

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

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INFORMATION ON NEW ACADEMIC AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

Dissertation's Title: The impact of perception of cause-related marketing on positive word-of-mouth and repurchase intention: A study of fast-moving consumer goods in Vietnam.

Major: Business Administration Code: 9340101

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Academic and Practical Contributions of the Dissertation:

Academic Contributions:

This dissertation confirms that perception of cause-related marketing (CRM perception) has a significant and positive impact on brand image, brand love, and positive word-of-mouth (WOM). These findings not only reinforce existing theoretical frameworks but also clarify key contextual aspects specific to Vietnam.

Firstly, the results indicate that CRM perception enhances brand image, aligning with prior studies such as Dean (2003), Nan & Heo (2007), and Moosmayer and Fuljahn (2010), which emphasized CRM's potential to build a positive brand image through its association with social values. However, this study highlights a notable point: in Vietnam, cultural factors heavily influence how consumers evaluate CRM campaigns. Vietnamese consumers prioritize CRM initiatives that focus on community-related issues such as environmental protection or education, differing from Western consumers who often value direct financial benefits (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012).

Moreover, the study confirms that CRM perception positively affects brand love, consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 2017) and empirical research by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) and Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen (2010). These studies argue that when consumers perceive a company as socially responsible, they tend to develop positive emotions toward the brand. Importantly, this dissertation adds that in Vietnam, brand love is not solely driven by product attributes but also by social interaction and media influence, especially among Gen Z and Gen Y - a perspective rarely covered in earlier studies.

Next, the study emphasizes that CRM perception promotes positive WOM, which aligns with findings from Karjaluoto, Munnukka, and Kiuru (2016) and Dam (2020). Positive WOM—one of the vital CRM outcomes - effectively spreads brand messages. In Vietnam, however, this WOM is strongly amplified via social media platforms, contrasting with developed countries where it tends to occur through direct interpersonal channels (Liu & Gal, 2011).

Regarding the mediating roles of brand image and brand love, the findings affirm that brand image acts as a key mediator, translating CRM perception into repurchase intention and positive WOM. This mirrors Vanhamme et al. (2012), where a strong brand image was linked to trust-building and consumer behavior. In Vietnam, brand image not only reflects product quality but also symbolizes the brand's social commitment - a valuable addition to existing theoretical frameworks, especially in emerging markets.

Brand love, an emotionally driven construct, is further affirmed as a strong connector influencing repurchase intention. This is consistent with prior research by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) and Batra et al. (2012). However, in Vietnam, emotional brand attachment is reinforced not only by product quality but also by the brand's social commitments, particularly among Gen Z and Gen Y. This underscores the importance of emotional and social values in fostering brand loyalty.

For the roles of positive WOM and repurchase intention, the study reiterates that WOM is both a behavioral outcome and a key mediator in brand message dissemination. This supports Arndt (1967) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), who highlighted WOM as a powerful trust-building and consumption-driving tool. Notably, in Vietnam, social media accelerates and amplifies WOM more than traditional channels. Lastly, the research reveals that repurchase intention is not only influenced by product quality or pricing but also by the brand's social commitment, affirming and extending

findings by Davidow & Leigh (1998) and Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001). In Vietnam, repurchase intention also reflects consumers' support for the social values represented by the brand.

This research not only validates the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model but also expands it by integrating demographic variables, notably generational cohorts and regions. This represents a key theoretical contribution by clarifying how these variables moderate the relationships between stimulus (CRM), organism (brand image, brand love), and response (WOM, repurchase intention).

Regarding generational differences, Gen Z and Gen Y tend to respond more positively to CRM campaigns—especially those that are creative and address urgent social issues like the environment and equality. This reflects their heightened sensitivity to corporate social responsibility and expectations for brands to play a role in community betterment. In contrast, Gen X and Baby Boomers are more focused on traditional attributes such as product quality and brand reliability. These insights complement the demographic theories in consumer behavior, in line with Solomon et al. (2012) and Hair Jr et al. (2021). Notably, the study emphasizes that social media and digital technology heighten sensitivity to social values - an aspect underexplored in previous studies.

Furthermore, the study identifies clear regional differences in consumer responses to CRM, aligning with Hofstede's (1984) cultural theory, but adds that these differences also reflect varying levels of economic development and regional socio-cultural characteristics within Vietnam.

Practical Contributions:

The dissertation not only provides a solid theoretical foundation for Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector but also offers several important practical contributions that help businesses optimize marketing strategies and enhance business performance.

Firstly, the dissertation provides empirical evidence of CRM's impact on consumer behavior, particularly on factors such as brand perception, brand love, and repurchase intention. The research findings show that CRM can help businesses increase brand value, build stronger emotional connections with customers, and foster greater customer loyalty. This is especially crucial in an increasingly competitive market, where consumers care not only about product quality but also value socially responsible brands.

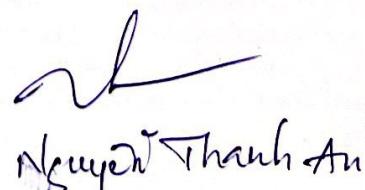
Secondly, the dissertation helps businesses better understand the behavior of different customer segments in response to CRM campaigns. The findings indicate that younger customer groups (Gen Z and Gen Y) tend to support brands with clear and transparent CSR and CRM initiatives, whereas older groups (Gen X and Baby Boomers) are more concerned with authenticity and the tangible benefits provided by such campaigns. Based on these insights, businesses can personalize marketing messages and design campaigns tailored to each customer group to maximize CRM's effectiveness and reach.

Thirdly, the study clarifies the roles of mediating and moderating factors in the relationship between CRM and consumer behavior. Factors such as brand trust, personal identification with the cause, and perception of corporate motives play critical roles in determining the effectiveness of CRM campaigns. This suggests that businesses should not only invest in social marketing initiatives but also ensure authenticity to avoid being perceived by consumers as using CSR merely as a sales gimmick.

Fourthly, the dissertation provides clear guidance for businesses on developing long-term CRM strategies rather than focusing solely on short-term campaigns aimed at attracting attention. The research indicates that CRM campaigns closely aligned with the brand's core values tend to have more sustainable impacts, helping businesses not only increase short-term sales but also build long-term brand loyalty and customer engagement.

Finally, the dissertation serves as a valuable reference for policymakers and non-profit organizations in collaborating with businesses to implement more effective CRM programs. Understanding how consumers respond to CRM can help stakeholders design better partnership programs, optimizing the social impact of these campaigns while also delivering sustainable business benefits.

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PHD CANDIDATE


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