→	Brand Image
Expiration date-based pricing	→	Perceived brand quality
Consumer choice of cause	→	Brand attachment
Cause-brand fit (image fit)	→	Brand credibility
Attribution of altruistic brand motivations		
The use of CRM at brand pages on social network sites	→	Consumer intentions to invite their friends to the brand page of a social network site
The use of CRM at brand pages on social network sites	→	Consumer intentions to join the brand page on social network sites

(*continued*)

		For-Profit Organization
Cause-brand fit (image fit) Attribution of altruistic brand motivations	→ →	Attribution of altruistic brand motivations Consumer perceptions of brand corporate social responsibility
Positive pre-existing attitudes towards the brand	→	Positive perceptions towards the brand after the formation of the CRM alliance
		Product level
Items linked to charity Large donation amount / High donation magnitude Items with variable donations (auction context) low-value products (auction context)	→	Higher ending price of a product (price premium)
Combination of promotional discounts and charitable donations Linking of an organization's product with a non-profit organization Hedonic products	→	Product Appeal/ Preference
Linking of an organization's product with a non-profit organization Linking of an organization's product with a donation Company-cause fit (for prosocial consumers)	→	Product differentiation Positive perceptions of product quality
Company participation in a CRM campaign	→	Product Promotion
Company participation in a CRM campaign	→	Perceptions of enhanced product performance
		Employee level
Salesperson selling confidence	→	Behavioral performance of sales representatives
Construed customer attitude toward the cause campaign	→	Cognitive identification with the company
Construed customer attitude toward the cause campaign Salesperson's cognitive identification with the company	→	Selling confidence (sales representatives)
		For profit organization's competitors
A focal brand's cause marketing initiative (−)	→	Customer profitability for a focal brand's main rival
		NPO/ Charity
Corporate reputation Non-financial investments by the corporate partner	→	Achievement of nonprofits' social and organizational objectives

(continued)

Table 1.

Table 1.

		For-Profit Organization
Cash investments by the corporate partner		
Social Alliance Management Routines	→	CRM alliance performance
Consumer-cause identification Cause focus: Health cause category and human services cause category		
Prior consumer attitudes towards the cause Gender: target female consumers Messages with informational content	→	Positive attitude towards the cause/ NPO
Company-cause fit	→	Increased donations to corporate supported NPOs
Linking of an organization's product with a non-profit organization		Cause image
Brand-cause fit Allying a cause with a familiar brand Positive pre-existing attitudes towards the charity	→	Positive perceptions towards the cause after the formation of the CRM alliance
		Consumer
Consumer Bragging (when the person's prosocial behavior is already known) (–) Consumer Bragging (when the person's prosocial behavior is unknown) Message content of the brag (brags and recruits others to donate) Conspicuous cause marketing products (–)	→	Perceived consumer generosity (perceptions of altruism)
The inclusion of a CRM initiative with a hedonic product	→	Consumers' feelings of guilt associated with hedonic consumption
Participation in a CRM campaign (compared to direct charitable giving to a charity)	→	Decreased consumer happiness
Participation in a CRM campaign (compared to direct charitable giving to a charity)	→	Decreased charitable giving by the consumer
Causes that occur suddenly	→	Consumer identification with the cause
Status of the cause (the degree to which it is viewed as significant and important by consumers)	→	Personal involvement with the cause (consumers' identification with a particular cause)

attitude toward helping others, and their effects on donation amounts. These studies comprise a fair share of all instances in which researchers attempt to detect moderating effects, all of which are illustrated in Table 2. A relatively small share of the reviewed papers also focus on multiple mediators and their direct effects on either the independent or dependent variables (see Table 3).

In addition, with regard to contextual dimensions, researchers typically focus on only one dimension, the most prominent being the culture. Other identified contextual variables include industry level of analysis, the selling context, the for-profit organization's reputation with regards to social responsibility, the level of consumer involvement with the cause, and identity-congruent donations (consumer social identity - cause congruence).

The nonprofit perspective. We refer to the second perspective on CRM research as the nonprofit perspective. It emphasizes the benefits (dependent variables) nonprofit organizations derive from CRM alliances as well as the determinants (independent variables) that drive these CRM benefits. Continuing, all dependent variables are positive in nature, and the studies of this cluster also empirically test 14 independent variables that relate to these dependent variables. Moreover, few studies in this category examine a handful of moderating and mediating variables. Adding to this, no contextual variables are identified within the selected papers from the nonprofit perspective.

The consumer perspective. The consumer perspective emphasizes the effects of CRM on consumers from their point of view. By reviewing the selected papers, we identify six outcomes from CRM campaigns that four empirical papers research and include both negative and positive outcomes. Moreover, we also identify the determinants that are related with the outcomes that focus on the consumer perspective (for further details see Table 1).

Comparison of the CRM research perspectives. From the 94 empirical articles that incorporate all three perspectives, 7 focus on multiple stakeholders. In particular, all 7 multi-stakeholder studies focus on the for-profit and nonprofit perspectives. Among the three perspectives, the for-profit (donor) perspective comprises the largest share of the empirical literature with 79 studies, followed by the nonprofit and consumer perspective with 4 articles each. Moderating (Table 2) and mediating (Table 3) variables are identified only from the for-profit (donor) and nonprofit perspectives. Adding to this, from the eight conceptual papers, six focus on the for-profit perspective, whereas the remaining two focus on multiple stakeholders (for-profit and nonprofit perspectives). Lastly, the three review papers summarize extant literature without focusing on a particular perspective.

4. Expanding the boundaries of the CRM domain: the value of CRM in international marketing research and further research directions

The importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and related initiatives in the global arena is continuously increasing notwithstanding the recent economic downturn (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2011; Endacott, 2004; Madden *et al.*, 2012). Global research, i.e. on General Electric posits that accountability, transparency, and strategic engagement with government will become increasingly important (Madden *et al.*, 2012). A survey conducted by McKinsey in 2009, which includes more than 1000 global corporate executives, shows that business leaders think the recent economic crisis has increased the public's expectations of companies' role in society. Of those, more than 85% state that addressing safety, privacy, environmental, workplace conditions, health, and developing country investment issues generates competitive value for their shareholders and companies. A similar survey conducted by IBM shows that CSR is viewed as an investment that entails financial returns (Madden *et al.*, 2012)

However, relating to the CRM domain, being one of the main CSR branches, the association of CRM research with global competitiveness and international marketing research is absent as the results of this review illustrate (Endacott 2004; La Ferle *et al.*, 2013).

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
Brand-related moderators		
Brand salience	→	The positive effect of messages with buy content on attitude and behavioral intention toward the brand
Brand salience (negative moderator)	→	The positive effect of messages with buy content on attitude and behavioral intention toward the cause
Low brand-cause fit	→	The positive effect of informational message on attitude toward the brand
High brand-cause fit	→	The positive effect of message with buy content on attitude and behavioral intention toward the brand
Low brand-cause fit (negative moderator)	→	The positive effect of message with buy on attitude toward the cause
High brand-cause fit	→	The positive effect of informational message on behavioral intentions toward the cause
(1) Brand social responsibility image (2) Emotional brand attachment	→	The relationship between consumer Moral identity (MI) centrality and intention to purchase CRM sponsor brand
Brand familiarity	→	The relationship between type of cause and consumer attitudes and intentions
Brand loyalty	→	The effect of EDBP on brand quality image (The negative effect of EDBP is weaker (or insignificant) among non-loyal consumers)
Brand-cause fit	→	The positive effect of cause dominance on consumer favorability towards the cause
Brand-cause fit	→	The positive effect of brand dominance on consumer favorability towards the brand
Brand-Cause familiarity	→	The effect of cause-brand alliances on cause attitudes
Brand-Cause familiarity	→	The positive relationship between fit and attitude toward the sponsorship such that greater familiarity with the social cause diminishes the effect of fit on attitude toward sponsorship
Type of brand (symbolic and functional.)	→	CRM leads to the greatest consumer intention to join the social network sites (SNS) brand page, compared to a cause sponsorship
Brand consciousness (individuals high - versus low - in brand consciousness)	→	The relationships between brand/cause fit and consumer evaluative responses toward the ad message and the sponsoring brand
Popularity of a brand (unknown)	→	The positive effect of embedded premium promotion on consumer choice
Product-related moderators		
Low-value products	→	The effect of bidders' willingness to purchase in charity auctions
Expiration date-based pricing framing	→	The effect of EDBP on brand quality image (are insignificant or positive if EDBP is framed as a cause-related marketing activity)
Product type (functional products)	→	The effect of the match between an individual's self-schema and the sponsored cause on brand preference

Table 2.
Moderating variables

(continued)

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
Product price (high)	→	The moderating negative effect of increased donation magnitude on the positive effects of donation framing on CRM
Product price (low)	→	The positive effect of charity incentives in absolute dollar terms on CRM effectiveness
Product price (high)	→	The positive effect of charity incentives expressed as a percentage of a sale price on CRM effectiveness
Expiration date risk	→	The effect of Expiration date-based pricing (EDBP) on brand quality image (exposure to EDBP has a negative effect when consumers perceive a lower expiration date risk, but the effect is weaker (or insignificant) if consumers perceive a higher Expiration date risk
Hedonic or frivolous product	→	The positive impact of donation-to-charity incentives on brand preference and actual purchases
Product type (indulgent)	→	The effect of self-construal on promotion preference for identity-congruent causes
Product type (utilitarian)	→	The concrete mindset evoked by a Buy-one Give-one promotion leads to favorable attitude toward the promotion
(1) Product-type (hedonic) (2) Purchase-type (planned purchase contexts)	→	Cue congruency effect (product-cause fit and donation quantifier) positively affects purchase intentions
Low price discount level	→	The effectiveness of a charitable donation on purchase probability
High price discount level (negative moderator)	→	The effectiveness of a charitable donation (high) on purchase probability
High Product–cause fit	→	The relationship between corporate giving style and a) attitude toward the campaign and b) purchase intention
High product–cause fit for both utilitarian and hedonic products	→	The positive link between nonmonetary corporate giving style and purchase intention for both utilitarian and hedonic products with a cause
Low product–cause fit for utilitarian products	→	The positive link between nonmonetary corporate giving style and purchase intention
Low product–cause fit for hedonic products	→	The positive link between monetary corporate giving style and purchase intention
Product type (hedonic)	→	The duration of attention, pleasure and emotional arousal are positively related to the choice of cause-related products
Product type (Utilitarian)	→	Customers focus on brand logo and donation amount while experiencing pleasure are positively related to the choice of cause-related products
Type of product (hedonic)	→	The effect of CRM on willingness to buy
Employee-related moderators		
Salespeople with lower levels of identification with the company	→	The influence of a sales representative's construed customer attitude toward the campaign on selling confidence
Moderate Price discounts	→	The impact of CRM on sales

(continued)

Table 2.

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
Cause-related moderators		
(1) Cause scope (international causes) (2) Cause acuteness (causes that occur suddenly)	→	Consumers evaluate more positively those campaigns that involve a primary need rather than a secondary need (cause type)
Charity efficiency (inefficient - negative)	→	The effect of self-construal on promotion preference for identity-congruent causes
Small Non-governmental organization (NGO) size	→	The effect of firm size (small) on CM effectiveness
Cause importance (health and human services cause categories)	→	The relationship between type of cause and consumer attitudes and intentions
Consumer-related moderators		
Consumers' product expertise (less familiar)	→	The impact of the company's prosocial activities on perceived product performance
Gender (women)	→	The positive effect of CRM on attitudes toward the firm and the cause
Gender (women) - weaker result (negative moderator)	→	The negative effect of hedonism on consumer skepticism toward CRM advertising
Gender (men)	→	The positive effect of individualism on consumer skepticism toward CRM advertising
Gender (women)	→	The negative effect of collectivism on consumer skepticism toward advertising
Identity salience	→	the effect of self-construal on promotion preference for identity-congruent causes
Consumers with collectivistic orientation	→	Corporate nationality (domestic firms) positively relate to consumer attitudes toward the firm
Prosocial consumer behavior (unknown)	→	The positive effect of bragging on perceptions of altruism
Known prosocial consumer behavior (negative moderator)	→	The positive effect of bragging on perceptions of altruism
Altruism	→	a) The relationship between self-esteem and self-oriented Conspicuous Donation Behavior b) The relationship between materialism and other-oriented Conspicuous Donation Behavior
Negative mood	→	The effect of processing fluency and need for cognition on skepticism and attitudes
Individuals' need for cognition	→	the fluency effect on truth judgments
Consumers with interdependent self-construal	→	The effect of CRM in improving brand image, consumer self-brand connection, and purchase intention
Consumers' guilt-sensitivity	→	Hedonic products positively relate to product preference and choice
Familiarity with the cause: higher (lower) levels of cause familiarity	→	The effect of the cause–brand alliance on post-attitudes toward the cause will be larger (smaller), the effect of pre-attitudes toward the cause on the cause–brand alliance will be larger (smaller), and the effect of the cause–brand alliance on post-attitudes toward the brand will be larger (smaller)

Table 2. (*continued*)

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
Individualistic cultural orientation	→	The influence of the association of pride (ego-focused moral emotion) on purchase intention for a social-cause product
Self-construal (high interdependence)	→	The influence of the association of guilt (other-focused moral emotion) on purchase intention for social-cause product
Fit between consumers' self-schema and the cause	→	Consumers with impression-relevant brand involvement positively relate to brand preference
Consumers' temporal orientation (present oriented)	→	The positive influence of the temporal framing within the ad (proximal) for a CRM campaign on brand attitudes and purchase intentions
Consumers' temporal orientation (future oriented)	→	A societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in distal terms leads to favorable (a) attitude toward the campaign, (b) brand attitude, and (c) purchase intentions
Higher levels of processing motivation	→	The effect of brand-cause fit on perceptions of nonprofit endorsement
Less-involved individuals	→	Positively framed rates on CRM campaign messages affect consumers' favorable attitudes towards the CRM campaign
Collectivism	→	The effect of novelty of a CRM campaign and perception of altruism of a company involved in a CRM campaign on consumer attitudes toward the CRM offer, advertisement, and company image
(1) Consumers' positive perceptions of the retailer's motive for engaging in CRM (2) Consumer-cause affinity	→	The effects of retailer–cause fit on consumer evaluations and intentions associated with cause-related marketing activities
Consumer participation effort where higher participation requirements (e.g. mail-in proof-of-purchase) yield more negative purchase quantity effects	→	The effects of purchase quantity on firm inferences and subsequent participation intentions
Consumers' direct breast cancer (cause focus) experience (negative moderator)	→	The relationship between consumers' years of participation in CRM events and consumers' identification with the organization
Ad skepticism (negative moderator)	→	Increased familiarity with an organization's CRM advertisement reduces consumer skepticism towards the CRM claim
Altruistic values	→	The relationship between attributions and consumer responses to social initiatives, including initiative evaluation and purchase intentions to corporate social initiatives
Consumer's goodwill is recognized publicly (privately)	→	Consumers who have a high (vs. low) desire to elevate their social status are more (vs. less) likely to show significantly favorable attitudes toward the CRM promotion and participate in the CRM promotion. Consumers who are stimulated (vs. not stimulated) by the guilt appeal of a CRM promotion are more (vs. less) likely to respond to the promotion positively

(*continued*)

Table 2.

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
(1) Customer's attitude toward helping others (2) Consumers' warm glow motive (3) Enhanced customers' cause involvement (4) Cause-organization affinity	→	Donation amount effect on willingness to pay
Familiarity of consumers with Expiration date-based pricing	→	The effect of EDBP on brand quality image (weaker)
Collectivism	→	Consumers' choice of cause of a CM campaign increases a) willingness to pay for and b) purchase likelihood of products associated with such campaigns
Company-related moderators		
Low corporate competence	→	Promotional CSR induces a positive CSR image
High corporate competence	→	Value-creating CSR induces a) positive CSR image, and; b) corporate trustworthiness
Property's (sponsor) national community proximity	→	The impact of community engagement on the sponsor's CSR image
The size of performance quality trade-offs under conditions of interbrand heterogeneity increase	→	The impact of perceived CRM motivation to support causes on consumers' brand choice
(1) Low company - cause fit (2) Goal proximity	→	Consumers' choice of cause of a CM campaign increases purchase likelihood of products associated with such campaigns
Company–cause fit (negative moderator)	→	Donation amount effect on willingness to pay
High perceived service quality (positive) Low perceived service quality (weakend or null)	→	The positive relationship between benevolence-motivated giving and consumer trust
Company's CSR history record (corporation has a weaker historical record of socially responsible behavior)	→	The positive effect of cause-related marketing on customer donations
High company-cause fit	→	The positive effect of individuals' social value orientations on: a) attitude towards the company, b) trust in the company, c) word of mouth, and d) favorable evaluations of the focal company's corporate abilities (i.e. product/service quality and innovativeness)
(1) Positive CSR reputation (2) Low company–cause fit (3) Simultaneous timing	→	The relationship between donation amount and perceived price fairness
Feature (store)	→	The influence of cause marketing on customer profitability for a brand
Elaboration on firm-cause fit (negative moderator)	→	The relationship between perceptual congruence and participation intentions
Elaboration firm-cause fit	→	The relationship between conceptual congruence) and participation intentions
Other/ Donation/ CRM campaign -related moderators		
Donation framing in in absolute dollar terms	→	The positive effect of product type (frivolous) on CRM effectiveness
Increased donation magnitude (negative moderator)	→	The positive effect of charity incentives in absolute dollar terms on CRM effectiveness
Financial tradeoff (negative moderator)	→	The positive effect of donation size (large) on brand choice
(1) Donation framing (monetary) – negative	→	

Table 2. *(continued)*

Moderator	Moderates	Relationship
(2) Donation framing (non-monetary) – positive		The positive effect of donation size (large) on brand image
High percentage of proceeds donated to charity	→	The positive effect of charity auctions on selling price (higher ending price)
CRM duration for the firm is lengthened	→	Collectivist consumers' favorable attitudes toward domestic firms
Social Alliance (SA) benefits-exploiting motive	→	The impacts of SA management routines on mutual trust and relational commitment
Social Alliance relationship-building motive	→	The impacts of SA management routines on relational embeddedness and relational commitment
(1) CRM messages that combined text and image (2) health cause category	→	The effectiveness of restaurant CRM ad on consumer attitudes toward alliance and behavioral intentions
Presence (or absence) of a charitable donation	→	Hedonic products positively relate to product preference and choice
Regulatory focus (negatively moderates)	→	The effect of taxonomic partnerships on increasing consumer skepticism

Note(s): The table contains empirically tested variables that act as moderators either for independent variables or for dependent variables directly

Table 2.

Whilst within the international marketing domain there are fine examples of studies that emphasize the importance of CSR in the global landscape (i.e. Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2011; Eisingerich and Rubera 2010; Laughlin, and Ahsan 1994; Madden *et al.*, 2012; Özsomer and Altaras 2008), however, the international aspect of CRM domain is almost non-existent. One notable exception is the recent study of Strizhakova and Coutler (2019), which focuses on effects of the spatial proximity of the firm (domestic vs. foreign multinational), cause (domestic vs. global) and consumer cultural identity (locally oriented vs. distantly oriented) on consumer attitudes towards the firm in Russia. Hence, one aim of this research is to identify and propose several research paths that provide fruitful avenues for further research of CRM issues in international marketing.

To fulfil this aim we provide in Figure 2 a future research directions framework that illustrates the four main future research paths of CRM in international marketing research, further explained below. In particular, the framework provides a roadmap and a research agenda for future scholars into the following areas: *the role of CRM in global competitiveness; the role of CRM communications in global promotional initiatives; the association of CRM with Multinational Enterprises,* and; *Cause proximity, multinational corporations and global brands*. The framework continues with more specific research directions that relate to each of these four research areas. The following sub-sections provide a more detailed analysis of the proposed four future research areas that link CRM with international marketing research.

The role of CRM in global competitiveness. Research demonstrates that CSR is a significant association that consumers use when choosing among global brands (Holt *et al.* 2004; Özsomer and Altaras 2008). For instance, in their study on global brand dimensions, Holt *et al.* (2004) find that the size of the global citizen segment, which includes consumers who care about a company's environmental behavior and other related issues, is more than 40% in 12 countries. Based on this association, consumers expect from global brands to act in a socially responsible manner when doing their businesses (Özsomer and Altaras, 2008). On a theoretical level, Laughlin and Ahsan (1994) introduce a model for developing social

Mediator	Mediates	Relationship
Consumer expectancy to be seen as favorable	→	(1) CRM leads to the greatest consumer intention to join the social network sites (SNS) brand page, compared to a cause sponsorship (2) CRM results in the greater intention to invite friends to the brand page than cause sponsorship
Consumer inferences about the firm	→	The positive effect of firm donation amount on participation intentions
Consumer inferences about the firm	→	The negative effect of purchase quantity on participation intentions
Perceptions of strength of the CRM alliance	→	The effect of fit on CRM attitude
Attitude toward the sponsorship	→	The relationship between brand-cause fit and attitude toward the brand
Consumers' identification with the organization	→	(1) Consumers' perception of organizational prestige, (2) Consumers' years of participation in the event, and (3) Consumers' primary motivation for participation in the event; are positively related to their identification with the organization
Consumers' familiarity with an organization's CRM advertisement	→	Claim repetition (more exposures to a CRM advertisement) reduces consumer skepticism towards the CRM claim
Attributed company motives	→	The moderating role of company–cause fit on the donation amount effect on willingness to pay (mediated moderation)
Enhanced consumers' perceptions of personal role in helping the cause	→	The positive effect of allowing consumers to select the cause in a CM campaign on purchase likelihood and attitude toward the company
Enhanced consumers' perceptions of personal role in helping the cause	→	The moderating effects of fit and goal proximity on the effect of Consumers' choice of cause of a CM campaign increases purchase likelihood of products associated with such campaigns
Consumer identification with the cause	→	The positive influence of the three cause attributes (a. cause type - causes that involve a primary need; b cause acuteness - causes that occur suddenly, and; c. cause scope - international causes) on corporate image
Attitude toward the CRM	→	The moderating influence of consumers' temporal orientation (present and future oriented) on the link between temporal framing (proximal and distal) on purchase intentions and brand attitude (mediated moderation)
Salesperson cognitive identification with the company and selling confidence	→	The influence of a sales representative's construed customer attitude toward the cause campaign on selling behavioral performance
Consumers' belief that the firm is acting in a socially responsible manner	→	Positively framed rates on CRM campaign messages affect consumers' favorable attitudes towards the CRM campaign
Firm's consumer trust level	→	The influence of CRM induced attributions on patronage intentions and recommendation intentions

Table 3.
Mediating variables

(*continued*)

Mediator	Mediates	Relationship
Inferred sincerity of motives	→	(1) The influence of information source on company evaluations and; (2) the influence of benefit salience on company evaluations
Perceived sincerity of motives	→	The effect of high CSR/Adv ratio on company evaluations
Customer–corporate identification	→	The positive effect of cause-related marketing on customer donations
(1) Dependence (2) Relationship	→	The positive effect of (a) reputation on the achievement of organizational and social objectives; (b) non-financial resources on the achievement of organizational and social objectives; and (c) cash investment on the achievement of organizational and social objective
Consumers' attribution of partner motives	→	The positive effects of message (informational), brand salience and brand-cause fit on attitude toward the brand and cause
Consumers' perceptions of the company's corporate abilities (i.e. product/service quality and innovativeness)	→	The interaction between Individual's social value orientation and moderating role of company-cause fit on consumers' responses towards the company in terms of attitudes, trust, and word of mouth
(1) Perceived sincerity (2) Personal involvement	→	(1) Status of cause positively influences a) interest and b) favorability (2) Company-cause fit positively influences favorability
(1) Altruistic attributions (2) Brand credibility	→	The positive effect of image fit on the formation of brand corporate social responsibility consumer perception (CSR perception) in a cause-brand alliance (CBA) context
Perceived helpfulness of the donation	→	The influence of Buy-one Give-one promotions on attitude toward the CM promotion
CSR attributions	→	The joint effect of corporate nationality and cultural orientation on attitudes toward the firm
Consumers' warm-glow good feelings	→	The impact of CM on purchase intention across the price discount conditions
Attributed company motives	→	(1) The moderating impact of CSR reputation, timing and company-cause fit on the link between donation amount and price fairness (In the context of price increase) (2) a) the main effect of donation amount on purchase intention and b) the moderating role of timing on the donation amount effect on purchase intentions
Intrinsic motivation	→	The effect of bragging on altruism. Bragging about prosocial behavior decreases the perception that the actor was intrinsically motivated to help, which in turn decreases perceptions of altruism
Mutual trust, relational embeddedness and relational commitment	→	The relationship between social alliance management routines and social alliance performance

(*continued*)

Table 3.

Mediator	Mediates	Relationship
(1) perceived cause importance (2) sequentially by both cause importance and perceived CSR	→	The relationship between effort requirements and participation intentions
Inferred company motives	→	The interaction among product–cause fit, corporate giving style, and product type with regard to participants' willingness to pay
Visual attention, pleasure and emotional arousal	→	The effect of cause-related products on consumer's choices (foster cause-related marketing effectiveness)
Guilt reduction	→	The effect of CRM on hedonic purchase intention
(1) Empathy (2) Moral identity	→	The relationship between consumer self-construal and consumer responses to corporate CRM
Altruistic attributions	→	The effect of community engagement on the sponsor CSR image
Firm motivations	→	Elaboration has a positive effect on participation intentions
Guilt	→	The influence of charity appeals on purchase intent toward luxury brands
Consumers' trust in a retailer's CRM campaign	→	The relationship between consumers' trust in CRM in general and retail store loyalty
Consumer empowerment and engagement	→	CM with choice strengthens brand attachment and brand attitude
Consumption guilt	→	Preferences for hedonic (but not utilitarian) products are moderated by the presence (or absence) of a charitable donation and by consumers' guilt-sensitivity
Perceived effort, then by perceived sincerity, and finally by feelings of gratitude	→	The effect of firm size (small) on CM effectiveness
Trust in the partnership	→	The positive impact of thematic partnerships on willingness to purchase
Distrust	→	The moderating effects of effect of Expiration date-based pricing, expiration date risk, and loyalty on brand quality image (mediated moderation)

Note(s): The table contains empirically tested variables that act as mediators either for independent variables or for dependent variables directly

Table 3.

responsibility strategies for multinational corporations in developing nations. Another conceptual contribution in the international marketing literature which utilizes the value of CSR on global competitiveness is the study of Özsomer and Altaras (2008). In their study, the authors develop a conceptual framework that explains the processes leading to consumers' attitudes toward and likelihood of purchasing global brands. In the course of developing their framework, the authors show, on a theoretical level, a positive association between social responsibility and global brand credibility, global brand attitude and purchase likelihood. However, Waldman *et al.* (2006) state that, even though the diffusion of awareness of the value of CSR initiatives in the global landscape has been occurring, little is known about the factors affecting such practices (Park and Ghauri 2015), a statement that Özsomer and Altaras (2008) also confirm. Thus, as CRM is a CSR strategy, it would be interesting for scholars in their future research efforts in this area to empirically investigate the effects of such CRM initiatives on global brands with respect to purchase attitudes and behavior, reputation and innovativeness, among others.

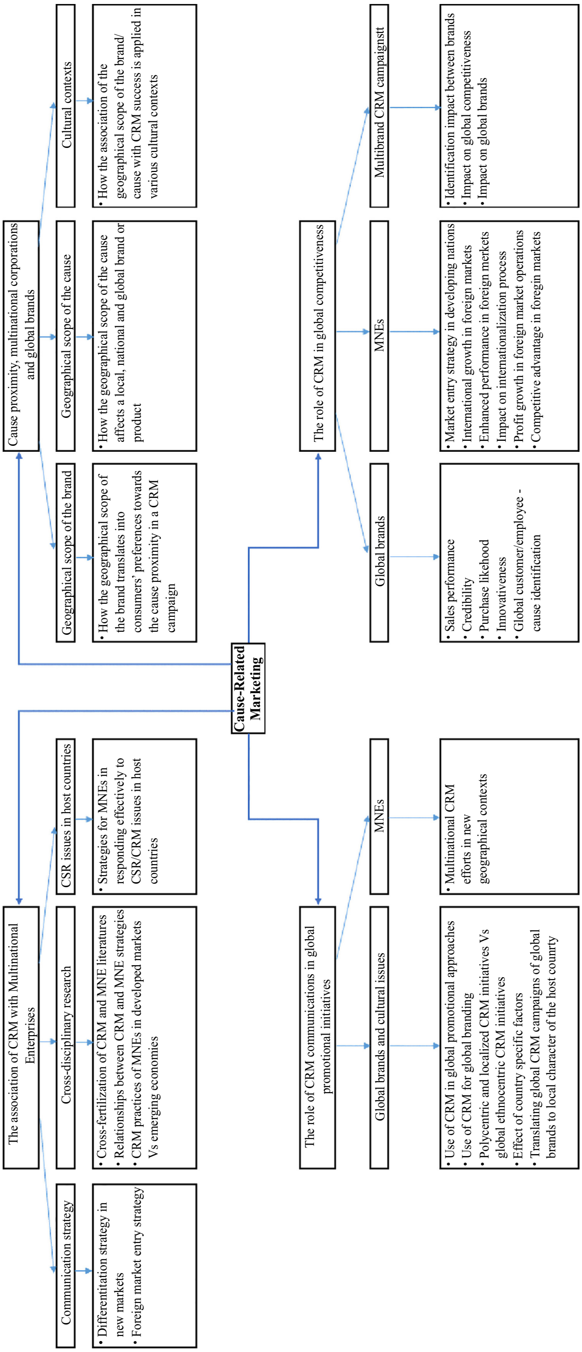

Figure 2.
Cause-related marketing and international marketing research: a future research directions framework

In addition, Vanhamme *et al.* (2012) stress another avenue for further research in the CRM domain that could extend the role of CRM in global brand competitiveness. According to the authors, various global brands have recently made an alliance to the same CRM initiatives. Thus, it is unclear how multibrand CRM campaigns, like the Product (RED) campaign in which major international firms such as Gap and Apple donated up to 50% of their profits from designated brands to support AIDS patients in Africa (Robinson *et al.*, 2012), actually affect any one brand owner. Other CRM initiatives supported by various brands, such as UNICEF that is supported by Pampers and IKEA or the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation supported by Yoplait and Ford Credit, also tend to receive support from multiple brands (Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012). Thus, various questions for which future scholars could investigate are generated, such as: Does these multibrand campaigns dilute the impact of identification with any one brand? What is the impact, both negative and positive, of such multibrand CRM campaigns on the global competitiveness of the various brands involved, as well as on the brands themselves?

Moreover, according to Endacott (2004) there is a positive trend of consumers' attitudes, on a global scale, towards CRM. However, in global and multinational organizations as well as NPOs, creating a CRM alliance with a good cause or benefactor that identifies with all their customers and employees emotions and desires on a global scale, could prove a formidable task. In particular, with few data available regarding consumer as well as employees opinions on a global scale, and the problem that these differ over time and from country to country, marketers may experience difficulties increasing their global brand's value by relating with just one good cause (Endacott, 2004). Thus, future cross-functional research on both international marketing and human resource management could provide valuable insights into this under-researched path.

Finally, attention could broadly be given to connecting CSR practices deployed by international firms to various aspects of their international growth, development and success. For instance, it would be enlightening if future research efforts on the subject examine the role that the adoption of CRM strategies play in influencing earliness of initiating international engagement and accelerated pace of international development and the overall process of internationalization (cf. Wu and Zhou, 2018). Likewise, it would be interesting to investigate relationships of CRM initiatives with international marketing adaptation/standardization and performance and conditions under which such initiatives can facilitate profit growth in foreign market operations (cf. Lee and Griffith, 2019). Here the study of CSM practices and how they affect the design and implementation of traditional marketing mix strategies such as the development of new products and pricing (cf. Hofer *et al.*, 2019) would be value-enhancing. Another particularly important direction for future research could be the role of CRM practices in influencing drivers and the achievement of competitive advantage and enhanced performance outcomes in foreign markets. In this context, for instance, linking CRM programs to marketing capabilities required for the deployment of such strategies in international markets and how their role differs between developed and emerging markets (cf. Ju *et al.*, 2018) would certainly add to our understanding of the role of CRM phenomena.

The role of CRM communications in global promotional initiatives. Resulting from the systematic review, CRM practices receive increased attention from the scholarly community in recent years. However, due to the fact that most of this scholarly work is conducted in the US and some other developed countries, such as the UK and Germany, the findings offer little guidance for international firms seeking to systematically promote multinational CRM efforts adjusted to idiosyncratic market conditions. These localized theories seem to be urgently required as CRM efforts with global brands and execution tactics are gaining momentum in the marketplace (Endacott, 2004). There is an observed trend that efforts relating to CSR initiatives of European and other multinational firms based outside the US are becoming similar to those of US businesses, which favor explicit programs and policies, as well as enhanced transparency in reporting and communications (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2011). In addition, recent research on international marketing indicates that there are benefits associated with the use of global promotional approaches and global branding, as well as the positive impact of CSR initiatives on such global practices (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2011; Özsomer and Altaras, 2008).

However, few scholars in the international marketing literature examine the role of marketing communications in global CSR initiatives and how these translate into diverse cultures. For instance, Becker-Olsen *et al.* (2011) examine the effects of marketing-oriented CSR communications on perceptions of the firm and its brands among consumers in Mexico and United States, two countries with different economies, cultures, and political landscapes. Their results show that multinational businesses emphasizing global CSR efforts are perceived more positive across multiple dimensions. However, regarding tactical and marketing communication issues, the results of their study also show the significance of some specific needs according to local experiences and tastes. Furthermore, La Ferle *et al.* (2013) explore the attitudes toward CRM campaigns in India and the United States, two countries at different levels of economic development. Their results show different attitudes towards the CRM campaigns from the two nations. Therefore, international marketing and CRM scholars could investigate whether polycentric and localized CRM initiatives, instead of global ethnocentric ones, are more effective for global brands and multinational corporations, and how country specific factors could be embedded in such initiatives to adjust in the cultural and other contextual dimensions of the various host countries. In the same vein, future research could also examine the role of marketing communications in translating global CRM campaigns of global brands to the local character of each host country. Summarizing, CRM and international marketing research should focus on increasing our understanding of the role of CRM communications adjusted to local context by global firms, a research path that appears particularly interesting considering the increasing implementation of standardized global promotional efforts (Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012).

The association of CRM with Multinational Enterprises (MNEs). The relationship between CSR and the literature on MNE is at its infancy (Park and Ghauri, 2015) and, as Husted and Allen (2006) indicate, the lack of scholarly research is one of the reasons that MNEs regularly fail to respond effectively to CSR issues in host countries. In particular, by reviewing the International Business literature, there are only a handful of studies that focus on this research stream (i.e. Park *et al.*, 2014; Park and Ghauri, 2015) and the significance of this association remains under-researched. Similarly, the association between CRM (which falls under the wider CSR umbrella) and MNE literature is scant. In particular, the results from the review indicate that there is no study focusing on relationships of CRM and MNE strategies. Thus, we urge international marketing scholars to undertake research in this important area. It would be fruitful if attention is given to investigating CRM practices of multinational firms and how these differ between developed markets and emerging economies that are marked by the increasing role, power, and sophistication of middle-class consumers (e.g. Cavusgil *et al.*, 2018) who play a more important role in the operations and international marketing strategies of these companies.

For instance, the increasing interdependence of world economies through globalization of trade requires firms based in developed countries to find new markets for their products (Cateora and Graham, 2007; La Ferle *et al.*, 2013; Mueller, 2004). Thus, businesses now seek to gain first mover advantage by offering innovative products and features to differentiate their brands from the competition in the minds of consumers in the host countries. However, as the competitive landscape becomes more intense, differentiation strategies based only on functional attributes become insufficient (La Ferle *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, marketing practitioners are developing more innovative communication strategies to help their brands stand out. In this context, CRM initiatives emerge as one such communication strategy creating differentiation of businesses in new markets (Barnes and Fitzgibbons, 1991; La Ferle *et al.*, 2013). However, researchers in International Marketing seem to have completely overlooked the strategic importance of CRM as a foreign market entry strategy, a research avenue that should be pursued at a rapid pace in view of continuing globalization and changing competitive pressures worldwide.

Cause proximity, multinational corporations and global brands. Cause-proximity, which refers to the distance between the donation activity of the charity in a CRM alliance and the potential consumers that would make the donation (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), is one of the most important structural elements of CRM campaigns. According to prior CRM literature, cause proximity is classified as local, regional, national or international (e.g. Cui *et al.*, 2003; Grau and Folse, 2007; Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012). Towards this direction, extant literature examines consumers' preferences of cause proximity in a CRM campaign; nonetheless, the effects of this structural construct on consumers' response towards CRM campaigns are mixed (Anuar and Mohamad, 2011). However, prior CRM literature fails to examine whether: (1) the geographical scope of the cause affects a local, national and global brand or product; (2) how the geographical scope of the brand translates into consumers' preferences towards the cause proximity in a CRM campaign; and, (3) how these associations are applied in various cultural contexts. Thus, for example, even if prior CRM literature reveals evidence that consumers prefer local causes (Lii *et al.*, 2013; Vanhamme *et al.*, 2012), if a CRM campaign is linked with a global brand, then a local cause could have minimal effect on the intended outcomes from the campaign. Hence, future research on these issues would find advantage in attempts to explain the various inconsistencies identified in the CRM literature and thus extend and deepen understanding of CRM phenomena in the international marketing field.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Limitations

As with any systematic review, the findings reported here should be viewed in the context of the limitations that are endemic to such review approaches. First, this review uses only three, although the most recognized, databases of record: EBSCO Host, Science Direct and Emerald. These databases may have omitted some relevant studies. Third, the filtering process may have also omitted some potentially relevant research. However, it is our belief that the rigorous procedure of the systematic review adopted here reduced the probability that the omitted research would have contained information that would critically alter the conclusions. Despite its limitations, this study provides substantive contributions to the CRM domain, along with the identification of extensions within the international marketing field, which are analyzed in the following section.

5.2 Substantive contributions

5.2.1 Contributions to the literature. This study provides the first systematic review and critical appraisal of extant CRM research for the past 30 years, including both empirical and conceptual articles. Systematic approaches are still rare in reviews, especially in the marketing field. As a number of scholars argue (e.g. Newbert, 2007; Xiao and Nicholson, 2011), without a systematic approach, even highly comprehensive reviews by academic experts in the field will not be free from selection bias toward the literature that is familiar to the reviewers. Thus, conducting a systematic review of the academic literature on CRM helps the development of rigorous standards in this evaluation exercise and advances understanding of the CRM concept and scholarly research knowledge in this area. Second, this study maps the field of CRM, structures the results from the extant literature, and provides unique and deeper insights, allowing for easier and better understanding of the relevant literature. Particular attention is given in extending CRM knowledge to international marketing and suggestions are made for fruitful avenues of future research in this area.

5.2.2 Pragmatic implications. In addition to contributing to the literature, this study also informs practice. First, this systematic review will assist marketing practitioners of local and global for-profit organizations in (1) understanding the various direct and indirect linkages between CRM determinants and outcomes and (2) formulating appropriate CRM campaigns in a structured and systematic way. Second, given the breadth of literature that this review covers, the insights from all three perspectives will help marketers of donor companies to use the results productively. For example, a donor that aims to enhance consumers' purchase intentions will benefit by applying the various independent variables identified through this systematic review. Third, this review's findings will also help nonprofit organizations better understand the CRM concept, establish more successful CRM alliances, and achieve their charity goals.

5.2.3 Implications for academics. To our knowledge, our review complements recent review articles on CRM by providing researchers with a structured overview of the nature and scope of CRM studies. Adding to this, it may also serve as a basis for beginning a discourse on how CRM is understood from the for-profit, nonprofit, and consumer perspectives. In this regard, future research could take a closer look at the commonalities and differences between the three perspectives that we analyze here. Such an analysis could reveal important aspects of the CRM domain that have not yet received adequate research attention. Moreover, this review's results highlight a number of knowledge gaps, inconsistencies, and conflicting theoretical predictions that future CRM research should resolve. In this context, in order to further expand the boundaries of the CRM domain, we elaborate on the lack of international marketing studies that focus on the value of CRM for global competitiveness and we propose several avenues for further research that will sparkle international marketing research towards this embryonic, but highly significant, research stream. For each of these aims, we provide a rationale for why it is relevant to close the particular knowledge gap or to resolve the conflicting theoretical predictions and empirical inconsistencies. These arguments may provide the basis for the emergence of research efforts that can make a substantial contribution to developing the domain. It should be remembered that the underlying gaps and inconsistencies in the literature reveal the weaknesses in prior work that should be avoided in future research. At the very least, such an analysis may provide a more holistic understating of the nature of CRM, constitute the basis for international marketing research on the CRM concept, and stimulate conceptual expansion and empirical investigation in an area of study that may have more theoretical and practical relevance than ever before.

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Appendix

The appendix is available online for this article.

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