

Cause' Attributes and Consumers' Purchase Intention: Empirical Evidence from Telecommunication Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract

The current study was conducted to explain the influence of cause' attributes on consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Data was collected on five point likert scale through self-administered questionnaire from the users of a SIM card of a telecommunication network. The questionnaires were personally administered at Okara and Sahiwal cities. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data. Reliability of the instrument was ensured through Cronbach's Alpha test. Correlation and multiple regression tests were applied to measure the nature and size of association among variables and test the hypotheses. The results of data analyses indicated (i) a positive relationship between the degree of cause' participation for consumers and the consumers' purchase intentions (ii) a positive relationship between donation amount and the consumers' purchase intentions.

Key Words: *Congruence between firms' products and cause, Degree of cause's participation for consumers, Donation proximity, Donation Amount, Purchase Intention.*

Introduction

Importance of Purchase Intention

Espejel et al.(2008) argued that the term buying intention has gained a distinct consideration in marketing literature. Morwitz et al. (2007) have argued that marketing managers regularly use the buying intention data to take decisions regarding both existing and new products and the marketing programs that support them. Whether a product concept guarantees product development and a new product merits to launch, consumers' purchase intentions are used for the answers of these questions. When a new product is to be launched, marketing managers take support from purchase intention data to take decision about geographic markets and customer segments. It also facilitates to estimate the demand of a new product.

Barber & Taylor (2013) have described that many theoretical models of consumer behaviour(Ajzen, 1991) perceive buying intention as a measure of buying behaviour. It is assumed that purchase intention is a good estimator of customers' actual purchase behaviours. The research has indicated that predictive validity of buying intentions is questionable (Chapman, 2001). So promotion and segmentation strategies developed on these models can be less reliable.

It can be concluded that purchase intention facilitates diverse decisions of marketing managers. Today organizations want to know about the vital influences of purchase intention to obtain higher market share and growth, competitive advantage, key market position and better communication with customers about their offerings. Currently research scholars are investigating it with new dimensions and their efforts are opening new horizons for the organizations.

Concept of Purchase Intention

What brand or product consumers will purchase on coming occasion is called buying intention. In other words buying intention can be described as an expectable consumer behaviour lying in instantaneous future buying decisions. A consumer's attitudinal conduct pattern about future buying is called purchase intention. Buying intention can be determined by beliefs and attitudes that customers are holding about products. Three basic elements of Assael model that formulate the attitudes are described as:(1) Cognitive element is an individual's beliefs and knowledge about products or services, (2) Affective element is an individual's feelings and emotions regarding products or services and (3) Behavioural element is the expression of customers' buying intentions(Assael, 1995). Attitudes are formulated during the time as a result of learning process. Attitudes are influenced by the personality, the experience, the obtained information, the social group with which one belongs and the other for which consumer has aspiration to belong.

“Purchase Intention” Reserch Work in the Telecommunication Sector of Pakistan

Ali (2011)executed a study to investigate the effect of corporated social responsibility on corporate reputation and consumers' purchase intentions. He has hypothesized that corporate social responsibility positively affects corporate reputation and consumers' purchase intentions and corporate reputation positively affects consumers' purchase intentions. Results of data analyses have supported all the hypotheses.

Ali et al.(2010) executed a research study to examine the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction on purchase intention, awareness of corporate social responsible acitivities on purchase intention and purchase intention on customer retention. They have hypothesized that customers' awareness of corporate social responsible activities positively affects their purchase intentions, service quality positively affects their satisfaction, customer satisfaction positively affects their purchase intentions and customers' purchase intentions positively affect their loyalty/retention. Results of data analyses have proved a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and disapproved a positive relationship amongcustomers' awareness of corporate social responsible activities

and their purchase intentions, customer satisfaction and purchase intention and customers' purchase intentions and their loyalty/retention.

Problem Statement

Literature shows that research work has been executed on the relationship between cause's attributes such as donation amount and donation proximity and the consumers' purchase intentions in foreign context (Hou et al. 2008). However the relationship between the cause' attributes such as donation amount and donation proximity and the consumers' purchase intentions is still un-tapped in Pakistani context particularly in the telecommunication sector. So current research focuses on:

- (a) The relationship between the donation amount and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.
- (b) The relationship between the donation proximity and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

Research Objectives

The basic objective of current study is:

- To measure the degree of relationship between causes' attributes and consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan
- The sub-objectives of current research are:
- To measure the degree of relationship between congruence between firms' products and the cause and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan
- To measure the degree of relationship between degrees of cause' participation for consumers and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan
- To measure the degree of relationship between donation amount and consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan
- To measure the degree of relationship between donation proximity and consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan

Literature Review

In the field of marketing purchase intention has been a key area of research. Many research scholars have contributed at different times. They have explained it with different dimensions to develop better understanding. A few research studies are reviewed here.

Kim (2006) has conducted a study to investigate whether country-product image has an influence on brand image and purchase intention.

Chen & Chang(2008) have executed a study to check the impact of (i) brand equity on brand preference and purchase intention (ii) brand preference on purchase intention. They have further investigated the effect of the switching cost as a mediating variable on the relationship between (iii) brand equity and purchase intention and (iv) brand preference and purchase intention.

Huang et al.(2010)have studied the influence of (i) human-message interaction, human-human interaction, perceived playfulness, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the attitude toward instructional video advertising (ii) perceived playfulness and perceived usefulness on purchase intention. They have further checked the effect of attitude toward instructional video advertising as a mediating variable on purchase intention.

Wang et al.(2012) have conducted a study to check the impact of (i) celebrity endorsement on advertising appeal, advertising effect and purchase intention (ii) advertising appeal on advertising effect and purchase intention (iii) advertising effect on purchase intention. They have further investigated the influence of advertising appeal and advertising effect as mediating variables on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

Grau & Folse (2007) have conducted two studies on the role of message framing and donation proximity in participation intentions and campaign attitudes of less-involved customers. They have hypothesized that participation intentions and campaign attitudes will be greater for more involved consumers than less involved consumers with the cause, participation intentions and campaign attitudes will be greater when the donation is targeted locally than nationally, participation intentions and campaign attitudes will be greater for less involved consumers when the donation is targeted locally than nationally (for those more involved, no such differences are expected), participation intentions and campaign attitudes will be greater for those less (more) involved consumers when they are exposed to risk information presented in a positive (negative) than negative (positive) frame. Results of data analyses have proved all the hypotheses.

Hou et al. (2008) have conducted a study to investigate whether cause' attributes have an influence on consumers' purchase intentions. They have hypothesized that there is a positive relationship among cause' importance and consumers' purchase intentions, cause proximity and consumers' purchase intentions, congruence between firm's products and the cause and the consumers' purchase intentions, fit between brand and the cause and the consumers' purchase intentions and the degree of cause' participation for consumers and the consumers' purchase intentions. Results of data analyses have proved all the hypotheses. A new study may also be conducted when a cause is both at local and regional level.

Bigne-Alcaniz et al. (2010) have conducted a study to investigate the role of customer association with social cause and customer identification with company in the customers' behavioural reactions towards cause-related marketing campaigns. They have hypothesized that there is a positive relationship among corporate social responsible (C.S.R) associations and brand attractiveness for the consumers, corporate ability (C.R) associations and brand attractiveness for the customers, brand attractiveness and consumer-company (C-C) identification, C-C identification and purchase intention of products and C-C identification and intention to support the non-profit organization (N.P.O). They have further hypothesized when social cause involvement is high, the effect of C-C identification on the customers' purchase intention of products and the customer's intention to support a social cause is higher. Results of data analyses have proved all the hypotheses.

Boenigk & Schuchardt (2012) have conducted a study on characteristics of cause-related marketing campaigns, attitude toward charity and fundraising success. They have hypothesized a positive relationship between donation amount and consumers' purchase intentions of luxury products involved in cause-related marketing campaigns. Further they have supposed that luxury products carrying cause-related marketing campaigns and pricing at the lower end of the price range yield higher purchase intention than those pricing at the upper end. They have hypothesized when luxury products are priced at the upper end, the influence of donation amount is weaker in cause-related marketing campaigns. They have also supposed that luxury consumers' level of familiarity with charity moderates the degree of attitude improvement through cause-related marketing luxury campaigns and cause-related marketing luxury campaigns lead to fundraising success as compare to traditional fundraising campaigns. Results of data analyses have proved all the hypotheses.

Chang & Liu (2012) have conducted a study to investigate whether product type (hedonic versus utilitarian) and donation level (low versus high) have an influence on product-cause fit (consistent-fit cause versus complementary-fit cause). They have hypothesized when sponsored product is perceived as possessing utilitarian value, consistent-fit cause will be preferred by consumers over complementary-fit cause, when sponsored product is perceived as possessing hedonic value, complementary-fit cause will be preferred by consumers over consistent-fit cause and when the donation amount is low, consumers will perceive

complementary-fit cause less favourable than consistent-fit cause. They have supposed that the effects of complementary-fit cause will increase as donation amount increases. Further they have hypothesized when promoted product is perceived by consumers having hedonic value and donation amount is high, consumers will perceive complementary-fit cause more favourable. The results of data analyses have proved all the hypotheses.

Research Questions

The basic research question of current study is as under:

- What is the impact of cause's attributes on the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan?

The sub-questions of current study are as under:

- What is the impact of the congruence between the firm's products and cause on the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan?
- What is the impact of the degree of cause' participation for consumers on the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan?
- What is the impact of donation amount on the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan?
- What is the impact of donation proximity on the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework

The newly developed purchase intention model is unique that it was built by combining different variables from different purchase intention models. Different researchers put their efforts to provide different variables in the purchase intention model. Waqas has contributed the congruence between firm's products and cause (2012), Hou et al. have supported the degree of cause' participation for consumers (2008), Grau & Folse have added donation proximity (2007) and Boenigk & Schuchardt have contributed donation size (2012). It provides better understanding of purchase intention concept particularly in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

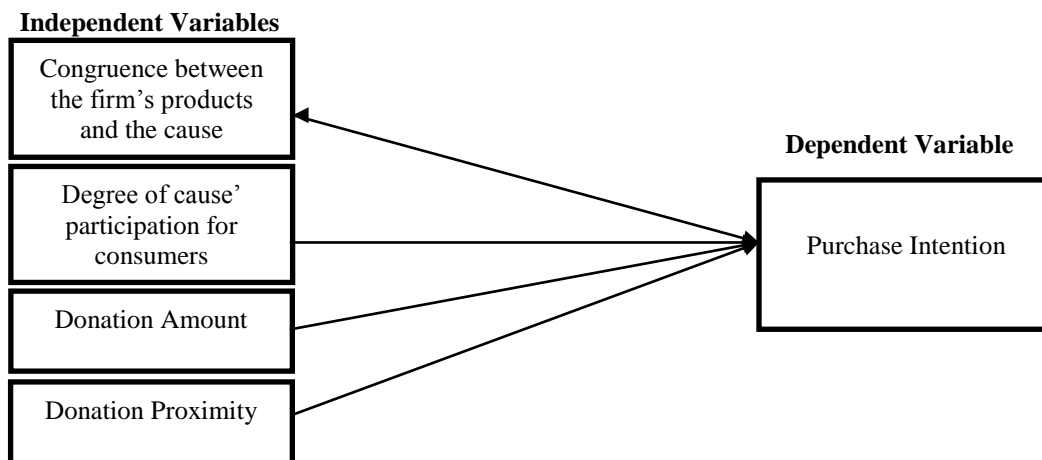


Fig.1 Theoretical Model Purchase Intention Model

Indication of independent and dependent variables

In the above figure congruence between the firm’s products and the cause, degree of cause’ participation for consumers, donation amount and donation proximity were treated as independent variables and purchase intention as a dependent variable.

Research Methodology

Research philosophy adopted for this paper was of phenomenological nature (applied research). Research nature was quantitative. Quantitative research is feasible when (i) sample size is consisted of a large number of sampling elements (ii) data analysis is of statistical nature and (iii) data is to collect in structured form.(Malhotra, 2005).

Unit of analysis was individual and he/she was the user of a SIM card of a telecommunication network. Target population was the users of a SIM card of a telecommunication network. The convenience sampling technique was used for the study. It is least time consuming and expensive among all the sampling techniques. The sampling elements are easily reachable. Information can be collected quickly. (Sekaran, 2003). A total number of 900 questionnaires were distributed among students. But 492 questionnaires were workable. So response rate was comprised 54.67%.

Congruence between a firm’s products and cause, degree of cause’ participation for consumers, donation size and purchase intention were measured with seven items each while donation proximity was measured with four items. Items were adopted from (Landreth, 2002). Data was collected through questionnaire on five point likert scale.

Questionnaires were personally administered at Sahiwal and Okara. A well prepared questionnaire has little chance to introduce the biasness into the results as compare to interviews. For example the way the interviewer responds to the answer of the respondent. Questionnaire provides quantitative information in a structured form. Such data is easy to analyze statistically. Data collection activity was completed in approximately two weeks from 28th October, 2013 to 12th November 2013. Reliability of questionnaire was confirmed through Cronbach’s Alpha test. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S) software version 20.0 was used for data analyses. Tables and pie charts were used to explain the respondents’ demographic information while correlation and multiple regression tests were applied to measure the nature and strength of relationships among the constructs and test the hypotheses.

Findings and Results

Reliability

Table: 1(Reliability)

No.	Construct Name	No. of Items	Reliability with the value of Cronbach’s Alpha
1	Congruence between a Firm’s Product and Cause	6	0.799
2	Degree of Cause’ participation for Consumers	7	0.810
3	Donation Proximity	3	0.716
4	Donation Amount	7	0.851
5	Purchase Intention	6	0.676

Interpretations:

Cronbach’s Alpha is a common measure of reliability. It is used to measure reliability of constructs. The value of Cronbach Alpha of each construct should be positive and greater than 0.70 to provide a good support to reliability of an instrument (Morgan et al. 2007). In table 1.4, the value of Cronbach Alpha is

greater than 0.70 for congruence between firms' products and the cause, degree of cause' participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount except purchase intention which has a value of 0.676. So study constructs have no reliability problem.

Statistics

Table: 2 (statistics)

		Congruence between a firm's products and cause	Degree of cause' participation for consumers	Donation Proximity	Donation Amount	Purchase Intention
N	Valid	458	448	476	422	448
	Missing	34	44	16	70	44
	Skewness	-.719	-.517	-.902	-.615	1.173
	Std. Error of Skewness	.114	.115	.112	.119	.115

Interpretations:

The table 2 indicates that purchase intention is positively skewed. The congruence between firms' products and cause, degree of cause' participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount are negatively skewed. Thus the condition that two variables should be approximately distributed normally is not fulfilled and Pearson correlation co-efficient cannot be used.

Correlation Co-efficients

Table: 3(correlation coefficient)

		Degree of cause' participation for consumers	Donation Proximity	Donation Amount	Purchase Intention
Congruence between a firms' product and cause	Correlation Coefficient	.579**	.355**	.394**	.341**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	422	445	397	423
Degree of cause' participation for consumers	Correlation Coefficient		.542**	.425**	.518**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N		439	393	415
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient			.377**	.366**
	Sig. (1-tailed)			.000	.000
	N			411	435
Donation Amount	Correlation Coefficient				.595**
	Sig. (1-tailed)				.000
	N				399

Interpretations:

If value of correlation co-efficient is +1, then there is a perfect positive correlation between two variables. The value of correlation co-efficient between 0.90 to 0.99 indicates a very high degree of positive correlation between two variables. If value of correlation co-efficient is between 0.75 to 0.90, then there is a high degree of positive correlation between two variables. The value of correlation co-efficient between 0.25 to 0.75 indicates a moderate degree of positive correlation between two variables. If value of correlation co-efficient is between 0.00 to 0.25, then there is a low degree of positive correlation between two variables. The value of correlation co-efficient of 0.00 indicates no correlation between two variables (Awasthi & Chaudhary, 2009).

If value of correlation co-efficient is -1, then there is a perfect negative correlation between two variables. The value of correlation co-efficient between -0.99 to -0.90 indicates a very high degree of negative correlation between two variables. If value of correlation co-efficient is between -0.90 to -0.75, then there is a high degree of negative correlation between two variables. The value of correlation co-efficient between -0.75 to -0.25 indicates a moderate degree of negative correlation between two variables.

Table: 4 (Model summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.636	.405	.398	.53771	.405	58.388	4	343	.000	2.109

Predictors: (Constant), Congruence between firms' products and cause, Degree of cause' participation for consumers, Donation proximity and Donation amount

Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

If value of correlation co-efficient is between -0.25 to 0.00, then there is a low degree of negative correlation between two variables.

The table 3 indicates that congruence between firms' products and cause, degree of cause' participation for consumers, donation proximity, and donation amount and purchase intention have a moderate degree of correlation with one another because their correlation co-efficient fall among 0.25 to 0.75.

Model Summary

Interpretations:

Since value of Durbin-Watson test is 2.109, so error terms are not autocorrelated.

ANOVA

Table: 5 (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	67.527	4	16.882	58.388	.000
Residual	99.173	343	.289		
Total	166.700	347			

Predictors: (Constant), Congruence between firms' products and cause, Degree of cause' participation for consumers, Donation proximity and Donation amount

Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

Interpretations:

Since p-value (0.000) is less than significance level (0.05), there is a linear relationship between dependent variable (purchase intention) and independent variables (congruence between firms’ products and cause, degree of cause’ participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount). The value of F (58.388) is significant and indicates that congruence between firms’ products and cause, degree of cause’ participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount are significantly combined to estimate consumers’ purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

Co linearity Diagnostics

Table: 6(Co linearity Diagnostics)

Model	Dimension	Eigen value	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	Congruence between firms’ product and cause	Degree of cause’ participation for consumers	Donation Proximity	Donation Amount
1	1	4.924	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.030	12.868	.02	.00	.03	.41	.47
	3	.021	15.245	.01	.35	.06	.36	.32
	4	.015	18.339	.93	.05	.12	.00	.21
	5	.010	21.695	.04	.60	.79	.23	.00

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Interpretations:

The table 6 indicates that independent variables such as congruence between firms’ products and cause, degree of cause’ participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount are not seriously auto correlated.

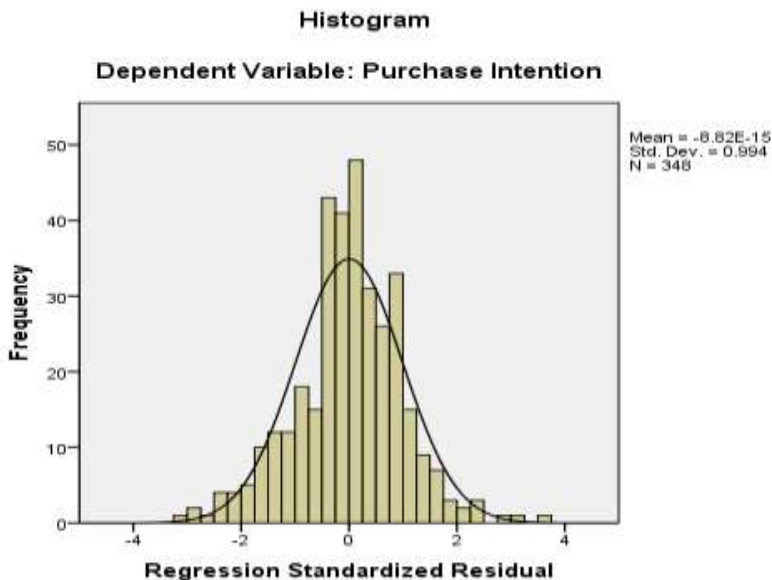


Fig 2 Regression Standardized Residual

Interpretations:

The histogram indicates that error terms are approximately distributed normally.

Table 7 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
Congruence between firms' products and cause	-.056	.057	-.052	-.991	.322	-.168	.056	.623	1.606
1 Degree of cause' participation for consumers	.251	.063	.236	4.010	.000	.128	.374	.499	2.004
Donation Proximity	-.031	.045	-.034	-.677	.499	-.119	.058	.677	1.476
Donation Amount	.551	.045	.558	12.344	.000	.463	.639	.850	1.176

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Interpretations:

The value of beta (0.25, unstandardized co-efficient) indicates that 25% variation in consumers' purchase intention is explained by degree of cause's participation for consumers. While beta value (0.55, unstandardized co-efficient) indicates that 55% variation in consumers' purchase intentions is accounted for donation amount.

We predicted that there is a positive relationship between congruence between firms' products and cause and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Since p-value (0.322) is greater than significance level (0.05), there is no positive relationship between congruence between firms' products and cause and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

We estimated that there is a positive relationship between degrees of cause's participation for consumers and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Since p-value (0.000) is less than significance level (0.05) so there is a positive relationship between congruence between firms' products and cause and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. We hypothesized when donation is targeted locally than nationally the consumers' purchase intentions are greater in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Since p-value (0.499) is greater than significance level (0.05) so it cannot be predicted when donation is targeted locally than nationally the consumers' purchase intentions are greater in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

We estimated that there is a positive relationship between donation amount and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), there is a positive relationship between donation amount and the consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan.

Referring to table 7, value of Adjusted R-Square indicates that approximately 40% change in consumers' purchase intentions in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan is explained by congruence between firms' products and cause, degree of cause' participation for consumers, donation proximity and donation amount.

Discussion and Conclusion

It is necessary to comprehend the association between cause's attributes and consumers' purchase intentions for the maximization of the effectiveness of cause-related marketing campaigns. Cause-related marketing campaign has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Barone & Miyazaki, 2000) and the attributes of a cause increase the effect of a cause-related marketing campaign.

The basic goal of current research was to identify how customers understand the cause' attributes and how these attributes affect their purchase intentions. The researcher has identified and tested four attributes of a cause: congruence between firm's products and the cause, degree of cause's participation for consumers, and donation proximity and donation amount. The results of current study made the existing evidence strong that the cause' attributes put a strong influence on consumers' purchase intentions (Lafferty, 2007).

Since cause-related marketing activities increase firms' performance and market awareness, the corporate managers of telecommunication organizations must ensure the cooperation of cause-related marketing activities. They should realize that cause' attributes exert a strong impact on consumers' purchase intentions. They should choose a cause by considering its attributes particularly degree of cause' participation for consumers and donation amount. They should realize that general public of Pakistan is not concerned with donation proximity and congruence between firms' products and the cause.

Data was collected through questionnaire. It was purely of structured nature and consisted of close-ended questions. So responses were limited to given choices. Responses were taken from the users of a SIM card of a telecommunication network. No telecommunication firm such as Mobilink, Warid, Ufone etc. was specified in the current study. The residents of large cities such as Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi etc. have better exposure regarding the cause-related marketing activities of organizations and they may respond well as compare to the natives of Sahiwal and Okara. A new research may be conducted to check the impact of cause' attributes on brand equity. Product quality, style, design may also be studied along with cause' attributes in the perspective of consumers' purchase intentions.

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