

Conceptualisation of Emotional Responses to Cause-Related Marketing: From Moral Praise to Condemnation

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Abstract

When consumers encounter a cause-related marketing (CRM) campaign, by which a firm promotes a charitable cause linked to its sales, their emergent and anticipated emotions have impact on their decisions. While there have been numerous studies on cognitive aspects of CRM, the consumer emotions in this context have remained largely unexplored. This research, to the best of our knowledge, is the first exploratory study on emergent emotions, their antecedents and consequences in the CRM context, based on the grounded theory methodology. Considering practical benefits including triangulation, we used both in-depth interviews (N=15) and open-ended questionnaires (N=181). The results reveal that consumers either report scepticism along with other-condemning negative emotions or express optimism followed by a wide range of positive and negative emotions. The findings contribute to the CRM literature and carry practical implications for businesses when launching CRM campaigns.

Keywords: *cause-related marketing (CRM); emotions; qualitative research*

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