Cause-related marketing: an exploration of new avenues through conjoint analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – Cause-related marketing (CrM) is one of the effective marketing concepts which draw high public exposure and make the cause and the organization known in the market. Further, it develops a higher inclination of the customers associating themselves with CrM-related campaigns. In this regard, CrM campaigns generally take hedonic products into consideration. The purpose of this paper (comprises two studies) is to: study 1, examine the attributes leading to successful CrM campaign and afterward when the results of Study 1 were found in line with the existing literature; and, Study 2, empirically examine the consumer preference for hedo-utilitarian products type in the CrM context.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 316 respondents participated in the survey. For selecting the appropriate research technique under the CrM study, the systematic review was conducted to arrive at a decision. Finally, conjoint analysis, a decompositional approach, was used for its ability to provide real-world setup to the respondents and keeping the social desirability bias at the minimum while assessing the consumer preference in the context of CrM.

Findings – Much literature is available in favor of using hedonic products for successful CrM activities. However, none has conceptualized the hedo-utilitarian products that have an equally fair chance to succeed under CrM strategy. The present study confirmed the relevance of hedo-utilitarian products (utilitarian products having hedonic features) for attracting the consumers having cognitive and affective responses altogether.

Practical implications – The novel concept of hedo-utilitarian product is introduced and empirically examined. The propositions and findings will facilitate the organizations in developing the products and marketing strategies in the context of CrM, giving them the option beyond the two product categories, i.e. hedonic and utilitarian. Accordingly, the companies may also focus and strategize for the "causmers," i.e. the consumers who pay heed to the cause of the campaign during the purchase.

Originality/value – While several of the dimensions in marketing have been explored, CrM is the least explored area in the Asian region. The attributes that may affect CrM were taken all together as another product feature/attribute under conjoint analysis exploring the attributes affecting CrM most, eventually, leading to higher consumer preference. Further, the concept of hedo-utilitarian products was introduced, empirically examined and recommended to future researchers for bringing it forward.

Keywords Conjoint analysis, Hedonic product, Cause proximity, Cause-related marketing, Cause-brand fit
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Companies constantly attempt to explore (Moosmayer, 2008; Beckmann, 2006) the mystery of consumer behavior (Bednarova *et al.*, 2015). Such exploration becomes more important when there is a rapid change in the lifestyle, aspirations, needs and desires of the customers affecting their perception and buying decision. Therefore, companies need to work on different fronts such as developing new products and services and at the same time developing and maintaining the favorable image in society:

> In the year 1992, the riots of South Central Los Angeles allowed McDonald to experience a new situation […] "that rioters refused to harm their outlets. While vandalism caused tremendous

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damages to businesses in the area, all sixty of McDonald's franchises were spared harm" (Hess *et al.*, 2002, pp. 113-114). The efforts of the company to maintain the dialogue with the society and its visible intent to develop its employees, built up the strong image that insulated it from such an incident (Kotler *et al.*, 2015).

The above incidence was sufficient to understand the importance of developing a good image by giving back to society from where one has earned and accumulated the wealth. In this context, the concept of CrM emerged out as an effective way to maintain the dialogue and rapport with society (Chang, 2008). Cause-related marketing (CrM) not only allows the companies to give back but also affects consumers' perception toward company's image, brand and as a result, generate the favorable buying decision (Barone *et al.*, 2000). CrM is "the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives" (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988, p. 80). Moosmayer and Fuljahn (2010) referred CrM as a way to ensure responsible behavior toward society and consumption. It stands for the act of the companies to donate a sum of amount in the form of money or otherwise as a charity per product or unit sold. These companies try hard establishing their name to get a better market image. In this endeavor, companies must look for their association with at least one non-economic or non-commercial activity or objective related to social welfare (Brennan *et al.*, 2016). In fact, the supported causes are offered by companies' nonprofit earning partners (Duane and Domegan, 2018; Drumwright and Murphy, 2001, p. 164). CrM allows high public exposure and makes the cause and the organization known in the market (Du *et al.*, 2008; Polonsky and MacDonald, 2000). Demetriou *et al.* (2010) and Pringle and Thompson (1999) mentioned that CrM has the ability to engage all stakeholders tactfully. The involvement of the donation aspect (Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998) motivates several customer segments to purchase (Lucyna and Hanna, 2016). In addition, it was observed that the size of donation increases the chances of positive evaluation (Strahilevitz, 1999; Dahl and Lavack, 1995; Holmes and Kilbane, 1993), unlike small donations which give rise to the suspicion among the mind of the consumers (Strahilevitz, 1999; Dahl and Lavack, 1995). Moreover, donating high amount, counterbalance the consumers' guilt associated with the consumption (Strahilevitz, 1999; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). Subrahmanyan (2004) observed that consumers are motivated to purchase more if the amount contributed is known to them.

To be precise, CrM must not be confused with corporate social responsibility (CSR). In an attempt to understand CrM in the contrast of CSR, Sheikh and Beise-Zee (2011) defined CSR as a holistic strategy by following the "good citizenship" concept supporting the stakeholders and the society. The corporate dynamics and the competitive environment compel companies to address corporate responsibilities. In this endeavor, financial or non-financial efforts are made under CSR activities. However, when any company supports a specific cause for a promotional purpose, it is known as CrM, which is widely practiced these days (Singh *et al.*, 2009; Nan and Heo, 2007; Brink *et al.*, 2006). It was observed that causes-oriented CSR is more appealing and beneficial than just a CSR activity. CrM is not only cheaper but also flexible to address different customer segments. On the other hand, the CSR or social activities are binding on the companies for legal reasons or expected as a part of normal behavior, thus does not attract much advantage (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011). In contrast, CrM conveys a positive image of good citizenship which eventually changes consumer perception in the favor of company. Some researchers discussed CrM as a marketing tool without reference to CSR (Samu and Wymer, 2009; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006a,b; Mekonnen *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, some researchers considered CrM as the quasi-synonymous of CSR (Barone *et al.*, 2007; Nan and Heo, 2007; Brink *et al.*, 2006; Ellen *et al.*, 2006). For this research, CrM is taken as a social activity for a specific cause under the broader concept of CSR.

In this paper, there is an attempt to address the affective and cognitive feelings and responses responsible for the purchase of hedonic and utilitarian products by offering the customers the newly conceptualized product type, i.e. hedo-utilitarian (refer research background section for the more details). In this endeavor, two studies were conducted for confirming the consumer preference for the hedonic products under CrM activities and further offering them hedo-utilitarian product type with other routine hedonic and utilitarian-oriented product attributes, respectively. Therefore, this paper attempted to empirically examine the impact of hedo-utilitarian products on CrM-related activities in comparison with the hedonic products (already established attribute for CrM) confirming the relevance under CrM and contributing under the existing body of knowledge.

2. Research background

For exploring how customers may be convinced for CrM campaign, it is essential to understand altruism (Choi and Mai-Dalton, 1998). The word altruism was coined by the French Philosopher Auguste Comte as the opposite of egoism (Campbell, 2006). Altruism is the moral practices of being concerned for the happiness of others (Choi and Mai-Dalton, 1998; O'Shea, 2004). In other words, altruism is termed as selflessness unlike selfishness (Choi and Mai-Dalton, 1999). There is always a debate on whether true altruism exists in human or not. The theory of psychological egoism (Crane and Desmond, 2002) answers it in negative that true altruism cannot exist. The actor may get an intrinsic reward in the form of personal gratification (Baumann *et al.*, 1981). Taking the clue for the above discussion, several researchers explored the impact of altruism on social marketing (Koku and Savas, 2014; Carvalho and Mazzon, 2015). The altruistic concept is one of the prime factors behind the success of any CrM campaign (Chang, 2008). If the customers are not high on altruism, they are less likely to charity for the given cause (Wallace *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, the companies try one way or another to generate altruistic motivations among the customers. However, the altruistic motivation will be high if there is a higher cause-brand fit (Bigne *et al.*, 2012). Further, in the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), the customers avoid the state of dissonance to restore the consonance and seek to convert their attitude toward one of the objects such as a social cause or alike. As per Solomon *et al.* (2006), dissonance, i.e. undesirable state of customers, occurs mostly in the trade-off situation. It means that the customers face a dissonance when they are offered two equally attractive options (Lake, 2009). Moreover, higher cognitive dissonance may be the cause of dissatisfaction eventually leading to "buyer's remorse" (Lake, 2009; Sharifi and Esfidani, 2014). For addressing such situations, companies may either eliminate the importance of contradicting beliefs and facilitate the customers to acquire new beliefs or remove the conflicting attitude or behavior (Festinger and Carlsmith, 1959; Festinger, 1957). Thus, if one can facilitate the customers in acquiring a new belief, the dissonance can be minimized. In an attempt to find out how the dissonance exists in the mind of different customers, the concept of affective and cognitive reactions can be held responsible for the same. It is claimed that "one of seven deadly sins of cognitive neuroscience is to assume that affect is independent from cognition" (Davidson, 2003, p. 129). In addition, Halgren (1992) suggested that "emotion and cognition are so interconnected that it is not practical to try to disentangle the temporal and causal relations of emotion and cognition." The affective reactions motivate the customers to purchase hedonic goods (Rodríguez-Déniz and Voltes-Dorta, 2014), whereas cognitive reactions motivate to choose utilitarian products (Batra and Ray, 1986). The details of both the reactions (affective and cognitive) are being mentioned in the literature review section.

Therefore, based on the aforesaid discussion, it is assumed that today's people/customers generally have both affective and cognitive feelings and responses (Davidson, 2003; Halgren, 1992). No single response will be sufficient enough to capture the customers' attention and their inclination toward the purchase (Storbeck and Clore, 2007). Many studies have endorsed and recommended the use of hedonic products for the charity and CrM campaign. However, we postulate that since there is a change in consumer behavior and affective and cognitive responses are interdependent (Storbeck and Clore, 2007), the customers exhibit the affective and cognitive reactions either at the same time or in a day or other. Thus, it is imperative to address both incongruity and congruity aspects of the customers eventually leading to the conceptualization of new product category, i.e. hedo-utiliratian (Manoff, 1985; Lefebvre, 2011) by capturing the customers' responses and the preference for the above-stated product category under CrM.

The aforesaid discourse leads us toward certain questions, given as: first, what attributes and specific levels persuade the customers to perceive CrM activities more favorably? Based on the results, second, can the CrM activities only be successful when associated with hedonic products?

In this endeavor, the attributes and levels are being obtained through a systematic review of relevant literature and the Delphi technique followed by their specific utility scores and relative importance scores using conjoint analysis. Afterwards, the pre-existing opinion that the use of hedonic products ensures the success of CrM is empirically examined. Thus, this study seeks to answer the research questions mentioned as follows:

RQ1. Does higher the company image results in better the CrM activities?

RQ2. Are hedonic products preferred over utilitarian products in the context of CrM?

RQ3. How cause-brand fit is perceived by consumers in the context of CrM?

RQ4. Do the customers feel more connected with the regional issues than the national and international issues under the CrM context?

RQ5. Do the cash donation has a higher preference over product donation in CrM-driven product sell?

After analysis of the responses obtained under Study 1, if the results are in line with the support of existing literature and research objectives, Study 2 is to be conducted for capturing the responses of the participants for the purpose as follows:

RQ6. Will the hedo-utilitarian products be accepted well by the customers over hedonic and utilitarian products under the CrM campaign?

Although CrM has roots way back to more than two decades, it still maintains relevance for consumer purchase (Bae, 2018; Kotler and Keller, 2006; Bonstein, 2005). Moreover, this concept is less explored in the Asian (Subrahmanyan, 2004) and European context (Brink *et al.*, 2006), that too in a boring way (Lucyna and Hanna, 2016). There are studies that attempted to explore CrM and related concepts (Hamby, 2016; Nelson and Vilela, 2017) using different research methods such as structural equation modeling (Bigne-Alcaniz *et al.*, 2009), regression analyses (Chaabane and Parguel, 2016), cluster analysis (Langen *et al.*, 2013) and many more (Table III). However, the marketing research questionnaires under the aforesaid studies asked the participants about their preferences in isolation (Kulshreshtha *et al.*, 2018, 2019; Sharma *et al.*, 2019). As a consequence, the participants were not evaluated under the real-life buying situation. Moreover, these results were hardly free from social desirability bias (SDB) and common method variance (CMV) leading to biased results. Here, SDB refers to the fact that respondents protect and project their positive image and get involved in self-deception (Lee and Sargeant, 2011). Second, when the questions are asked in isolation, they anticipate the socially desirable answers and reply accordingly. This inevitable behavior of respondents makes it difficult to keep any research free from SDB. Further, CMV is defined "[…] as potential alterations to true correlations among observed variables in a study, because the data for these variables are being collected using a single instrument and at the same time" (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017, p. 193; Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Thus, it affects the validity of experimental and survey research works (Fisher, 1993; Nederhof, 1985). For addressing such issues, the conjoint analysis found suitable in reducing the chances of SDB and CMV (Cunningham *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, it is surprising to learn that several published research and review articles have attempted to explore CrM, but only few of it ever tried to explore the aspects of CrM using conjoint analysis (the detailed rationale and the process behind choosing conjoint analysis is exhibited under methodology section). Thus, the attributes with its specific levels were being examined for its utility and relative importance scores in the context of CrM. We first asked the respondents about their preference for the specific combination of attributes, they would like for their better association with the CrM-related campaign. Further, under Study 2, they were told to mark their preferences for the given consumer durable while keeping the most preferred combination in their mind. During the second phase of the study, the new product type, i.e. hedo-utilitarian, was introduced with other routine attributes (door style, door pattern, capacity, energy rating and color). Therefore, this paper attempted to empirically examine the impact of hedo-utilitarian products on CrM-related activities. Consequently, the aforesaid discourse formed the basis of our research.

At the end, the major contributions of this research are multifold. First, the exploration of attributes leading to the positive perception toward CrM was made in real-life situations. For this purpose, the different product profiles were offered and examined using conjoint analysis, consecutively addressing the issue of socially desirability bias and CMV bias. Second, the relevance of newly conceptualized product category, i.e. hedo-utilitarian products under CrM, was empirically examined for its contribution in the theory by introducing and establishing the relevance of hedo-utilitarian goods in the CrM context. Third, the current research extends the framework for better CrM by focusing on attributes and levels with its specific relative importance and utility scores. The remainder of the paper includes a literature review on company image, product type, cause-brand fit, cause proximity and company donation in detail. The next section comprises of methodology and the research design, describing the process of exploring the research gap using inclusion and exclusion criteria, process of Delphi technique and conjoint analysis. Section 3 includes the results and discussion followed by managerial implications and limitations and future research avenues.

3. Theoretical framework

It is vital to have an in-depth review of the existing literature before venturing in any research topic. Moreover, the same is required to select the most appropriate attributes under this study. Afterwards, the specific attributes and its levels related to CrM such as company image, cause-brand fit, product type, cause proximity and company donation for providing real-world setup (Kulshreshtha, Tripathi, Bajpai and Dubey, 2017) were selected after seeking the support of the relevant literature, theories and Delphi technique (detailed discussion is available in methodology section). The literature pertaining to the study is being discussed further.

3.1 Company image

In an attempt to move from the mere obligation to strategy, under an article in *Harvard Business Review*, Craig Smith emphasized on focusing on specific social issues. The same facilitates in achieving marketing as well as social objectives (Kotler *et al.*, 2012). As per the survey conducted by Nielsen Global Research (2014), consumers also reward those companies having the concern for the society, by buying and paying more from them. The ethics-oriented business has become the mandate, rather than the option at will. The consumers' altruism (willingness to even pay more to the companies doing good to the society) and marketers concern for keeping themselves abreast with the people and the society ensures its relevance in marketing strategies (Nielsen Global Research, 2014). However, for reaping the benefits, it becomes imperative to explore what image consumers carry about any company (Rindell *et al.*, 2010), as the same increases the revenue for the organization (Rindell, 2013; Martineau, 1958), though it is in the eye of the beholder (Stern *et al.*, 2001; Bullmore, 1984). On a conceptual level, corporate reputation is the socially constructed collective conception (Bromley, 2001), while an image is an individual level concept constructed "as a product of a multiple-variable impression formation process located in the interaction among organizational texts, environmental and individual or personal factors" (Williams and Moffitt, 1997, p. 238). Moreover, the advertiser credibility (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989), merchant credibility (Lichtenstein and Bearden, 1989), company reputation (Goldberg and Hartwick, 1990), company credibility (LaBarbera, 1982) and confidence in the advertiser (Settle and Golden, 1974) form consumer perceptions about the company and its image. In addition, a credible source of communication generates a positive attitude (Craig and McCann, 1978). As per Newell and Goldsmith (2001), higher the credibility of sources, better the positive image in the eyes of the people of the society. However, it is difficult to manage and maintain that image (Rindell *et al.*, 2010). Trimble and Rifon (2006) stated that if the companies are considered an expert in its field, they are assumed more credible, eventually persuade consumer for more charity. Therefore, the company brand and consumer perception are interlinked (Trueman *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, the companies that have good image attract more consumers toward CrM initiatives. In contrast, the poor image has a negative impact on the consumer and drives them away from CrM-related activities.

Moreover, in the context of the company image, consumer skepticism is a central point of concern. The marketing strategy related to CrM may fail miserably, if the same is not addressed properly. As per Leonidou and Skarmeas (2017), skepticism is the general attitude of the individual raising an eyebrow with suspicion and the tendency to question for identifying the ulterior motive if any. Consumers may suspect the intention of the company and its different marketing and product-related claims (Chaabane and Parguel, 2016). Such suspicion may arise due to disbelief (Kim and Lee, 2009; Obermiller *et al.*, 2005; Boush *et al.*, 1994), lack of trust (Skarmeas and Leonidou, 2013) and intention of the company (Eggert *et al.*, 2015; Morales, 2005). The customers perceive the ulterior motive of the company while dealing with it during the previous purchases (Cui *et al.*, 2003; Foreh and Grier, 2003). If the consumer skepticism is high, the efforts of CrM may go in vain (Chaabane and Parguel, 2016). However, if the company carries a good image, the customer perceives the CrM campaign positively. The strong company image convinces the customers to perceive the intention of the company in a positive way and enhances the warm glow effect (the good feeling people get from helping others) (Muller *et al.*, 2014; Winterich and Barone, 2011; Davison and Deeks, 2007).

3.2 Product type

Shreds of research have been conducted in CrM, its promotional activities and compatibility with the product type (Palazon and Delgado-Ballester, 2013; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; O'Curry and Strahilevitz, 2001; Khan *et al.*, 2004; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). As a result, the selection of the type of product (hedonic and utilitarian) depends on the context. For example, when there is a need of justification, utilitarian products are better; similarly, the hedonic product choice is considered as discretionary in nature (Millar and Tesser, 1986; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000). As mentioned earlier, when someone chooses the utilitarian option, the justification theory (Jost and Hunyady, 2005) diminishes the sense of guilt. Moreover, the purchase of hedonic products that generates a sense of guilt may be substituted if associated with some social or charitable cause (Okada, 2005; Kivetz and Simonson, 2002a). As per Batra and Ray (1986), functional/cognitive and experiential/affective responses are the reasons behind the selection of the type of products. Under higher-order cognitive processes (Pham *et al.*, 2001), when there is an urge for the solution of any particular problem, utilitarian products are preferred (Park and Moon, 2003). On the other hand, when consumers look for better experience and mood refreshment, they go for hedonic products (Roy, 2010; MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). The affective behavior is when "the response or the action to the stimulus is not performed upon the stimulus, but upon the acting person himself […] instead of the person producing some effect upon the stimulus object, the person himself is affected" (Kantor, 1923, p. 433). The utilitarian value looks for the aspects such as value for the money (Overby *et al.*, 2005; Teo, 2001) and persuade for planned shopping, whereas the hedonic value looks for the unplanned shopping (To *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, it is observed that people purchase the product for different purposes (pleasure or functional aspects). Moreover, if the situation arises to drop the idea of purchasing, the hedonic products are selected first in this endeavor (To *et al.*, 2007).

The hedonic products are meant to cater the desire for sensual pleasure and can be related to profligacy and wastefulness (Luchs *et al.*, 2010; Subrahmanyan, 2004; Strahilevitz, 1999). On the other hand, utilitarian products are aggravated by basic needs. In the opinion of some researchers, luxury is mainly meant for the hedonic products, while necessities are the requisite to fulfill a more utilitarian purpose more (Dubois *et al.*, 2004; Kivetz and Simonson, 2002a, b; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). The utilitarian and hedonic consumptions are discretionary and differ on the basis of the degree or the perception (Okada, 2005). In addition, some researchers suggested that hedonic goods are multi-sensory that generates excitement, pleasure, delight, fun and experiential consumption. Designer and trendy clothes, music, sport and luxury cars, smart/sport watches, sport watches and flowers are few names in this category. Simultaneously, utilitarian goods are primarily instrumental in motivating consumers to purchase the products based on their utility or functional aspects. Some examples under this category are detergents, minivans, microwaves, refrigerator, home security systems and washing machine (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). For deciding the hedonic or utilitarian nature of the product, the consumption motives and usage are the deciding factors (Pham, 1998). For example, purchasing the mobile to connect with others makes the phone utilitarian. However, purchasing the mobile to chat with friends makes it hedonic. It is also observed that hedonic goods affect rich more than the utilitarian products and vice versa is not necessary in all cases. In general, customers used to prefer ice cream, if offered as a single choice, but when offered two, will choose the one having more utility (Okada, 2005). Wakefield and Inman (2003) and Strahilevitz (1999) suggested that consumers are generally less price sensitive for hedonic products or services instead of the products with the functional aspect. Therefore, the hedonic products are mostly used for charity-related aspects. Moreover, the guilt of purchasing the pleasure-oriented products can be counterbalanced by associating the hedonic product purchase with any cause-related charity (Kim *et al.*, 2005; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). The reason behind such behavior may be that the hedonic products such as sport bikes are purchased for fantasy, delight and amusement. Therefore, donating some amounts for any cause gives them a sense of satisfaction. Thus, linking CrM campaign with hedonic products is more beneficial (Rintamaki *et al.*, 2006; Subrahmanyan, 2004). On the other hand, monetary promotions are much more effective in the context of utilitarian products and non-monetary promotions are beneficial in the case of hedonic products (Chandon *et al.*, 2000). It is also observed that the hedonic product (harmful for environment) with charity incentive is more effective than the utilitarian product (Strahilevitz, 1999; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). However, this outcome is established in western guilt cultures. In the Eastern shame culture, the practical products are preferred over hedonic product (Hofstede, 2001; Subrahmanyan, 2004). However, the contingent effects of the product type with harmful nature remain unexplored (Chang and Chen, 2009).

When somebody purchases the anti-environmental product of utilitarian nature, the dispositional blame is diluted by the situational attribution (which state that particular buying behavior is due to situational behavior, not due to consumer's self traits, abilities or feelings), eventually justifying such behavior (Jost and Hunyady, 2005). Therefore, product type is an important consideration for cause-related marketing (Roy, 2010). Therefore, hedonic and utilitarian products make a reasonable basis to study CrM.

However, companies are catering to the need of the customers who are motivated to purchase the products having the utilitarian and hedonic features altogether. The customers who prefer utilitarian and hedonic features in the same products are significant in number. The marketers are responding to the taste and preferences of the consumers who are asking for "everything" featuring in a single product. Moreover, considering the various theories (cognitive, affective and cognitive dissonance theory), we conceptualized the hedo-utilitarian product type (the products that possess the features of hedonic and utilitarian goods at the same time) and attempted to examine the consumer preference for the same.

3.3 Cause-brand fit

Cause-brand fit occurs when there are compatibility and correspondence between the social cause and the brand (Lafferty, 2007; Trimble and Rifon, 2006). It is crucial to have harmony between the product and the cause prior to the promotion of any product. It is established that higher the cause-brand fit, better the perceived motive of CrM campaign (Bigne-Alcaniz *et al.*, 2009; Hou *et al.*, 2008) and such congruence and similarity between supported cause and brand affect the success of the alliance. Therefore, the cause-brand fit may differentiate CrM alliances (Liu and Ko, 2011; Samu and Wymer, 2009; Pracejus and Olsen, 2004; Till and Nowak, 2000; Keller and Aaker, 1992). Simultaneously, when a company has financial liquidity and ample profit opportunities, it leads to the positive attitude for the product combined with the cause (Yoon *et al.*, 2006; Szykman, 2004; Campbell and Kirmani, 2000). In the context of cause-brand fit with congruence or consistency theory (Lafferty *et al.*, 2004), several researchers have explained the rationale behind consumers positive response toward high-fit cause brands compared with the low fit (Becker-Olsen and Hill, 2006). The congruence theory confirms that relatedness or similarity facilitates storage and retrieval of the information from the memory (Lafferty, 2007; Cornwell *et al.*, 2005). The customers always want to maintain harmony in their thoughts and feelings and the same congruence is expected in the cause-brand fit (Lafferty *et al.*, 2004; Jagre *et al.*, 2001). The finding related to attribution theory suggested that every time it is not possible to know everything about an event. Therefore, the customers look forward to find a logic, sense or explanation (Folkes, 1988; Kelley, 1973) in an attempt to gain improved understanding about the things happenings around them (Folkes, 1988; Kelley, 1973). However, the theory of low fit–high fit does not necessarily exert the same impact on all individuals equally due to the other factors, including "lack of vested self-interest" (Nan and Heo, 2007) or heterogeneity in the operationalisation of the variable (Barone *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the customers incline toward the brand having a higher cause-brand fit (Menon and Kahn, 2003; Strahilevitz, 1999). In spite of several research works exploring the effects of cause-brand fit on CrM campaign outcomes (Lafferty, 2007; Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; Trimble and Rifon, 2006; Becker-Olsen and Hill, 2006; Pracejus and Olsen, 2004; Rifon *et al.*, 2004; Lafferty *et al.*, 2004; Berger *et al.*, 2004; Menon and Kahn, 2003), only partial work for the importance of high fit is examined (Lafferty, 2007).

In addition, Bigne *et al.* (2012) viewed the cause-brand fit through two different perspectives such as functional fit and image fit. Functional fit refers to the comparison of product functions and the social cause, whereas image fit refers to the related characteristics between the brand and the social image. In this context, rich literature is available on the social cause, social marketing and CrM (Duane *et al.*, 2016; French, 2015; Gordon, 2013; Gordon *et al.*, 2011, 2016; Hastings, 2017; Domegan and Harris, 2017).

3.4 Cause proximity

The consumers may have high involvement or low involvement with the cause (Rifon and Trimble, 2002). Such low-involved customers can be the crucial bottom line to keep the corporate competition stiff and high (Grau and Folse, 2007). The fast moving generation Y is not much involved with the cause (Rifon and Trimble, 2002), though baby-boomers are socially conscious and involved with it. Therefore, how low-involved customers can be motivated is the point of concern. So that, once they become highly involved will take the causes relevant to their lives (Myers *et al.*, 2013; Zaichkowsky, 1994) and develop a positive association with the brand (Sherif *et al.*, 1965). However, all causes are not "marketable" or chronic in nature such as protest cancer, food and shelter (Landreth-Grau and Polonsky, 2006; Polonsky and Landreth, 2005). Therefore, the companies must be cautious while selecting the cause for any marketing campaign.

In this given context, the cause proximity deals with the cause and the consumers and further divides it into regional, national and international levels (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). As per the survey conducted by Roper (2000), 55 percent consumers preferred local cause, 30 percent national cause and 10 percent consumers preferred global cause. Therefore, it is quite clear that the proximity of the cause exerts the impact on customers' charitable behavior (Groza *et al.*, 2011). For example, the donation made by the Indians for the victims of Kerala (India) flood was higher than of the tsunami in Indonesia (*The Indian Express*, 2018b). Every cause picked up by the companies generally passes the test of cognitive and affective evaluations by the customers (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 1995). There are endorsements in favor of the local cause than an outside or remote cause (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002; Kantor, 1923). Now these days, the extended role of the companies expects them to convey the consumers that they are not only doing well for the global community at large, but also the local community as well (Mattila and Hanks, 2012). As per Hou *et al.* (2008), customers prefer the local cause over remote causes (Grau and Folse, 2007) as it exerts direct impact on the community. It is also observed that the nearness between the donor and the recipient results in pro-social behavior (Hou *et al.*, 2008; Hammad *et al.*, 2014). The physical distance between the recipient and the donor affects the donation amount (Bar Tal, 1976), i.e. less distance more donation and vice versa. However, Ross *et al.* (1992) stated no significant difference between local, national or international cause. The example of local cause can be a charity for cow-care, national cause (child education, help to the acid victims) and international cause (refugees, victims of international terrorism). The global causes are expected to be addressed by the large-sized organization (Brunk, 2010), whereas the local cause preferably to be addressed by the small- and medium-sized companies (Kulczycki *et al.*, 2017; Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006). It is further observed that the large size companies are more likely to be scrutinized by the customers than small- or medium-sized companies for their CSR and CrM campaigns (Kulczycki *et al.*, 2017; Brunk, 2010). These key differences motivated us to examine the CrM through the regional, national and international levels perspective.

3.5 Company donation

The charitable giving is defined as "a transfer of goods, services or experience that benefits entities with whom the donor does not have a social relationship and which do not directly reciprocate" (Fischer *et al.*, 1996, p. 184). Therefore, taking the clue from the above definition, Folse *et al.* (2014) conceptualized that company donation includes any cash, goods or services offered by the company to any nonprofit organization with no expectation of reciprocity from the nonprofit firm. Under CrM campaign where consumers are engaged in prescribed behavior, a philanthropic donation is made by for-profit organizations to the nonprofit partner organizations (Christofi *et al.*, 2014; Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). In the present era, customers expect for-profit organization to get it engaged in some social activities. The companies traditionally follow two ways for donation, i.e. making cash donations of a certain amount or a percentage of purchase to a nonprofit partner (Winterich and Barone, 2011) or product donations in the form of goods, equipment, medicines or alike (Papasolomou and Demetriou, 2006; Ramrayka, 2004).

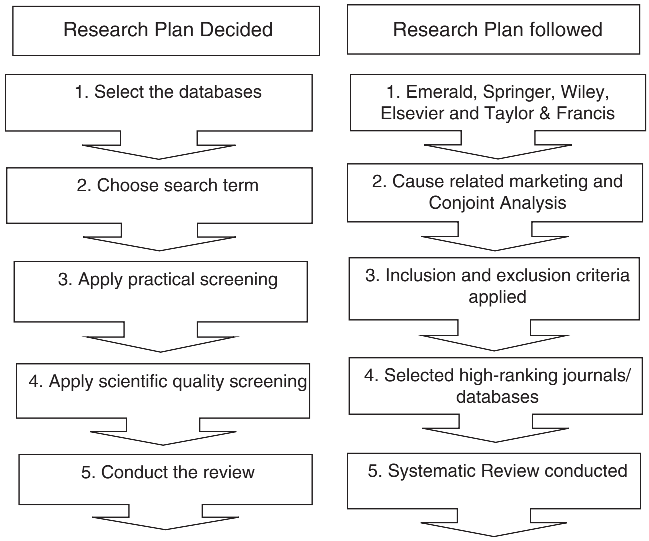
The product donation is beneficial in terms of financial aspects and creates "real difference in their communities as well as enhance their image as good corporate citizens" (Prysock, 2002, p. 61). On the other hand, product donation may be the way to reduce the logistics instead of destroying or writing-off the unwanted products. In some countries, product donation allows companies to have tax advantage if the products are donated then mere disposal (Stecklow, 2005). Product philanthropy gets the products adjusted that went out of demand due to several reasons such as non-merchantability, product line change, out of fashion inventory, product return and products with obsolete technology (Prysock, 2002). By doing product donation companies can have tax benefits, prominent market standing and projection as a good corporate citizen (Yang *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, product donation is sometimes more beneficial and attractive than cash donations (Caulfield, 2013; Jordan, 1959). Moreover, the chances of misappropriation of fund are also reduced.

However, some researchers observed that cash donation by the organizations to the nonprofit partner is preferred more than product donation (Hellenius and Rudbeck, 2003) because the cash can be used in various pressing needs, allowing more flexibility to the receiver. Nonetheless, many nonprofit organizations such as UNICEF and alike are readily accepting product donations in the form of medicines, equipment from pharmaceutical companies, food and clothing from the corporate houses (Hellenius and Rudbeck, 2003). However, as per the persuasion knowledge model (Friedstad and Wright, 1994; Campbell, 1995; Campbell and Kirmani, 2008), cash donation yields a more favorable response than product donation. As per the persuasion knowledge model, consumer accumulates a good amount of knowledge about various persuasive tactics. Therefore, whenever consumers are encountered with new persuasive tactics, they start evaluating it in terms of its fairness and equity. During this attempt if the fairness is at stake, it is viewed negatively and may result in customers' detachment from the CrM campaign. Therefore, though the product donation is more beneficial for companies, still not much in use. Moreover, product donation is considered as an eyewash or a way of disposing of the excess inventory and generally generates the doubt and skepticism erupts about such non-cash donations (Landreth *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the success of CrM campaigns depends on how customers are interpreting the cause, which eventually triggers consumer participation.

Based on the above discourse related to the product type, cause-brand fit, cause proximity, company image and company donation, the methodology for exploring the consumer preference is being proposed as follows.

4. Methodology

In an attempt to explore the preferences of people about the attributes leading to CrM, two studies were decided to be conducted. Initial Study 1 was conducted for getting the preferences of people on CrM, based on the company donation, cause proximity, cause-brand fit, product type and brand image. Thereafter, based on the results, Study 2 was conducted. For selecting the appropriate research technique for this research, we developed the research plan that comprised of five stages. First, the major databases such as Emerald, Springer, Wiley, Elsevier and Taylor & Francis were identified (Figure 1).



Source: Kulshreshtha *et al*. (2018)

Figure 1.
Search and selection criteria of articles

Second, an extensive search for the research papers having "cause-related marketing" and "conjoint analysis" keywords was conducted. Third, practical screening was done using the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Kulshreshtha *et al.*, 2018; Silveira and Zilber, 2017). Fourth, the selection of only high-ranking journals; and fifth, systematic review followed by the final decision on a research technique was made.

The inclusion criteria (Table I) comprised of date criterion from the evolution of a particular journal/database to till date. Authors' apprehension about the less availability of the work done on CrM and conjoint analysis in combination motivated us not to select any date bracket. The research articles were searched across all academic, industrial areas and countries. The filter-English-only language was used. After compilation, all the available papers were examined for its quality. At last, the research articles on CrM and conjoint analysis were selected with or without other research technique.

Further, the exclusion criterion was applied (Table II). The editorials, short comments were excluded due to their non-scientific contribution. Moreover, there were several instances where the searched keyword was available in the title or the text, but did not hold any seminal value. Therefore, such research articles were dropped.

Table I.
Inclusion criteria for conducting a literature review

Inclusion criteria	Reason for inclusion
All dates	Due to the expected less number of research articles, no date criterion was included. Therefore, the date ranged from the journals' inception date till 2018
All industries and countries	In order to explore a higher number of research articles not included industry or country-wise restriction
Conjoint analysis with or without other technique	For examining and exploring the research conducted on cause-related marketing and conjoint analysis, both theoretical and empirical research papers were included with or without other techniques
English language	The only-English language papers/articles were included due to its universality and wide acceptance

Source: Kulshreshtha *et al.* (2018)

After the analysis of results obtained from Study 1, the second study was conducted taking the specific refrigerator-related attributes accompanied with one repeated attribute from Study 1, i.e. product type. This time under product type attribute, one new level (hedo-utilitarian) was additionally added. The aim behind this addition was to examine the preference of the participants about the hero-utilitarian products (the products which have the features of hedonic and utilitarian products) in the context of CrM activities.

As per our assumption, though the work on CrM is available, the application of conjoint analysis (a technique that can address the limitation of SDB) in CrM-related research works is scant (Table III). Based on the thorough search, it was found that the Emerald database was having only two articles exploring CrM through conjoint analysis, Taylor & Francis comprised of two, Elsevier one and Wiley and Springer database has no research article on CrM employing conjoint analysis. Therefore, the conjoint analysis technique was selected on its merits.

The purpose of this research was to extend the research on CrM by exploring consumer preference through cause-brand fit, company image, cause proximity, company donation and product type using the conjoint analysis technique. Moreover, the hedo-utilitarian product type was conceptualized for the successful CrM campaign. Therefore, instead of asking about the liking or disliking for a particular attribute in isolation, participants were asked to rate the most effective configuration of attributes. In this endeavor, the conjoint analysis technique SPSS v. 20 was used (Kulshreshtha, Bajpai and Tripathi, 2017) to analyze the responses collected from the participants. One of the vital phases of conjoint analysis includes the accurate selection of attributes and its levels. Therefore, after seeking the support of the relevant literature, the Delphi technique was employed. Later, a questionnaire was designed for conducting the survey. At last, the results and analysis were discussed.

4.1 Conjoint analysis procedure

The problem in the quantification of customer judgment acted as a catalyst behind the evolution of conjoint analysis (Luce and Tuckey, 1964; Green and Rao, 1971). Conjoint analysis is one of the best multivariate techniques in understanding how customers develop their preferences (Hair *et al.*, 1995, 2015; Aghdaie *et al.*, 2014). It is a decompositional method where the part worth and importance weights of attributes are obtained indirectly. Moreover, the profile descriptions presented to the participants provide a realistic representation about the subject under study (Sattler and Hensel-Borner, 2007). The significance of conjoint analysis can be judged from its spate of applications from the 1970s to till date. The applications of this technique are mostly in marketing and for new product development (NPD). However, after being evolved from the basic application, it has taken a leap from the traditional areas to medical, pharmaceutical, banking, decision making, hospital management, human resource, finance and many more (Kulshreshtha *et al.*, 2018).

Conjoint analysis involves six steps (Green and Srinivasan, 1978). As depicted in Table IV, the model of preference was the part-worth function model because of ease of interpretability of graphically displayed attribute. Data collection method was full-profile, best suited for five to six attributes at a time, and this method can employ either a rank

Exclusion criteria	Reasons for exclusion
Editorials, forum reviews, short comments	These papers do not make any scientific contribution to the given field; rather summarizes existing issues, previous research studies
Keywords(s) mentioned at the references	Some articles were dropped because they were having the keyword in the paper, but did not have any seminal work

Source: Kulshreshtha *et al.* (2018)

Table II.
Exclusion criteria while conducting a literature review

S. No.	Authors	Used modeling approach	Contributions
1	Hou *et al.* (2008)	Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)	Suggesting the idea for higher participation and the alliances for social cause
2	Moosmayer and Fuljahn (2010)	Online survey and ANOVA	Studied the relation of CrM based on gender
3	Thomas *et al.* (2011)	Factor analysis and ANOVA	Examined the role of CrM and WOM
4	Bigne-Alcaniz *et al.* (2012)	CFA and SEM	Evaluated the consumer perception for social cause-brand fit, brand attitude in the context of CSR
5	Boenigk and Schuchardt (2013)	ANOVA, *t*-test	Studied the role of luxury campaigns to persuade luxury customers toward charitable organizations
6	Lafferty and Edmondson (2014)	ANOVA	Studied the impact of health cause category and human service category on the attitude of consumers over an animal and environmental cause
7	Baghi and Antonetti (2017)	ANOVA	Studied the hedonic consumption and guilt as an emotion for future research
8	Folse *et al.* (2014)	ANOVA, ANCOVA, MANCOVA	The company motive, product donation-cause and company cause were examined
9	Hammad *et al.* (2014)	In-depth consumer interviews and regression	Motivational attribution with the impact of personal characteristics for persuading consumers to purchase was studied
10	Guerreiro *et al.* (2015)	Eye-tracking and electrodermal response measurements	Studied the role of emotional arousal, pleasure and attention for emotionally charged marketing campaign
11	Ladero *et al.* (2015)	Partial least squares-based structural equation model	The impact of sociodemographic characteristics with personal values was examined
12	Kleber *et al.* (2016)	Regression	The presentation of donation amount in percentage or in absolute amounts was examined
13	Tarhini and Aldmour (2016)	ANOVA and Regression	Studied the role of cause-fit, brand credibility and sponsor-cause congruence
14	Chaabane and Parguel (2016)	Bootstrapping regression analyses.	Features and target audience must focus for reducing skepticism
15	He *et al.* (2016)	Regression	Explored the relation of brand social responsibility image and emotional brand attachment in the context of consumer moral identity (MI) and intention to purchase the CRM sponsor brand
16	Das *et al.* (2016)	Mean scores	Examined the role of impulse purchase and effect of product type on the cue congruency
17	Kim *et al.* (2016)	MANOVA, ANOVA, power analysis	Examined the role of advertising types and social causes
18	Huertas-García *et al.* (2017)	Content analysis, SEM	Evaluated the role of consumers' affinity and brand-cause
19	Shree *et al.* (2017)	Case study method	Explored the role of cause-related marketing campaigns in positioning and increased customer trial
20	Bae (2018)	*Post hoc*, multiple regressions and bootstrapping	Examined the impact of publicly stating the potential firm-serving benefits of its actions in reducing consumers' skepticism

Table III. The details of research conducted on CrM with used modeling approach

order or rating (Hair *et al.*, 2015), e.g. seven-point Likert scale. Stimulus presentation was through written description so that the responses can be collected through mail or in person. The measurement scale was "rating scale" and the estimation method is MONANOVA because of its compatibility with part-worth. The selection of the above-mentioned method was based on the rationality expressed by Green and Srinivasan (1978), though the depth discussion of these criteria was beyond the scope of this study.

The attributes under consideration must be relevant to consumers and of such nature that can be manipulated by manufacturers (Murphy *et al.*, 2000). Gil and Sanchez (1997) suggested that the attributes and levels under the study must be prevailing in the market and capable of representing the entire range. Based on available literature (Gunasekaran *et al.*, 2015) and experts' opinion through Delphi method, for the first study, each attribute with two levels was established, except the one attribute (cause proximity) with three levels. For the second study, six attributes with three levels each (except door pattern) were established. Every selected attribute has one level, which seems to be more attractive and another, which may not be much more attractive for customers. For testing, the total five attributes with $2\times2\times2\times3\times2$ levels were identified with 48 different profiles in Study 1. Moreover, six attributes with $3\times3\times3\times3\times3\times2$ levels were taken for Study 2. However, it would be a tedious task for the participants to mark their preference for such a huge number of combinations. Therefore, the orthogonal design was used (Huertas-Garcia *et al.*, 2016; Meulenaer *et al.*, 2015; Lee and Rhim, 2014; Arias, 1996). The 48 profiles for Study 1 and 486 profiles under Study 2 were reduced to 8 and 18 statistically significant combinations, respectively. The orthogonally developed profiles were free from multi-collinearity between attributes (Silayoi and Speece, 2007).

4.2 Delphi method

The Delphi technique was used for selecting and finalizing the most significant attributes and respective levels for conjoint analysis application (Aghdaie *et al.*, 2014). The Delphi technique is selected because of some prominent reasons. First, the most effective attributes that influence the product concept were to be selected. Such a sophisticated process of attributes and level selection requires experts having domain knowledge and expertise. Second, under the current study, we required university and market experts with suitable knowledge. Conjoint analysis is not much-explored phenomena in India. Therefore, a limited number of experts were available. In addition, the Delphi panel may include a less number of experts. Therefore, soliciting 5–20 members would be sufficient (Armstrong, 2001). Third, unlike other group decision-making approaches, there is no need to have face-to-face meetings with the experts (Hanea *et al.*, 2018). Thus, Delphi save time and avoid the chance of dropping the relevant expert residing at some far place (Hanafizadeh and Mirzazadeh, 2011).

For getting the information, a Delphi questionnaire was developed. Based on the literature review and interaction with brand managers, a total of 11 attributes were included. The experts were selected on the basis of their knowledge, experience, willingness, availability and capacity (Skulmoski *et al.*, 2007). In total, 15 experts were included, i.e. 11 academicians and 4 brand managers. The academicians were selected based on the

Steps in conjoint analysis

	Steps	Method adopted
1	Selection of a model of preference	Part-worth function model
2	Data collection method	Full-profile (concept evaluation)
3	Stimulus set construction for the full-profile method	Fractional factorial design
4	Stimulus presentation	Verbal description
5	Measurement scale for the dependent variable	Rating scale
6	Estimation method	MONANOVA

Source: Green and Srinivasan (1978)

Table IV.
Steps involved in conjoint analysis

number of research papers published related to the topic under study and courses taught. Industrial practitioners were selected based on their relevant experience, position and number of years served in the industry.

The questionnaires were mailed to the experts for getting their responses. The experts were expected to give their opinion on a five-point Likert scale about each variable's influence on the consumer purchase intention. During the whole process, the anonymity of experts was maintained. The repetition of the process for more than three attracts criticism for fatigue, attrition and forced results (Thangaratinam and Redman, 2005). Thus, the process was repeated only twice by the facilitator for reaching the consensus. After analyzing the results, the results were summarized for identifying the attributes and specific levels.

Finally, the first questionnaire was pre-tested with 30 electronic durable buyers to check the participants' understanding while giving responses. Moreover, after Study 1, the pilot testing was repeated again. These pilot studies showed no lacuna in the survey instrument.

Table V depicts the details about the literature supporting specific attributes and the levels followed by the Delphi technique for finalization.

4.3 Data collection and sample

In order to test the research questions, personal interview and integrated conjoint measurement were conducted. For exploring the utility of the factors, conjoint analysis is the appropriate and dominant tool (Green and Srinivasan, 1990; Cattin and Wittink, 1982). This tool works on a decompositional approach (Pracejus and Olsen, 2004). Under this approach, the participants rate or rank the different product versions. Further, the obtained total values are decomposed into utility and relative scores and attributed to each specific product characteristic (Ben-Akiva *et al.*, 1999). Therefore, the conjoint analysis method was applied to estimate the impact of product type, cause-brand fit, cause proximity, company image and company donation on CrM. Further, how the importance of each attribute affects the consumers was judged. Different combinations were presented to the participants by putting them in a situation of purchasing a new refrigerator. The total 8 and 18 combinations with a seven-point Likert scale were presented in the form of a questionnaire at two different times observing the gap of four months, so that the participants may get over the impact of the first study (Table VII). The target population was Indian consumers of consumer durable, i.e. refrigerator to over and above the age of 14 years, and the data was collected by the way of convenience sampling. More than 1,287 consumers were approached for the responses with a condition

S. No.	Attributes	Sources	Levels	Sources
1	Company image	Cheron *et al.* (2012), Vanhamme *et al.* (2012), Chattananon *et al.* (2008), File and Prince (1998), Jahdi (2014)	Good and poor	Cheron *et al.* (2012), Yoon *et al.* (2006)
2	Product type	Melero and Montaner (2016), Chang and Liu (2012), Wakefield and Inman (2003)	Hedonic and utilitarian	Wakefield and Inman (2003), Subrahmanyan (2004)
3	Cause-brand fit	Melero and Montaner (2016), Sheikh and Beise-Zee (2011), Lafferty *et al.* (2004), Vyravene and Rabbanee (2016).	High fit and low fit	Ellen *et al.* (2006), Cheron *et al.* (2012)
4	Cause proximity	Vyravene and Rabbanee (2016)	Int. National, National and Regional	Cui *et al.* (2003), Ross *et al.* (1990/1991)
5	Company donation	Kleber *et al.* (2016), Chang (2011), Wakefield and Inman (2003)	Cash and product (cash or kind)	Ulku *et al.* (2015), Kim and Lee (2009), Human and Terblanche (2012)

Table V. Table exhibits the literature support for the attributes and the levels that they will be agreeing for one more study as and when conducted within the next six to eight months. Out of the 1,287 respondents, 316 respondents (24.5 percent response rate) consented to be the part of the dual study. Of those participants, 6.96 percent were 14–19 years old, 23.73 percent were 20–24 years old, 30.38 percent were 25–29 years, 16.14 percent were 30–35 years, 10.44 percent were 36–40 years and 12.34 percent were over 41 years old. In total, 69.94 percent of the participants were male, and 30.06 percent were female (see Table VI). The majority of the participants were graduate (67.41), 10.44 percent were intermediate or under, 17.41 percent having Masters' degree and 4.75 were PhDs (Table VI).

The questionnaires were mailed and distributed at the prominent consumer durable stores of Delhi-NCR. The reason for selecting Delhi-NCR (the capital of India) was its demographic dividend that comprised of the people from different regions residing there due to the high employability and per capita income (*The Indian Express*, 2018a). Consequently, this place would be the best place to conduct the survey (Table VII).

Table VI. Sociodemographic dividend of participants

Gender		*Income class ($)*	
Male	69.94	⩽300	13.61
Female	30.06	301–600	18.67
		601–900	19.30
		901–1,200	37.66
		1,201–1,500	6.65
		⩾1,501	4.11
Age		*Education*	
14–19	6.96	Intermediate or under	10.44
20–24	23.73	Bachelor degree	67.41
25–29	30.38	Master degree	17.41
30–35	16.14	PhD	4.75
36–40	10.44		
> 41	12.34		

Notes: % of participants, $n = 316$

Table VII. Different attributes and levels taken for the study

Study 1		Study 2	
Attributes	Levels	Attributes	Levels
Company image	Good	Product type	Hedonic
	Poor		Utilitarian
			Hedo-utilitarian
Product type	Hedonic	Door style	Double
	Utilitarian		Side-by-side
			Multi-door
Cause-brand fit	High fit	Capacity	231–300
	Low fit		301–400
			401 above
Cause proximity	Int. national	Energy rating	2 stars
	National		3 stars
	Regional		4 stars
Company donation	Product	Color	Gray
	Cash		Purple
			Silver
		Door pattern	Floral
			Solid

5. Results and discussion

While dealing with the conjoint analysis model, the consistency and validation of the model is a prime concern. In this endeavor, Pearson's R and rank correlation coefficient of Kendall's τ parameter were implemented and advocated for examining the validation and consistency of the model (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). The aforesaid Pearson's R was used to test the consistency of the results, whereas rank correlation coefficient (Kendall's τ) is used to check the "goodness-of-fit" between observed and predicted ranking/rating or scores of the profiles. Pearson's R and Kendall's τ having a value of one or closer to one are considered good fit. The values of Pearson's R were 0.902 and 0.907, and Kendall's τ were 0.786 and 0.777 for Study 1 and Study 2, respectively (Table VIII). It indicated high goodness of fit, thus having high internal validity (Hamin and Elliott, 2006).

Moreover, the results were examined for CMV and response bias. For reducing the CMV, procedural as well as statistical techniques were adopted (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017). First, for counterbalancing the questionnaire, the order of questions/profiles was changed. Second, the multitrait-multimethod analysis (Campbell and Fiske, 1959) was done through paper-and-pencil questionnaire and e-mail survey. As a result, we were able to keep the anticipated CMV at the lowest. Further, the issue of non-response bias was addressed by randomly calling the participants taking their responses and comparing them with the already obtained results from the data. The comparison showed no significant difference between the response sets (Hair *et al.*, 2015).

5.1 Study 1: results and discussion

The results of Study 1 (Table IX) showed cause proximity (34.214) percent (which includes the regional, national or international aspects of concerned cause) as the most important attribute for attracting consumers toward CrM. The company image was having the second highest score (18.725) percent, followed by the cause-brand fit (16.079) percent, company donation (15.942) percent, and finally product type (15.039) percent (Table IX). It was worth noticing that the difference between the importance scores of cause proximity and other attributes was significantly higher than the differences among product type, cause-brand fit, company image and company donation. Therefore, it can be stated that cause proximity is the most preferred attribute by the participants for CrM-related activities.

Table VIII. Peason's R and Kendall's τ for model fit

	Correlations[a]	
Model fit	Study 1 Value	Study 2 Value
Pearson's R	0.902	0.907
Kendall's τ	0.786	0.777

Note: [a]Correlations between observed and estimated preferences

Table IX. Importance scores of attributes as per consumer preference

Study 1		Study 2	
Attributes	Importance scores	Attributes	Importance scores
Company image	18.725	Product type	20.909
Product type	15.039	Door style	17.273
Cause-brand fit	16.079	Capacity	9.351
Cause proximity	34.214	Energy rating	7.922
Company donation	15.942	Color	31.039
		Door pattern	13.506

The regional aspect of the cause in cause proximity attribute with 0.228 utility score clearly reveals that if the cause is regional, it will be preferred over other levels, i.e. national or international (Groza *et al.*, 2011; Roper, 2000). The probable reason behind this finding might be that people feel more connected with the regional/local issues (Myers *et al.*, 2013; Zaichkowsky, 1994). Therefore, the results were in line with the literature (Grau and Folse, 2007; Smith and Alcorn, 1991; Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), where the customers perceived regional cause more real than remote issues, accordingly ready to contribute for CrM (Roper, 2000). The international level cause had 0.025 utility score, followed by national level cause with −0.252 utility score showing the less preference for the international cause and least for the national cause, respectively. The consumer preference for international level cause showed that the contribution to the international level cause makes the customer feel more globally connected and achieve self-actualization (Macarov, 1976), though the regional level preference was higher than the international level cause. Therefore, the aforesaid discussion affirms the fourth research question that the regional level issues are preferred more than the national and international cause. Good image of the company has 0.261 utility score (Table X), and indicates that the customer may develop a positive perception for the CrM campaign, only when the company image is good (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001). The probable reason behind this preference might be the good image of the company capable of convincing the customers that their money is going in right hands (Trueman *et al.*, 2012). The utility scores of levels of different attributes are depicted in Table X.

On the other hand, the company's good image works as brand equity for the company in the eyes of consumers (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001) and develops an expectation for being ethical and committed toward them. Moreover, the consumers get assurance that their contribution is going in the right hands (Trueman *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, it confirmed that better credibility/image of the company will lead to a positive response in society (Rindell *et al.*, 2010; Newell and Goldsmith, 2001). Hence, *RQ1*, which stated about the success of CrM campaign, if the company carries a good image, is confirmed. Cause-brand fit that was the third preferred attributes with a utility score 0.059 for high cause-brand fit demonstrates that if there will be a higher cause-brand fit, the customer does not develop the suspicion on the intention of the company running the campaigns for

	Study 1			Study 2	
Attributes	Levels	Utility estimate	Attributes	Levels	Utility estimate
Company image	Good	0.261	Product type	Hedonic	0.139
	Poor	−0.261		Utilitarian	−0.611
				Hedo-utilitarian	0.472
Product type	Hedonic	0.022	Door style	Double	0.556
	Utilitarian	−0.022		Side-by-side	−0.194
				Multi-door	−0.361
Cause-brand fit	High fit	0.059	Capacity	231–300	−0.194
	Low fit	−0.059		301–400	0.139
				401 above	0.056
Cause proximity	Regional	0.228	Energy rating	2 stars	−0.028
	National	−0.252		3 stars	−0.194
	International	0.025		4 stars	0.222
Company donation	Product	−0.036	Color	Gray	−0.528
	Cash	0.036		Purple	−0.361
				Silver	0.889
			Door pattern	Floral	0.354
				Solid	−0.354

Table X.
Utility scores of levels of different attributes

some social cause (Leonidou and Skarmeas, 2017; Chaabane and Parguel, 2016). For example, congruence will be higher if a football manufacturing company supports the youngsters' play school. When there is low or poor fit (−0.059) between the cause and the brand, customer apprehends company's intention in taking the advantage of the situation (Webb and Mohr, 1998). Thus, *RQ3* inquiring about cause-brand fit is confirmed in the favor of higher cause-brand fit. Further, in the current finding, participants preferred cash donation (0.036) over product donation, which may eventually motivate the customers to donate more. Customers may be skeptical for product donation made by the companies, confirming *RQ5* by endorsing that the cash donation is more appropriate for favorable consumer response. Subsequently, the product type, which included two levels, i.e. hedonic and utilitarian, was the least preferred aspect. However, the hedonic type was preferred over the utilitarian goods based on utility scores (0.022) that is in line with the literature (Kim *et al.*, 2005; Wakefield and Inman, 2003; Strahilevitz, 1999; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998) discussed aforesaid, confirming *RQ2* (Table VIII).

5.2 Study 2: results and discussion

After obtaining the results of the first study, the specific product features (refrigerators) with its respective levels (Table V) were taken for Study 2. The product type attribute was added again with the other routine product features such as door style, capacity of a refrigerator, energy rating, color and door pattern. The participants were asked to rate their preferences with a question: will you connect yourself with the CrM campaign while purchasing the refrigerator having combination profiles as follows. Based on the results obtained from the second conjoint analysis, consumer preference was the highest for color (31.506) attribute, followed by product type (20.909) and door style (17.273). The capacity and energy rating secured the last position with 9.351 and 7.922 scores, respectively. The literature on utilitarian and hedonic products endorsed that the donation is expected to be more for hedonic products than the utilitarian products. Therefore, CrM activities are generally limited to hedonic products. Thus, for extending the CrM activities, the concept of hedo-utilitarian product was introduced. Under this study, the hedo-utilitarian products mean the products that are mainly utilitarian, but possess hedonistic essence. The options like color and door pattern, including floral-print door, door opening style contain the hedonic essence. On the other side, the capacity of refrigerators, number of doors and energy rating make this product utilitarian. Taking the utility score criterion under consideration, we observed that the utility score of hedo-utilitarian (0.472) product type was the most preferred option. Therefore, the results of utility score endorsed *RQ6* that states that the hedo-utilitarian products will be preferred (higher utility score) over the hedonic and utilitarian products in the context of CrM.

Further, the analysis of the results obtained from the second conjoint explores that double door option was preferred over side-by-side and multi-door options. Under capacity attribute, 301–400 liter options secured the top position. Further, four-star energy rating was given priority over two stars and three stars. At last, the silver option (0.889) and floral (0.354) door pattern were preferred, respectively. The result clearly indicates that consumers are willing for the hedo-utilitarian product type that facilitates them satisfying their affective and cognitive reactions. Moreover, the higher importance and the utility scores assigned by consumers for color and door style confirmed that preference for the hedo-utilitarian product type is not *ad hoc*.

Various theories explaining the rationale behind consumers' association with CrM have been explored (Ladero *et al.*, 2015; Tsai, 2009; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006b; Myers *et al.*, 2012). The selection of the specific type of goods, i.e. hedonic and utilitarian, depends upon the affective and cognitive reactions. As discussed in the previous sections, the affective reactions include moods, feelings, emotions brought forth impulsively and in an unplanned manner (Palazon and Delgado-Ballester, 2013). The cognitive reactions are the evaluative judgment about the product or subject matter under study. In other words, it is a reason-based assessment process. The result of this study addresses the issue raised by Palazon and Delgado-Ballester (2013) that higher-order cognitive process leads to stronger reasoning, and the lower order cognitive process generates affective responses. The customers going through the higher-order cognitive process prefer the utilitarian products for addressing their existing problem (Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000). Thus, more attention is being paid by them on the attribution, utility and usefulness of the product (Park and Moon, 2003; Babin *et al.*, 1994). To the contrary, the lower order processing is linked with the selection of hedonic goods (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). However, this time customers pay more attention to the degree of delight, experience and the factors soothing to the mood. Customers are generally concerned for the price during the utilitarian product purchase, whereas in the case of hedonic product purchase the fun, luxury, pleasure and excitement are placed at the top of the minds, and money at the last.

Therefore, the marketers and the manufacturers may explore the opportunity of converting the refrigerator from the pure utilitarian to hedo-utilitarian by introducing some in-built mp3, digital clock, double-triple doors, attractive colors, door patterns, touch screen and camera. As a result, the CrM campaign associated with products having dual features (hedonic and utilitarian) will have a higher preference (Table VIII).

6. Managerial and theoretical implications

The average part-worth function for the attributes under Study 1 and Study 2 may be helpful in understanding how a change in a single attribute's performance influences the value created for the customers. In practice, it allows the managers to analyze the needs of even a small customer segment such as wealthy single urbanites (Williams, 2017) and high net worth individuals (Alexander, 1987) and as a result may create attractive value offerings. In addition, the relative importance of different product-related attributes could be a guiding factor in creating value for the customers. Study 1 endorses the attributes relevant under CrM campaign. The managers may offer a wide array of products under CrM campaign. In this regard, the product management team may work on the prevailing regional social issues in the society on a regular basis (Sangwanand and Lohia, 2014). This way, both the aspects, i.e., addressing the social issue and developing trust among the customers may be nurtured. Further, the companies must adopt the cash donation instead of product donation to avoid suspicion in the mind of consumers (Eggert *et al.*, 2015; Kim and Lee, 2009). Such "causmers," the one who pays heed and get influenced by the cause-of-charity before making an opinion about the campaign and the purchase, can be dealt in a better way.

Generally, the CrM concept is employed by accompanying it with the hedonic products (Kim *et al.*, 2005; Strahilevitz, 1999). However, the presence and interdependence of affective and cognitive responses (Storbeck and Clore, 2007) make the people more materialistic as well as utility seeking. Therefore, the concept of hedo-utilitarian products must be focused upon (Davidson, 2003; Halgren, 1992). The hedonic products are being considered as the most suitable product type for CrM campaign (Kim *et al.*, 2005; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998). However, the above-mentioned newly conceptualized product type (hedo-utilitarian) is the significant contribution in the existing body of knowledge endorsing the use of hedo-utilitarian products under CrM-related activities for reaping the intended benefits. In this endeavor, the managers and marketers may emphasis on the products with the most preferred attributes and levels with suitable CrM strategies (Nan and Heo, 2007; Henderson and Arora, 2010). Moreover, they are advised to address the research issues such as CMV and SDBs during the survey for NPD.

The inclusion of the aforesaid findings may assist the marketers in developing the optimal product configurations or service packages with suitable marketing strategies or to introduce the changes in existing product configurations and marketing strategies accordingly.

7. Limitations and future scope of research

The present study has certain limitations that may be considered for future studies. This study only resorts to customer sample; the future studies may include other stakeholders for the opinion. Further, a comparative study between developing and more developed economies can be conducted for examining the preferences of different countries. In addition, similar studies can be conducted for wealthy single urbanites (Williams, 2017) and high net worth individuals (Alexander, 1987) with or without similar products, different causes and consumer affinity toward the cause. Further, the future researchers can use the conjoint analysis technique with cluster analysis for identifying specific consumer segments. For the further validation of the concept of hedo-utilitarian products, some hedonic products can also be examined instead of utilitarian product, i.e. refrigerator (Khan *et al.*, 2004). At last, the sample size could have been higher for better generalization (Chaudary *et al.*, 2016).

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