

# An Assessment of Customer Perception of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Through Cause Related Marketing (CRM) Initiatives

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**Abstract**—The field of Corporate Social Responsibility is attracting attention from business and academic communities across the world. Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is one way that companies fulfill their social responsibility towards local communities. This strategy allows companies to link their products or services to a social issue with the retail price ear-marked to support charitable causes. This study assesses customers' perceptions of CRM initiatives in Kuwait. The methodology used in this research uses the questionnaire responses from 532 participants. A scenario of an actual CRM offer was presented to elicit responses about customers' perceptions of such initiatives. The results show that the perceived company motive (intrinsic and extrinsic), the importance of the cause to the customers and their trust in the organization all play an important role in consumers' attitudes toward CRM offers. The research also found that the four groups of customers (pre-contemplators, contemplators, actionists and maintainers) exist, and each one of them has different attitude toward the CRM campaign and its sponsor.

**Keywords**—Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), CSR initiatives, Cause Related Marketing (CRM), Consumer Attitude and Behavior.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**I**NTERSE competition in recent years has pushed organizations to pursue new ways to make their brands more attractive to consumers (Roy and Jones, 2010). Marketing campaigns and promotions with links to social causes are a growing choice of corporations in attracting consumer attention and purchasing power (Hoeffler et al., 2010). In addition, Baghi et al. (2009) stated that consumers have been shown to demonstrate a growing concern with corporate social responsibility. These findings have spurred corporate marketing divisions to determine the degree of correlation between consumer perception of the company's social responsibility and the sales of their new product offerings (Yoon et al., 2006).

Consumers may decide to switch from their current supplier or provider to another company's products or services when the firm is perceived in a negative way regarding corporate

responsibility practices (Du et al., 2010). The key to the success of Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is the inducement of purchasers to increase the revenue of the parent company as a way for them to contribute to a charitable organization. Therefore, this is an area of great interest to companies worldwide as it becomes increasingly important for companies to study the levels of participation in a cause related campaign. This study aims to examine customer perception of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through Cause Related Marketing (CRM) initiatives in the State of Kuwait.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. CSR Background and Evolution

The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved over the years to reflect the relationship between business and society and has become increasingly accepted as an essential part of business in the corporate world today (Schwartz and Carroll, 2008; Podnar and Golob, 2007). Although CSR was introduced in the early 20th century, the concept was not formally written till the 1950s (Blasco and Zolner, 2010; Pondar et al., 2007; Carroll, 1999). Overall, it is evident that scholars and economists who actively researched social responsibilities of a business made progressive attempts to better define the concept and the inter-relationship between company and society. In a broader view, CSR is merely an extension of activities and behavior practiced by a company as a by-product of its standard products or services offered to society. Handy (2002) argued that CSR was the constructive relationship of business with society, without negating business economic objectives.

This research deploys one part of Carroll's (1979/1991) Model, as it is still the most widely accepted conceptualization of CSR to better assess consumers' expectations from business and as such became the basic platform for all CSR future studies (Montiel, 2008; Podnar and Golob, 2007). The model encompasses four major social responsibilities: Economics, Legal, Ethical and Discretionary, with the main focus of this research being on the Discretionary responsibility which embraces all voluntary activities that corporate bodies provide to society whereby they regard themselves as good citizens.

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The term philanthropy is often used interchangeably with discretionary to include corporate citizenship as a comprehensive term. Discretionary responsibility may be the most difficult category to measure in Carroll's Model, as its limits are broad and subjective. It is inherently possible that corporate discretionary strategies could significantly alter or perhaps, conflict with a firm's economic and profit-making structure (Jamali, 2008). Involvement with the community is considered a core business issue and a corporate responsibility, and is solely based on a discretionary relationship (Robins, 2008; Montiel, 2008). Levy (1999, p.52) in his book "Give and Take" postulated "Corporate philanthropy and social initiatives are the heart and soul of business". In this statement, heart stands for the business objectives, while the soul represents its values.

The shift in CSR definition toward discretionary has been more prominent over the last decade, as scholars and economists have morphed it to be purely of a philanthropic nature. Kotler and Lee (2005, p.3) opine that "Corporate Social Responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources". The authors further cited an in-depth meaning of the word 'discretionary' to represent voluntary contribution and commitment conducted by a business for the benefit of community, on human or environmental issues, and without any obligations or expectations. The business that can practice such a commitment will certainly qualify as being socially responsible. For their parts, Perrini et al. (2009) and Gupta and Pirsch (2006) all shared the same views that corporates investing in socially responsible activities is rewarding to business, supporting a positive relationship between social and economic performance. Such initiatives have become a prime business strategy providing a competitive advantage and standardizing it as the norm.

As more and more firms realized the benefits of CSR, management pursued engagement in different social activities and corporate initiatives, with several researchers categorizing these activities. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), these initiatives may fall under six (6) types, while Bloom and Gundlach (2001) categorized similar initiatives into four (4) types. Similarly, Canli and Fries (2010), organized them into five (5) categories. Table 1 describes the categories of these three groups of authors, and other related terms commonly used by scholars, plus related examples in Kuwait. In comparison, the perspective of Kotler and Lee (2005) is more comprehensive and serves the scope of this research and area of interest, which is: Cause Related Marketing (CRM). Although the activities presented in Table 1 vary in corporate dedication of resources, the single factor that unites them is volunteerism.

### *B. Cause Related Marketing (CRM)*

The most common and inclusive CRM definition referenced by many scholars has come from Varadarajan and Menon (1988); Farache et al. (2008); Gupta and Pirsch (2006) who

suggested that 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-producing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives.

Pringle and Thompson (1999) also argued that CRM is a marketing strategy that reflects a mutually-rewarding partnership between business and a social cause, translating corporate commitment to action in society. On the other hand, Adkins (2000) viewed CRM as primarily good business, facilitating significant returns to firms and non-profit organizations. Hence, the author emphasizes that CRM is profit motivated and cannot be considered philanthropy, as this latter anticipates nothing in return. CRM is approved by Alcheva et al. (2009) as the greatest cost effective product strategy in years, because it allows quantitative measurement of the monetary success of a marketing campaign.

Montiel (2008) and Kotler and Lee (2005) elaborated that "cause" may include both social and environmental issues in general. The most common concerns to community are the basic human needs: health, safety, education, hunger, employment, and animal rights. Although various authors have discussed CRM in several ways, the previously stated version of Farache et al. (2008); Gupta and Pirsch, (2006) encapsulates the essence and supports the concept that CRM is not tantamount to simple corporate philanthropy, but involves benefits to "causes" that far exceed the generation of revenues.

### *C. Benefits and Risks of Cause Related Marketing (CRM)*

Farache et al. (2008, p. 214) stated that "Cause Related Marketing (CRM) has switched the emphasis on what business can do for charity to an equal focus on what charity can do for business". CRM is considered an essential business strategy that generates higher profits, enhances corporate/brand image, improves employee morale and increased sales through cause alliance that positively impact consumers' attitude toward the firm, most importantly CRM is used as a marketing tool to gain customers' loyalty (Demetriou et al., 2010; Roy and Jones, 2010; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006; Cui et al., 2003). Simply viewed by Farache et al. (2008) and Kotler and Lee (2005), CRM initiatives that exceed "doing good" to community and "looking good" by corporate will result in "feeling good" to customers as they gain a sense of satisfaction through their purchase benefiting a charity or a cause. Thus, they are win-win strategies, whereby all parties enjoy a positive return and benefits. According to Hoefler et al. (2010) and Robins (2008) if the philanthropic motives behind corporate objectives are sincere and truly ethical, then the resulting corporate initiatives are considered to be socially responsible. It would be inappropriate to point to corporations and ask them to stop "doing good", nonetheless, corporate actions do conform with social responsibility, as their intentions, to some extent, do good for the community.

TABLE 1  
CSR INITIATIVES

Bloom and Gundlach (2001)	Kotler and Lee (2005)	Canli & Fries (2010)	Other terms	Description	Example From Kuwait
<b>Sponsorships</b>	<b>Cause Promotion</b>	<b>Sponsorships</b>	Cause Marketing, Cause, Cause advertising, or Corporate Sponsorships	Increase awareness of a social cause through contribution of funds and resources	Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) distributed booklets to their customers announcing sponsorship of the Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention in 2009 (CBK, 2010)
<b>Cause Related Marketing</b>	<b>Cause Related Marketing</b>	<b>Cause Related Marketing</b>	Cause Marketing or Co-branding Programs	Allocate a percentage of sale of product or services in support of a social cause	IKEA contribute a percentage of purchase price to Bayt Abdulla Children Hospital (BACCH) (Al-Wattan, 2010)
<b>Social Advertising</b>	<b>Corporate Social Marketing</b>	<b>Advocacy Advertising</b>	Considered as a subset of cause marketing	Advertisement campaigns to encourage behavior changes	NBK sponsors a Walkathon in support of Diabetes awareness twice a year (Mallin, 2009)
	<b>Corporate Philanthropy</b>	<b>Philanthropic Initiatives</b>	Corporate Giving, Corporate Social Investing or Community Outreach	Provide funds in the form of cash or in kind services to a charity or cause	Most firms allocated a donation box at their cash registers for customers to drop in their donation for Abdulla House Foundation, 2010
<b>Green Marketing</b>	<b>Community Volunteering</b>	<b>Employee Participation</b>	Community Outreach, or Corporate Citizenship Programs	Encourage in-house employees and other local businesses to participate in community related events	NBK employees volunteered to clean-up the beach of Kubar Island in one day (Mallin, 2009)
	<b>Socially Responsible Business Practices</b>		CSR or Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Commitment	Develop discretionary business plans in support of social causes	American International School (AIS) is changing its office practice from paper to e-mail communication in order to reduce waste and save the environment

**Source:** Adapted from Kotler and Lee (2005). *Shaded sections are the focal point of our area of research*

Despite the benefits of CRM to businesses and community, there are risks involved with this strategy, because it touches and thrives on the emotions of customers. CRM may be viewed by customers with skepticism and when it is a facade for corporate to simply increase their profits; if the firm's intention is not sincere and genuine toward the social cause, it is likely that such endeavor will fail and the firm may have an irreversible bad image (Roy and Jones, 2010; Zdravkovic et al., 2010). Handy (2002, p. 49) stated that "Markets rely on rules and laws, but those rules and laws in turn depend on truth and trust. Trust is fragile. Like a piece of china, once cracked it is never quite the same".

#### *D. Customers' Evaluation to Cause Related Marketing (CRM)*

Consumer perception of a Cause Related Marketing (CRM)

program is key when measuring its impact or success (Farache et al., 2008). Various researchers have identified that consumers form positive attitudes toward socially responsible companies (Wang, 2008). Equally, companies believe that their socially responsible behavior will be rewarded by consumers' positive attitude and purchasing intention (Piercy and Lane, 2009). In general, a firm's assessment of consumer behavior is paramount when targeting their purchasing power. CRM programs are certainly a tool to positively impact consumers when they are recognized as an added value to product selection. Personal satisfaction is enhanced, tipping the scale toward the firm that sponsors a social initiative. In reviewing the CRM literature, researchers have identified various elements that effect consumers' response at various levels of engagement and attitude. Table 2 summarizes different variables as addressed by different authors and which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

TABLE II  
CRM VARIABLES ADDRESSED BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS

	Mohr et al. (2001)	Bhattacharya and Sen (2004)	Hill and Olsen (2005)	Gupta and Pirsch (2006)	Youn and Kim (2008)	Roy and Jones (2010)	Canli and Fries (2010)	Du et al. (2010)
Andreasen Model	x						x	
Company-Cause Fit	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Consumer-Company Fit		x		x	x	x	x	
Consumer-Cause Fit (importance of cause)	x			x	x	x	x	x
Perceived Motive and Consumer Skepticism	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
CSR Communications	x	x		x		x	x	x
Company Trust & Reputation	x	x				x	x	x
Proactive vs. Reactive		x	x					
Religiosity					x			
Local vs. International							x	

### E. Andreasen Model

Mohr et al. (2001) applied the Andreasen Model of Changing Behavior to highlight the success of a CSR initiative as a consequence of the level of involvement by consumers. When consumers change from their traditional purchase pattern of price, quality and convenience dependency, due to CSR initiatives, firms enjoy greater success. Similarly, Kotler and Lee (2005) stated that the objective of marketing associated with corporate social activities is promoting behavior change. According to Andreasen (1995, p.143) "Consumers do not undertake high-involvement behaviors rapidly and in one step. They move toward the desired outcome in definable stages". When evaluating CRM, Mohr et al. (2001) identified four (4) groups of consumers in parallel to Andreasen's four (4) stages of behavior change. The Pre-contemplator (stage 1) is a group of consumers who is not aware of, nor does it consider CRM issues when selecting products or services at the time. Their purchase decision is purely influenced by standard economic criteria such as price, quality or personal choice. Some pre-contemplators believe that a firm should not participate in activities other than making profit, enhancing the quality of products and taking care of their employees (Mohr et al., 2001). The Contemplator (stage 2) consumer group is aware of CRM initiatives and the role of corporations in society. They do not, however, take it into consideration when selecting a product because they are not familiar with the company's credibility and past performance, nor are they aware of the impact of their participation on the community, i.e. one purchase will not save the world (Canli and Fries, 2010; Mohr et al., 2001). The Action (stage 3) consumer group strongly favors CRM initiatives. They may consider the cause in their purchasing behavior, but do not necessary make it a primary factor for purchase selection. Nor do they apply it to long-term commitment (Mohr et al., 2001). Their rationale is attributed to either not having sufficient information about the CRM initiative, or skepticism toward the company's motives. The Maintainers (stage 4) are consumers who are referred to as socially responsible or pro-social. This group is highly

committed and endorses CRM initiatives through their purchases and product selection. Typically, this group has keen knowledge of both the social cause selected and the corporation's role in serving the interest of community (Canli and Fries, 2010; Mohr et al., 2001).

### F. The Fit (Consumer-Company-Cause)

"The fit is defined in a social marketing context as the perceived link between a cause and the firms' product line, brand image, position, and/or target market" (Olsen et al., 2006, p. 47). According to Gupta and Pirsch (2006) and Olsen et al. (2006) the interrelationship between company, cause and customer plays a key role in the CRM program and its success in terms of maximizing purchase intent and/or receiving favorable responses.

The Company-Cause Fit type of relationship depicts the synergy in the mind of consumers between company and cause. Roy and Jones (2010, p. 257) stated that high fit between company and cause refers to the "Natural fit or likelihood that two entities match up in the consumer's mind", i.e. high congruence leads to high fit. Kotler and Lee (2005) emphasized the importance of targeting the appropriate social issue that can best relate to the company's core product. Low fit, or incompatibility between company and cause, can lead to CRM failure and the tarnishing of a company's image (Zdravkovic et al., 2010). Conversely, it is possible that the opposite could occur. Roy and Jones (2010) argued that there is always a certain segment of cynical consumers who prefer to support a cause that is not aligned with the company's core business. Similarly, other researchers identified that high-fit could lead to high skepticism by consumers who view greed behind the company's motive (Hoeffler et al., 2010; Zdravkovic et al., 2010; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006).

The common term used to describe consumers' perception in relation to a company is "consumer-company identification" (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). It is driven by two components, an emotional component that pertains to the individual's attitude toward the company, and a cognitive component that relates to customer-company fit (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). When evaluating customer identification with the company, studies concluded that customer congruence of their own

values regarding a company's identity will influence their attitude and intent-to-purchase a product associated with a CRM program.

Consumers' attitude toward a company goes hand-in-hand with their perception of the cause sponsored by the company (Consumer-Cause Fit). According to Zdravkovic et al. (2010) individuals who relate to a cause emotionally are more likely to engage with the CRM program that sponsors it. Hence, it is important for the firm to select the right cause to target consumers' attention and involvement (Hoeffler et al., 2010; Roy and Jones, 2010).

#### *G. Perceived Corporate Motive and Consumer Skepticism*

Consumers perceive company motives to be either extrinsic or intrinsic. A company is considered extrinsically motivated when a CRM program is perceived by consumers as self-serving to the company. When consumers view the firm as opportunist and exploitative, often they will disengage from the CRM offer. When a company is intrinsically motivated the company is perceived by consumers as being associated with a CRM program for the purpose of serving the interest of the community or for raising awareness of a cause. Consumers who perceive companies' motivation as intrinsic are likely to engage with the sponsored CRM program and exhibit positive attitudes toward the company (Roy and Jones, 2010; McWilliams et al., 2006; Hill and Olsen, 2005; Cui et al., 2003). Interestingly, and per Gupta and Pirsch (2006) it is also possible for consumers to support a CRM effort knowing that the motive is both extrinsic and intrinsic. However, Olsen et al. (2006, p.50) argued "If the objectives are stated as purely social and firm actions appear to be self-serving", it will conclude with a negative reaction by consumers.

Another perspective is offered by various authors who applied both the Attribution Theory and/or Persuasion Knowledge Model to better explain and understand consumers' perception toward companies' motives. The Attribution Theory suggests that consumers form their own attributes when assessing a CRM offer (Ellen et al., 2000). These authors also argue that a company will be perceived as extrinsically motivated when their CRM program is intended for a short term, and intrinsically motivated when their CRM program is applied as a long term strategy. The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) gives an insight into how consumers perceive marketers' tactics. Appropriateness (e.g. manipulation, fairness, etc...) were studied as they related to consumers' skepticism (Hoeffler et al., 2010).

#### *H. CRM Communication*

In general, CSR communication is referred to "The promotional instruments produced by the company or the reports provided by the media that depict the initiatives undertaken by the firm to meet its economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities" (Maignan and Ferrell 2001, p.465). It is imperative for a business to convey social cause information and spread awareness of its CRM activities to consumers in order to better expose its position toward a social issue. For the purpose of this study, a review of communication tools will be limited to advertising and reporting.

According to McWilliams et al. (2006) CRM advertising is characterized by being either persuasive or informative in purpose. Persuasive CRM advertising targets consumers' preference for products using CRM attributes. Informative CRM advertising takes a less emotional stance in its message and attempts to provide information about the quality of the firm. Marketers consider the engagement of a firm in both persuasive and informative CRM advertising as a positive indicator of the product and the firm respectively. However, CRM advertising can also lead to negative responses by consumers who may interpret it with skepticism (Hoeffler et al., 2010; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006).

In order to retain consumers' trust, CRM reporting is a method which provides evidence of a firm's performance and commitment to a social cause, as well as customer response in terms of donation to the program. Reporting has been valued by businesses as an integral part of their social responsibility strategy (Perrini et al., 2009; Kotler and Lee, 2005). Authors like Montiel (2008) and McWilliams et al. (2006) also stated that CSR reporting, in general, is typically formulated by a firm with the objective of spreading awareness of their contribution and their commitment toward a social activity.

#### *I. Company Trust and Reputation*

Trust building is an important prerequisite to a company ascribing to CRM initiatives. A trustworthy company is less likely to attract skepticism as it engages in CRM than a company that is untrustworthy. Canli and Fries (2010) stated that trust in a company with socially responsible activities will create positive effectiveness of consumer evaluation as the company engages in pro-social partnerships. Du et al. (2010) agree that trust mediates the consumers' perception of the brand name and the company's CSR promotion. Furthermore, Canli and Fries (2010) suggested that a company with a good reputation will actually attract less blame if a recall situation occurs due to possible product harm to the consumer. According to Yoon et al. (2006) consumer skepticism can be a strong force particularly if companies support causes with which they have a negative reputation (e.g. cancer research funded by cigarette manufacturers).

#### *J. Proactive vs. Reactive*

Being perceived as a pioneer in CSR activity is also key to the context in which an initiative is perceived. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) showed that consumers believe the company to be more committed to the cause if it came early to the movement. Latecomers were perceived as choosing CSR as an add-on to a product or service and engendered less favorable responses. Olsen et al. (2006) characterized timing of CRM initiatives to be perceived by consumers as proactive or reactive. Menon and Kahn (2003) elaborated that the reactive strategy will lead consumers to be more focused on the actions of the company, and as a result lower CRM evaluations. In proactive initiatives the context is more diffuse, making it less likely that the consumer will be critical of company motives and actions.

### K. Religion

Corporate involvement with charitable causes related to religion lead individuals to take part because of their belief in giving back to others. Youn and Kim (2008) suggested that purchasing products that are associated with this type of social activity are synchronous with the religious life choices that include giving to charities and performing socially beneficial volunteer activities. Kerestes et al. (2004) identified that people who hold religious beliefs were more positively engaged with activities such as demonstrating in public or petitioning for a cause. In this way the religious become a sort of bloc, sharing a sense of social networking and community response that fits well with CSR activities (Youn and Kim, 2008).

### L. Local vs. International

Donations made to national causes tend to effect consumers indirectly, compared to causes that are funded closer to the

communities in which they live. For this reason, and because the impact of donations directly effects their lives, consumers consider local causes to be more important to them than national/international causes. Grau and Folse (2007) found that those companies aligned with the support of local causes garnered more consumer support than companies which chose national or international causes. Overall, purchasers tend to support issues that directly impact their lives where they live.

### M. Proposed CRM Model

Following the literature review related to CRM, the study examines different variables that may affect customer attitude and evaluation of CRM offers, as shown in Figure 1. The proposed CRM Model was developed in accordance with the established literature in the field.

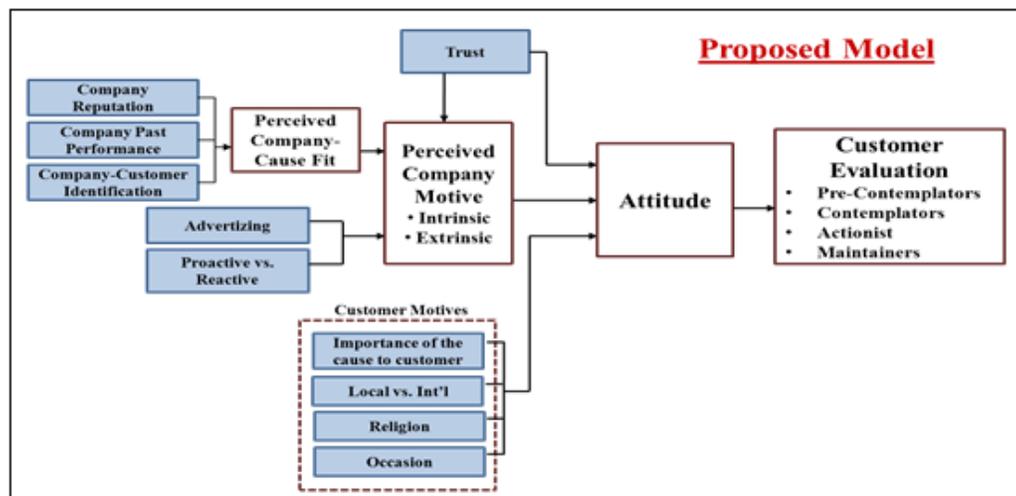


Fig. 1 Model of Customer Evaluation of CRM reaction to CRM.

## III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Context & Objectives

While major Kuwaiti companies adopt CRM measures as an attempt to follow international best practices, it is not entirely clear whether such measures are regarded by consumers as a way for companies to discharge their corporate social responsibility or are regarded as advanced marketing tools. The concept of CRM as related to CSR and its application in Kuwait has not been explored or examined before. It is therefore proposed that a better understanding of the implications of CRM for companies will provide clarity on the subject and lead to more efficient resource allocation by organizations as opposed to trend-instigated practices. With this context in mind the following objectives are set:

- Assess the impact of CRM initiatives on consumers' attitude and behavior as related to CSR in Kuwait.
- Evaluate customer participation in CSR initiatives through CRM in the local community.
- Interpret the different local market segments' (pre-contemplators, contemplators, actionists and maintainers)

- Investigate the variables that directly impact on consumer behavior and CRM initiatives.

### B. Research Instrument, Measurement and Sampling

Our research proceeds on a deductive course as it discusses the issues raised in various existing theories of CRM with regard to consumer perception, attitude and behavior. This study is exploratory, as little work has previously been done to provide a clear picture of consumer attitude and behavior to CRM in Kuwait. It is also descriptive, contributing to the understanding and extension of antecedent studies on the recent development of CSR and CRM. The procedure used, includes the usage of primary data from a purposeful questionnaire which rendered this research to be quantitative in nature. The company, IKEA Kuwait was selected because during the month of Ramadan, IKEA sponsored Bayt Abdullah Children Foundation (a non-profit organization caring for over 1000 children with long term illness) by donating a portion of its sales revenue toward this social cause.

The prepared questionnaire includes four sections for the respondents' consideration, and consisted of 56

statements/questions. Except for the demographics variables (3 questions), all the other sections needed to be answered using a five-point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). A total of 900 questionnaires were distributed of which 562 were returned/collected and of which only 532 were valid for analysis. The survey was distributed randomly to consumers from different social backgrounds and education. To run statistical tests and to analyze the data, SPSS v.19 was utilized.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The sample used to conduct this study consisted of 532 respondents with 59% being females, against 41% for the male respondents. With regards to the age groups of the participants, the respondents fell within different categories, with the majority of the respondents (75%) being aged between 18 and 40 years old.

For the purpose of this research, Exploratory Factor Analysis was deemed the most suitable technique to be used for reducing any redundancy in data and to show any correlation that may exist between the independent variables. Based on the results of the factor analysis, the major change worth mentioning is the regrouping of two variables, namely Religion and Occasion, to form one component. This convergence can be explained by the fact that the particular occasion of Ramadan is religious in nature. Factor Loading was also applied to all confirmed variables individually and all met the criteria with factor loading and KMO results registering at 0.65 and above; and the explained variance results registering at 0.5 and above. The Cronbach's Alpha technique is the most common analysis used to evaluate reliability and measure the internal consistency of the statements. According to Pallant (2010) the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be 0.7 and above for the scale to be considered reliable. All the obtained results attained this coefficient and/or scored higher. In addition to this, further confirmation of reliability was obtained through conducting the split half technique on all 53 statements. The split half coefficient obtained (0.768) is above the required level of (0.7) which indicates the reliability of the entirety of the statements. In this study, the histogram technique was also used to test the distribution for the data collected, and all showed to be normally distributed and was thus deemed eligible for parametric analysis.

##### A. Perceived Company-Cause Fit Analysis

The main objective of the Perceived Company-Cause Fit variables is to test how each variable affect customer perception of the association between a sponsoring company and the cause it supports, and the extent of such effect. The descriptive statistics for this part of the model indicate that 54% of the respondents perceive IKEA's association with Bayt Abdullah Children Foundation in the context of cause related marketing as logical and acceptable. In addition, most respondents thought that IKEA: (i) has a good reputation (82%), (ii) has a history in supporting social issues (67%) and

(iii) is a valued company (71%).

In order to test the effect of the variables on the perception of the Company-Cause fit, a two-group discriminant analysis was carried out to test which variable(s) discriminate the most between the respondents who claim to perceive a high company-cause fit and those who do not. The results indicate only one significant function (0.000) which explains the whole variance and show that Corporate-Customer Identification (Coef.=0.919) (i.e. valuing the company brand, and caring about what others say about the company) is the variable that most discriminates between the respondents' perception of the company-cause fit; followed by the company's reputation (Coef.=.675). The past performance of a company when it comes to sponsoring social issues was not significant to the Perceived Company-Cause fit. This is confirmed in the literature by one line of thought as per Kotler and Lee (2005) who maintained that past performances are not essential as customers view present endeavors of the company in social issues as an opportunity for the company to demonstrate its concern for the community. On the other hand, Gupta and Pirsch (2006) proved that past performance of a company is crucial in determining customer attitudes with regard to this issue.

##### B. Perceived Company Motives

The main objective of the Perceived Company Motives is to test how firm's motives in engaging in social activities are being perceived by customers. Descriptive analysis shows that 45% of the respondents were indifferent to whether the company is a pioneer in the social activities it pursued and 26% disagreed and strongly disagreed that it mattered. Nearly two-third of respondents (63%) were of the opinion that the company spent too much money in advertising for the campaign. In addition, 54% of respondents believed that the fit between the company (IKEA) and the cause (Bayt Abdullah Children Foundation) was logical. This resulted in 55% of respondents believing that the company motive in adopting this social cause was real and genuine, while 57% thought IKEA was associating itself with the cause in order to enhance its public image.

Standard multiple regression was applied to examine the effect of the four independent variables (Trust, Perceived Company-Cause Fit, Advertising, and Pro-active vs. Reactive) on the customers' perception of the company motive in sponsoring social causes. This was done through the test of 3 hypotheses (Hyp.1, Hyp.2 & Hyp.3) as shown in table 3.

With reference to the Intrinsic Motive, results show that trust ( $\beta = .259$ ) is the factor that most significantly influences customers to regard the motives of the company with respect to sponsoring social issues as being genuine and real. In determining the component of trust, respondents were asked how confident they are that the company will deliver their contributions to the charity in question. The second most influential factor was found to be customer's perception of the company's pro-activity in sponsoring social issues ( $\beta=.203$ ). Moreover and even though the Company-Cause Fit was found

to be significant, it is regarded as the least influencing factor.

TABLE III  
PERCEIVED COMPANY MOTIVES REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Regression Results
Perceived Company Motive (Intrinsic) (Hyp.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Perceived Company-Cause Fit</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Proactive vs. Reactive</li> </ul>	R Square = .24 - Sig. (0.000) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust (<math>\beta = 0.259</math>)</li> <li>• Perceived Company-Cause Fit (<math>\beta = 0.199</math>)</li> <li>• Proactive vs. Reactive (<math>\beta = 0.203</math>)</li> </ul>
Perceived Company Motive (Extrinsic) (Hyp.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Perceived Company-Cause Fit</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Proactive vs. Reactive</li> </ul>	R Square = .067 - Sig. (0.000) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust (<math>\beta = - 0.116</math>)</li> <li>• Advertising (<math>\beta = 0.191</math>)</li> </ul>
Perceived Company Motive (Intrinsic & Extrinsic) (Hyp.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Perceived Company-Cause Fit</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Proactive vs. Reactive</li> </ul>	R Square = .063 - Sig. (0.000) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust (<math>\beta = - 0.102</math>)</li> <li>• Perceived Company-Cause Fit (<math>\beta = - 0.106</math>)</li> <li>• Advertising (<math>\beta = - 0.100</math>)</li> <li>• Proactive vs. Reactive (<math>\beta = - 0.103</math>)</li> </ul>

The second analysis was conducted with reference to the Extrinsic Motive as shown in Table 3. Advertising ( $\beta = .191$ ) is the factor that most influences customers with regards to the motives of the company when sponsoring social issues. On the other hand, trust registered a negative beta value ( $\beta = -.116$ ) which means that if customers are not confident that the company will deliver their donations, they will perceive the company's motive with suspicion (Extrinsic).

As expected, when applying the third regression to determine the factors influencing a mixed perception by customers of the motive of the company in sponsoring social issues (both intrinsic and extrinsic motives), Table 3 indicates that all variables appear to be significant and equally relevant (with all the beta values being almost equal). This result is in line with Gupta and Pirsch (2006), who argued that the perception of company motives are both intrinsic and extrinsic.

It should be noted that the registered value of R Square for the 3 regressions is relatively low. This is an indication that there are other additional variables that have not been included in this model and which have not been covered by the literature in this field. According to Youn and Kim, (2008) similar values of R Square were registered in previous empirical studies and the same did not preclude acceptance of the studies. This is a common occurrence in CRM studies as the field remains in its infancy.

*C. Attitude*

In this section, the variables that may directly influence customer attitude towards CRM offer will be assessed. The results of the descriptive analysis on the customers' attitude

towards the company's CRM campaign was in the positive side with 66% agreeing that they would support a company that sponsors a social issue.

Because the data was found to be normally distributed, it is therefore appropriate to use Pearson Correlation analysis to assess the existing relationships. In Table 4, it is notable that the variable "Importance of the Cause" was found to have the highest positive correlation with Attitude of customers towards CRM ( $r=0.427$ ). The second variable with the strongest correlation ( $r=0.390$ ) is whether customers perceive the company motive in supporting social issues to be genuine and real (intrinsic). In other words, the more the cause is important and it is being perceived as genuine, the more my attitude towards the organization will be positive; these results are in line with Hoeffler et al., (2010) work. Religion was found to have a positive, albeit weak, correlation with Attitude ( $r=0.163$ ). This is a surprising result for a society like Kuwait where religion is viewed as a very important aspect of daily life. Furthermore, and as expected, in the event the company's motive is perceived as profit-related, the results show a negative correlation ( $r=-1.80$ ). In addition, even though some respondents perceived the Company Motive as both intrinsic and Extrinsic (result aligned with the work of Gupta and Pirsch (2006)), they had a positive attitude towards the CRM campaign albeit weaker than the attitude of respondents perceiving it as purely intrinsic ( $r=0.15$ ). The results also indicate that there is no significant relationship between the nature of the social cause (whether local or international) on customers' attitude towards CRM.

TABLE IV  
PEARSON CORRELATION ON CUSTOMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CRM

	Reli/Occ	Trust	PCM-int	PCM-ext	PCM-both	IoCause	Lvs.I	Attitude
Religion / Occasion	1							
Trust	0.084	1						
Perceived Company Motive-	0.064	.368**	1					
Perceived Company Motive-	0.056	-.150**	-.179**	1				

Perceived Company Motive-Both	.093**	.158**	.605**	.672**	1		
Importance of the Cause	.282**	.345**	.310**	-0.058	.187**	1	
Local vs. International	.115**	0.023	0.038	0.031	0.053	.134**	1
Attitude	.163**	.341**	.390**	-.180**	.150**	.427**	0.059

Pearson Correlation, n=532 (Significant at the 0.01 level 2 tailed)

*D. Customer Evaluation*

The evaluation of the customers towards the CRM campaign will be now be assessed through the four groups of customers. It is worth noting that the analysis indicated that 7% (n= 41) of the respondents were deemed not to belong to any particular group. The descriptive analysis of the Pre-Contemplators revealed that more than two-third of the respondents (68%) are found to be market oriented with their main concern being price and quality. In addition CRM was found not to have any impact on 54% of the respondents; while 52% believed that the only responsibility of companies is to make profits. Even though 47% of the Contemplators were aware of the corporate responsibility towards society, an almost equal number (46%) did not believe that their participation would make any positive difference in their society. Therefore, it was not surprising that 45% of the respondents had no intention of supporting the cause. Half of the Actionists respondents were found to be prepared to support the company’s CRM initiative. Even though 54% agreed or strongly agreed that they have suspicions about the company’s intention; a slightly smaller percentage (46%) was willing to support the social initiative regardless of the company’s intentions. The Maintainers group is also known as the pro-social individuals. The data revealed that 38% of the sample was actively searching for companies and/or products that are particularly associated with social initiatives. Furthermore, 48% were willing to switch to a

socially responsible brand. In addition, 46% of respondents were happy to pay more for products associated with social initiatives.

Regression Analysis was further applied to each group individually, to answer hypotheses 4, 5, 6 and 7, as presented in table 5. The results in the table indicate that the value for R square for the Pre-Contemplators group of customers is 0.186. This result is logical since this group of people is not expected to be influenced by any of these variables since they have their predetermined convictions about companies’ profit making objectives. However, advertising was found to have an impact on the Pre-Contemplators with a significant albeit very low beta (0.058). This is perhaps explainable by the fact that the questionnaire used in the study was designed with a built-in advertising for the CRM offer which was presented as a scenario. Therefore, the underlying assumption in this study has always been that they are aware of the CRM offer. Also this group of people view the amount of money used by the company in advertising for the campaign as ill-spent and could have been better put to use if the money was directly contributed to the social cause.

TABLE V  
CUSTOMERS’ EVALUATION REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variables	Pre-Contemplators (n=165) R Square = .186 Sig. (0.000) Hyp.4	Contemplators (n=131) R Square = .366 Sig. (0.000) Hyp.5	Actionists (n=104) R Square = .456 Sig. (0.000) Hyp.6	Maintainers (n=91) R Square = .718 Sig. (0.000) Hyp.7
Trust			$\beta = -0.247$	
Perceived Company Motive - int			$\beta = 0.482$	
Perceived Company Motive - ext				
Perceived Company Motive - both				
Corporate Reputation		$\beta = -0.188$		$\beta = 0.151$
Company-Cause Identification				
Corporate Past Performance				
Perceived Company-Cause Fit				
Advertising	$\beta = 0.058$			$\beta = -0.182$
Proactive vs. Reactive				
Importance of the Cause		$\beta = -0.214$		
Local vs. International				
Religion/Occasion				$\beta = 0.743$
Attitude		$\beta = -0.267$	$\beta = 0.214$	

The analysis of the **Contemplators** indicates that the R Square value is 0.366; a much higher value than for the Pre-Contemplators. The highest beta value was registered for the

attitude towards CRM,  $\beta=-0.267$ . This means that people in this group have a negative attitude towards the CRM offer. It is worth noting that this result is in contradiction with the literature. The study further confirmed that the contemplators

do not like the company (Beta value for corporate reputation registered -0.188) and that the cause was not important to them ( $\beta=-0.214$ ).

For the **Actionists** group, the R Square value reached 0.456 which means that a considerable number of variables affecting this group were included in this model. The analysis shows that the actionists believe that the company is genuinely concerned about society with  $\beta=.482$  for the variable Perceived Company Motive (intrinsic). Despite having a good attitude towards the company ( $\beta=0.214$ ), this same group of people did not trust the company to deliver their donations to the social cause ( $\beta=-0.247$ ).

For the **Maintainers** group, the R Square value is .718, which is a good indicator that the model provides for this group. The most significant variable with respect to this group was found to be religion/occasion with  $\beta=0.743$ . Even though Religion was not found to be an important factor in having a positive attitude towards CRM campaigns, the pro-social group of Maintainers in Kuwait is found to be driven by religion particularly using the occasion of Ramadan in their support of social issues. The second most significant variable was found to be the Corporate Reputation with a small Beta value of 0.151. Advertising was also found to have an influence on this group with a negative Beta value of 0.182. This group of people despite its size (17% of the sample) is important for decision makers to consider when adopting CRM campaigns as they form the support base of the company.

## V. STUDY IMPLICATIONS

### A. Managerial

As CSR is a new concept in the Kuwaiti market, businesses may be reluctant to adopt CRM strategies because of their limited experience and knowledge of the subject and past performance in this field. However, as shown by the results of the study and the successful initiatives undertaken by companies new to these practices in Kuwait, CRM should always be viewed as having the potential to add value to and strengthen the goodwill of the company in the market. This reluctance may decrease as the benefits of CRM become more apparent in the business sector, as adopters of the concept improve awareness of their brand and their company's image status is enhanced thus attracting more customers as a result.

Despite the fact that CRM campaigns carry with them the inherent risk of the company being viewed as exploitative of the chosen social cause, companies should accept such risk readily. CRM campaigns do not differ much from the normal risks of advertising which may or may not work in terms of attracting customers to the company's services and products. The added advantage of social causes benefiting substantially from a company's financial backing reduces this risk with the CRM campaign making customers not only aware of the cause, but also of the company, its services and products.

While it is relatively easy for companies to adapt their campaigns to ensure the full support of the Actionists and Maintainers, this study concludes that companies in Kuwait

should be aware that when adopting this type of campaign that support will come from a small percentage of their customers.

Furthermore, religion was not found to have a big impact on customer attitude towards CRM campaigns and should therefore not be treated as a determining factor. A case in point is the practice of adopting CRM campaigns only during Ramadan. These should be augmented by strategically implementing them all year around in order to maintain visibility and a high profile.

### B. Academic

With regards to the academic implications, the existing CRM research is replete with information with respect to the analysis of both theoretical and empirical data. Varadarajan and Menon (1988) and Mohr et al. (2001) have made many suggestions for future study based on numerous articles examining the antecedents and the consequences of successful CRM campaigns. However, there has been a lack of empirically tested models which link both the antecedents and results of effective Cause Related Marketing. It is proposed that this study has in part fulfilled this need.

Previous research endeavors have put forward a number of hypotheses that tested few elements of CRM. This study, on the other hand, provides a responsive analysis of most elements of CRM. It also offers further research which takes into account additional variables that may impact the model, but have not been tested collectively to provide an all-encompassing model. In addition, the study presents for the first time a quantitative analysis with the inclusion of Customer Evaluations in a CRM model.

The inclusion of Customer Evaluations in the model has various implications. Mohr et al. (2001) applied 4 groups of customer types regarding CSR initiatives in general and tested their attitudes and behavior towards the initiative using a qualitative sample (44 interviews). The result of the research, however, was geared towards understanding how the characteristics of the different groups affect the perception of interviewees in general. The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that it tests for a combination of most of the tested variables including Customer Evaluation. It further provides a framework which may be used to include other antecedents and/or consequences, useful for future research.

## VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study restricts itself to the examination of the attitudes and behaviors of only one stakeholder – the consumer. The opinions and behaviors of other stakeholders such as investors and employees are not addressed in this analysis. Future studies could consider assessing the opinion of these stakeholders. The scope of the research limits itself to the assessment of purchasing intention, it is therefore recommended that future investigations could examine the actual purchase transactions. While the current study focused on social issues, future research could also consider environmental concerns.

Moreover, and in order to enhance the current

understanding of CRM initiatives and customer attitudes towards them, additional variables may be included in the model. For example, to investigate which type of products would be best associated with CRM strategies (luxurious, domestic, etc.), or to assess what level of trade-off customers are willing to make to participate in CRM initiatives (price, quality, time, etc.). In order to investigate the effect of culture on customer perception of CSR and CRM, the application of this study may be extended to other countries in the GCC region. For purposes of arriving at an understanding of the association between company characteristics and customer perception, the effectiveness of CRM initiatives may be tested on different companies simultaneously, possibly from varied business sectors to identify influencing factors of success.

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