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CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM CAUSE RELATED MARKETING IN GEN Z AWARENESS AND ACTION

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SUMMARY

The study explores the interaction between awareness and attitude in determining the cause related marketing (CRM) intentions of the Generation Z, localized in the Ernakulam District of Kerala. Although there are high literacy levels in the region, little has been done in determining the mechanisms used by CRM to mobilize youth on social and environmental issues. The study uses percentage analysis, ANOVA, and linear regression to analyze the cognitive basis of conscious consumerism using a primary sample of 100 participants. Statistical analysis indicates that there is a strong positive relationship, which is significant, between CRM awareness and consumer attitude ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.001$). Further regression analysis indicates that awareness is a strong predictor of brand sentiment and indicates that it explains the entire variation between consumer attitude to 30.1 ($R^2 = 0.301$). Demographic ANOVA analysis shows that the level of awareness in the groups is homogenous; whereas gender has a significant moderating effect on the intensity of attitudes ($p = 0.028$), female respondents are found to be more sensitive to morality. The findings indicate that in order to ensure CRM bridges the awareness-action gap, brands should go beyond the superficial disclosures and adopt transparent and localized approaches of communication. The study ends with a proposal for a future study on the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) transparency and longitudinal trust formation in maintaining the interest of Gen Z in social causes.

Key words: *cause-related marketing, conscious consumerism, generation z, social responsibility, brand authenticity, purchase intention, ethical consumption.*

INTRODUCTION

Cause-related marketing or CRM is a powerful strategy for expanding companies that have a reason to increase income, make a beneficial contribution to society, and the environment. It is also true that customers are becoming more conscious of the social and environmental impact of the products that they use. CRM in its purest form is the marketing based on profit motive, and a reason for society that is a benefit to the company and society. This arrangement takes the aspect of social responsibility straight into the marketing campaigns and commercial strategy. Today, the various types of cause-related

marketing activities take up a multitude of forms, including business partnerships in which a company raises awareness about a pressing social issue or product marketing when a company donates some of its revenues to charity organizations. CRM is capable of making a big transformation and also enhancing the brand reputation and consumer loyalty, and the change can be in the form of promoting the growth of a healthier society, environmental protection efforts, or the promotion of social justice. Their personal emotions, behaviors, and beliefs always influence the view of customers on the reason and the organization that promotes it [11]. According to Stötzer and Kaltenbrunner (2024), altruistic appeal is not the only factor that drives consumer engagement, since perceived authenticity and brand-cause congruence are also relevant and influence the attitude of consumers to the social activities of the brand, in general [19]. Tao et al. (2025) also state that CRM activities positively impact brand impression and indirectly impact consumer intentions to buy due to positive emotions, which highlights the mediation role of emotional reactions in attitude formation [20].

Statement of the Problem

Cause-marketing, which is a powerful tool facilitating promotion of social and environmental causes, is an obscure perception among the young Keralites in general. Although the literacy rate in the state is high and the number of young people continues to increase, cause marketing and its ability to foster positive change are not a familiar and comprehended issue. Such a knowledge gap eventually influences the overall welfare of the Kerala communities by hindering the proper mobilisation of the young generation to support social and environmental agendas. Besides exploring how the youth can be enhanced to participate and engage in cause marketing activities, the Problem also tries to find out the current level of youth awareness of cause marketing in Kerala. The opinion that a person will have on a thing or a phenomenon is directly related to the actions or behaviours that will be followed [15]. Sheik and Beise-Zee (2011) believe that a company is interested in a cause to leverage the passionate views of the members of a particular segment within the citizenry. Kozłowski (2024) demonstrated that as millennials and Gen Z perceive that the company is socially committed and transparent, they display a higher level of attitudinal support of the cause-related items [9]. More recently, Shetty et al. (2021) showed that attitude is an intervening variable between knowledge and actual buying behavior, which indicates that customers with high knowledge of the cause-related products, as compared to traditional ones, are more likely to buy a cause-related product [12]. Recent literature tends to conclude that higher awareness creates positive attitudes, which significantly influence the decision of customers on cause-related products [14].

Scope And Significance of the Study

Young Keralites who reside in Kerala's rural and urban areas are the primary focus of the study. Targeting Gen Z, the study includes students, working professionals, and entrepreneurs. Its goal is to investigate young Keralites' understanding, attitudes, and behaviours related to cause marketing, as well as how they view social and environmental issues. The results will give marketers, non-governmental organisations, and social entrepreneurs important information to create successful cause marketing campaigns among young Keralites. By investigating the attitudes and actions of young Keralites towards cause-marketing, the study helps to raise societal and ecological consciousness in this group. This study emphasises the social/environmental issues and cause marketing in relation to the UN Goals on Sustainable Development. While examining the attitudes and actions of young Keralites, the study hopes to enable them to become more knowledgeable, involved, and responsible citizens.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the present state of awareness about cause marketing among Kerala's youth.
2. To determine the elements that affect young people's attitude towards cause marketing campaigns.

Hypotheses

- H01: Gender does not significantly affect attitudes regarding CRM.

- H02: Various socioeconomic categories do not significantly differ in their awareness levels.

Limitations of the Study

1. While conducting surveys, Gen Z in the Ernakulam District is the sole population taken for the study.
2. Some respondents will not answer the survey questions accurately.

The study is organized to provide a comprehensive analysis of cause-related marketing dynamics among Generation Z. It begins with an introduction and literature review establishing the theoretical framework. This is followed by the research methodology and conceptual model. Subsequent sections present data analysis through statistical tools, followed by results and discussions. The article concludes with practical implications, scope for further study, and final conclusions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study by Moosmayer et al., (2010) aims to replicate two key views on cause marketing campaigns to determine whether gender and donation size affect customer impressions of the company and customer attitudes on cause-related marketing campaigns, which benefit the nonprofit organisation [1]. An online survey of 306 university students in Germany reveals how participants felt about the Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) campaign. There are notable differences in gender-wise interpretations of CRM campaigns and acceptance of the product. The benefits of the Nonprofit Organisation and their feelings about the CRM campaign are significantly influenced by the magnitude of the donation. The size of the donation has an impact that is somewhat influenced by gender and stems from outside perceptions. According to the results, CRM initiatives are especially well-suited for marketing to women. Small gifts are enough when speaking to males.

Badenes-Rocha et al., (2021) state that the study looks at the restraining effect of the pictorial consideration paid to cause-related posts in Instagram, as well as the influence of customer observations (i.e., image of the firm), views, and opinions (i.e., support for the firm's social responsibility initiatives) on behavioural intents (i.e., user recommendations, drive to publish news feeds, and participation in causes) for fast-food restaurants [2]. The results prove that the level of devotion (the duration of fixations) and revisits are associated with more positive attitudes and behaviours toward the cause and the business. The correlation between customer advocacy and trust is diluted by the duration of time spent analysing the response of the company to the negative user-generated content, however. This will come in handy to apply effective social media marketing to causes.

Sebastian (2022) opines that Cause-related marketing techniques show a bigger impact on people who are short on attention [3]. However, little is known about the neurophysiological processes that underlie positive consumer insights of cause-related marketing messaging. Understanding how initiatives, firm, and invention affect consumers' insights towards the firm is the goal of this study. It also shows how a seller can use cause-related marketing campaigns to leverage the goodwill. The predictable experimental design has a positive influence on new initiatives on the mindset towards the firm's position in the industry.

The study by Tesng and Tang (2025) investigated whether the bank's involvement in public welfare initiatives will significantly affect consumers' inclinations to make purchases through Cause-Related Marketing [5]. In this research, the experimental design method is used to gauge the perception of the marketing effects of charitable causes by consumers. The results show that the marketing effects of the cause and gender-based purchasing intentions varied significantly. Moreover, the consumer marketing of the cause and the amount of donation made by the bank have a considerable relationship. A bank that is not involved in the activities of welfare of the people will have a greater opportunity of attracting people to communicate with it compared to a bank that participates in the welfare programs. The study investigates two independent variables, namely, the amount of donation and participation of banks in the community well-being programs by creating four experimental situations through direct mail (DM) advertising and cause-related marketing [18].

According to the study, primary need-based humanitarian issues are cause-related empathy- entrenched networks. The hypothesis states that consumer loyalty rises as statement content becomes more similar to the respondent's, which is thus supported by this study. Higher levels of customer-centricity lead to better improvements in advertisements, which in turn generate consumer perceptions of the company's image [15]. CRM is a combination of marketing and philanthropy. It is necessary to determine which cause-marketing programmes are well-known and widely disseminated to the target viewers and to what degree the groups are aware of the Cause-Related activities, to enhance consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour. The survey, which was part of the study, was completed by 610 young people. Both the unaided and assisted levels were used to measure the amount of awareness. The CRM concept was summarised and restated, and most respondents understood it at a basic level. They had either purchased the CRM-backed products, seen them, or heard about them. It showed that they understood how business organisations may use social initiatives to better society. The respondents' understanding level, when left alone, was fairly great. Most of the people who responded could name a company, brand, or product that used CRM.

Research Gap

In the literature review, it was found that several studies have been done in the past years on the issue of awareness and attitude of youth towards CRM in various countries. In India, the number of studies on this subject reviewed is minimal. Additionally, Kerala only conducts a small number of studies. The study focuses on examining Gen Z's knowledge and attitudes toward Cause-Related Marketing in the Ernakulam district. This study also aims to determine which social cause young people prefer for CRM and the relationship between factors such as awareness and attitude in conscious consumerism.

The reason why a choice was made to focus this study on the Ernakulam District is that it is the commercial centre of Kerala, where there is a high concentration of educational institutions and corporate offices. This age cohort offers a good representation of Generation Z, who are exposed to the trends in global marketing. In addition, the high literacy level and the high rate of use of digital media in the region imply that the respondents are well placed to have the cognitive construct that would allow them to evaluate more complex marketing strategies like Cause-Related Marketing. All these aspects contribute to the district being a perfect place to explore the connection between the awareness of social and ethical concerns among consumers and the rise in conscious buying behavior.

The empirical research of Kao et al. (2025) states that the perception of the brand positively influences purchase intentions after CRM activities. Emotional responses mediate this relationship, and it implies that the extent to which consumers have emotional interpretations of CRM messages influences behavioural outcomes. Moreover, the studies of Indonesian Muslim millennials prove that negative attitudes toward CRM could affect behavioural intentions, and such variables as religiosity and satisfaction soften their impact. The scepticism, however, is a major stumbling block to perceptions. On the whole, these recent studies suggest that the perception of consumers towards cause-related marketing is complex and is conditioned by emotions, motives, attribution, as well as cognitive and affective interpretation of brand-cause associations, which ultimately determine the ultimate product preference and behavioural intentions.

Inference

The literature suggests that consumer responses to CRM are shaped by demographic factors, donation size, and perceived sincerity. Studies indicate that gender influences empathy toward social issues, while digital engagement and image fixation drive behavioral intentions. Ultimately, awareness and emotional reactions act as fundamental precursors to brand trust and purchase decisions.

Research Gaps: There is a research gap, as most of the research is based on an international situation, and there is no specific study on the attitudes of youth in Kerala. Though India is a developing market, there is limited research on the impact of high literacy and exposure to media by the Gen Z in places such as Ernakulam and their perception of CRM legitimacy and transparency.

In relation to the objectives and Hypotheses, this research will be related to the objectives to measure awareness and establish factors that influence youth attitude in Kerala. The study examines whether such global tendencies as gender-based empathy can be applicable to this group by testing the hypothesis about gender and socioeconomic status. The discussion shows the mediation of awareness on conscious consumer behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study includes data collection and analysis. Data is collected from 100 respondents through a questionnaire, and the secondary data are collected from journals, books, etc., and the tools used for the analysis are charts, figures, percentage analysis, correlation, ANOVA, etc.

Consumer knowledge and perceptions of social reasons are fundamental antecedents that mould attitudes and ultimately affect consumers' intentions to buy things related to causes. The review by Pandey et al. (2024) [21] indicates that more positive attitudes, stronger brand associations, and higher behavioural intentions are always linked to awareness of CRM campaigns and the perceived social cause relevance. The review summarises the findings of foreign research and establishes the prominent areas that influence consumer attitudes and buying intentions. Due to the high literacy level, extensive media publicity, and increasing level of consumer awareness on social and ethical concerns, Kottayam District was chosen as the location of study since it represents an ideal place to explore consumer attitudes and perceptions in relation to marketing items that cause issues [10][21].

The conceptual model states that consumer awareness also influences attitudes towards cause related products by creating a perception of the social cause, which ultimately leads to the benefits of cause related marketing. These positive attitudes lead to better attitudes towards cause related products, such as increased awareness that leads to better perceptions of the legitimacy and importance of the social cause, better product selection, better brand image, greater trust, and perceived social impact, and underscores attitude as a key mediator of the relationship between awareness and CRM benefits.

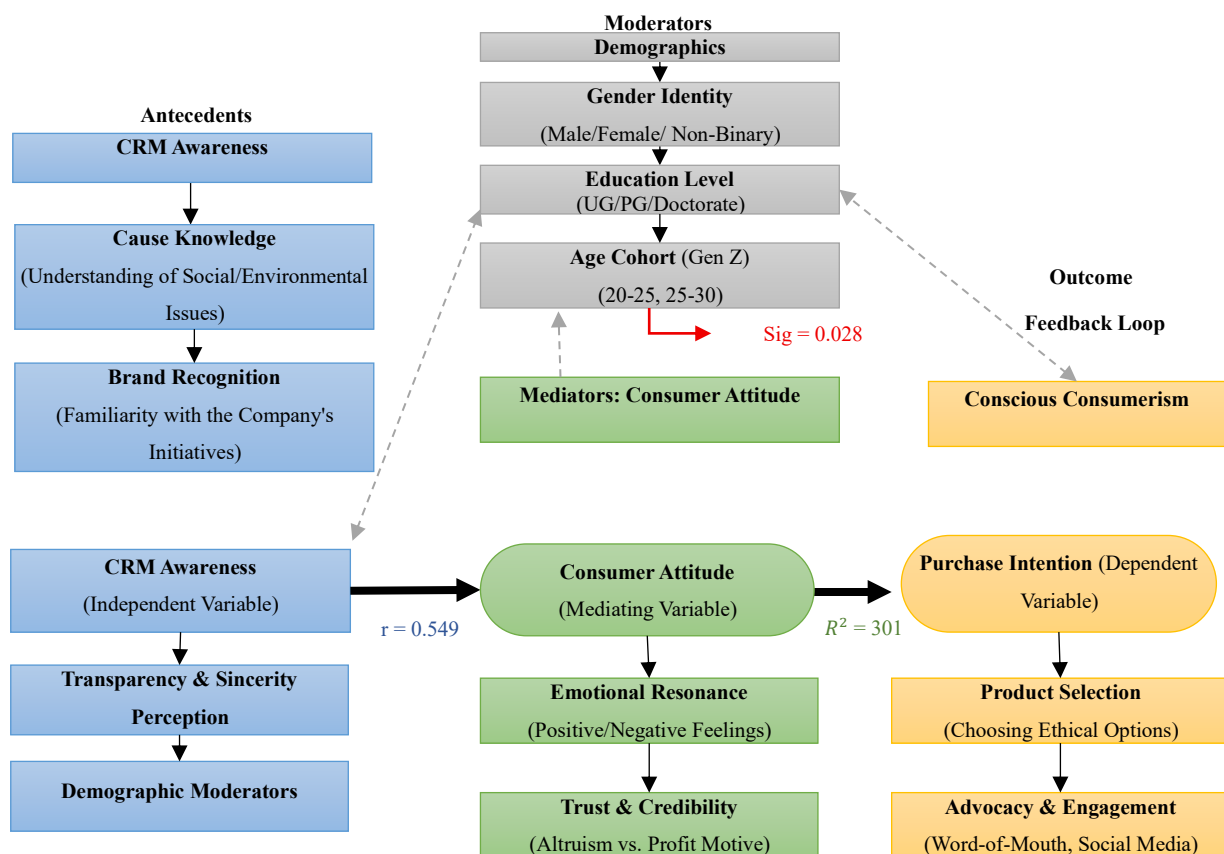


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of gen Z CRM engagement

The figure 1 shows how CRM Awareness (Cognitive), Consumer Attitude (Affective), and Conscious Consumerism (Behavioral) are sequentially changing. It makes it clear that attitude is a fundamental mediator, and it encompasses demographic moderators such as gender ($p = 0.028$) and statistical correlations ($r = 0.549$) to confirm the effects of cause-linked marketing, Vishnubhatla & Agashe (2022) [13].

Analysis of CRM Variables

The methodology section outlines the statistical models to be applied to the primary data to be collected in the Ernakulam district. This gives you the quantitative framework for your awareness and attitude analysis of Gen Z awareness and attitude.

The study uses an inferential statistical model in testing the connection between consumer awareness (Independent Variable) and brand attitude (Dependent Variable).

Correlation Coefficient Pearson (r)

To measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between awareness (X) and attitude (Y), the Pearson Correlation coefficient is calculated in equation (1):

$$r = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \rightarrow \quad (1)$$

The analysis yielded $r = 0.549$, indicating a statistically significant, strong positive relationship ($p < 0.001$).

Simple Linear Regression Model

To quantify the predictive impact of awareness on the development of conscious consumerism, the following regression equation (2) is applied:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \epsilon \rightarrow \quad (2)$$

Based on the coefficients derived in table 8, the specific model for this study is in equation (3):

$$Attitude = 59.332 + 1.029(Awareness) + \epsilon \rightarrow \quad (3)$$

Coefficient of Determination (R^2): $R^2 = 0.301$, implying that awareness explains 30.1% of the variance in Gen Z attitudes.

β Coefficient: The value of 1.029 indicates that for every unit increase in CRM awareness, consumer attitude improves by 1.029 units.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The F-statistic is utilized to verify the overall significance of the regression model and to test for attitudinal differences across demographic groups (Gender and Age), as shown in equation (4):

$$F = \frac{\text{Mean Square Regression}}{\text{Mean Square Residual}} \rightarrow \quad (4)$$

The model achieved an F-value of 42.196 with a p-value of 0.000, confirming high model validity. Gender was identified as a significant moderator with $p = 0.028$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study is conducted by selecting data through primary and secondary methods. This work has a sample size of only 100 contributors. The convenience sampling method is employed in this investigation. The target population is youngsters in Kerala's Ernakulam district. The tools used for this study are

- Percentage analysis
- Independent sample t-test
- Correlation
- ANOVA
- Regression

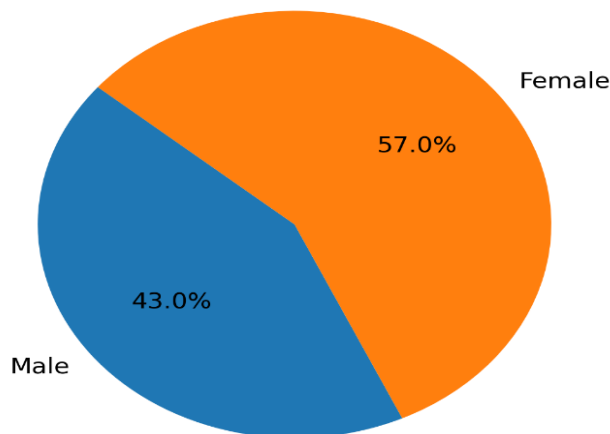
Demographic Profile and Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	43 %
	Female	57	57 %
Age	20-25	82	82%
	25-30	18	18 %
Educational Qualification	UG	36	36 %
	PG	59	59 %
	Others	5	5 %

The table 1 shows that the majority of people (57%) are female, and 82% of the Gen Z group falls in the 20 -25 age category. According to the data collected, 59% of the respondents are postgraduates, 39% are graduates, and the remaining 5% hold some other type of educational credential.

Gender Distribution (N=100)



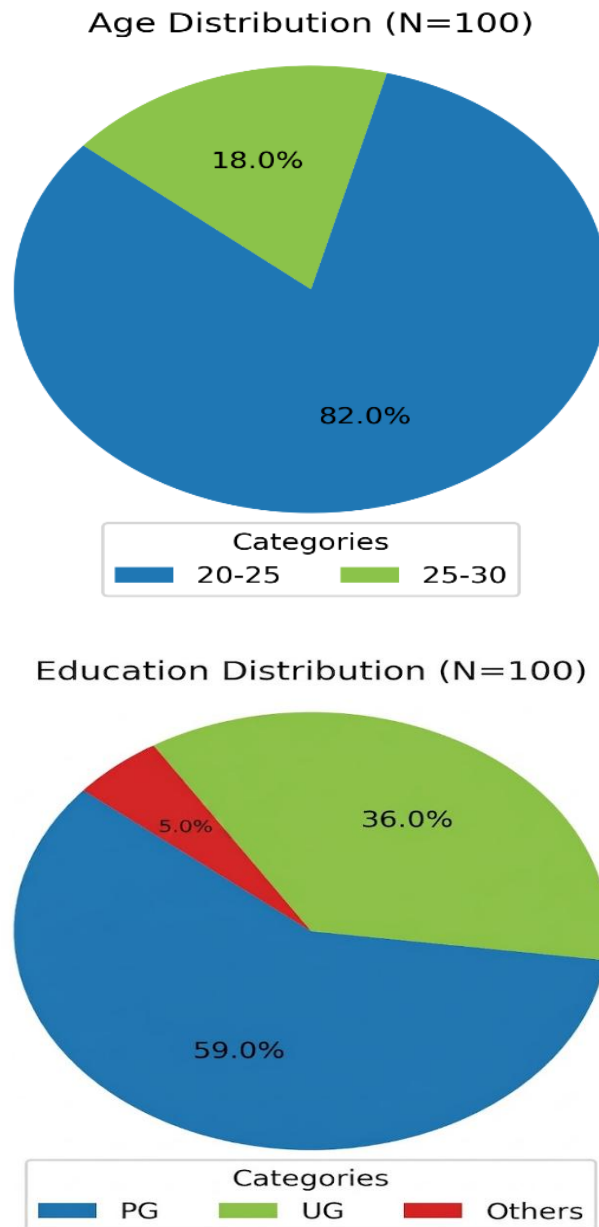


Figure 2. Demographic profile and distribution of gen z respondents

The figure 2 shows the main demographic features of the 100 Gen Z respondents of the Ernakulam District of Kerala. Its sample is mostly female (57%), and heavily skewed towards the 2025 age bracket (82%), a digitally native generation that has a high postgraduate education level (59%). All these make it a highly literate group of respondents, which is necessary in gauging the legitimacy and transparency of multifaceted cause-related marketing endeavors.

- H01: Various socioeconomic categories do not significantly differ in their awareness levels.
- H02: Gender does not significantly affect attitudes regarding CRM.

Socioeconomic Characteristics and Awareness (H01)

The table 2 shows that females have a mean score of 36.98 with SD 7.63, and the male respondents have a mean score of 35.65 with SD 10.27. The mean score of the 20-25 age group is 36.80 with SD of 8.97794, while the 25-30 age group has a mean score of 34.6111 with sd of 8.16116. The mean score of educational qualification for UG<PG and others is 100.78, 98.15, and 98.60, respectively, with a SD of 10.95, 14.33, and 6.66.

Table 2. Demographic profile and awareness

Socioeconomic Profile- Variables	Distribution	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	43	35.6512	10.27221
	Female	57	36.9825	7.62630
Age	20-25	82	36.8049	8.97794
	25-30	18	34.6111	8.16116
Educational Qualification	UG	36	100.78	10.95
	PG	59	98.15	14.33
	Others	5	98.60	6.66

Source: Primary Data

The table 3 result of the independent sample t-test demonstrates a significance value of 0.477, indicating that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is no difference in the level of awareness of gender.

Also shows descriptive statistics on Age and awareness show that the 20–25 age category had a high mean score of 36.80 (standard deviation = 8.97). This means that the 20-25 age group has Greater knowledge regarding cause-related marketing.

Table 3. Result of ANOVA and independent sample t-test of the level of awareness based on socioeconomic characteristics

Demographic Group		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F/t	Sig.	H1
Age	Between Groups	71.034	1	71.034	.909	.343	Rejected
	Within Groups	7661.156	98	78.175			
	Equal variances assumed		98		-.744	.459	Rejected
	Equal variances not assumed.		74.526		-.714	.477	
Educational qualification	Between Groups	155.511	2	77.755	.463	.631	Rejected
	Within Groups	16277.049	97	167.805			

(Significance value: 5%)

Gender, Education, and Attitude (H02)

Table 4. Result of ANOVA and independent sample t-test of the level of attitude based on socioeconomic characteristics

Demographic Group		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F/t	Sig.	H1
Gender	Between Groups	790.106	1	790.106	4.950	.028	Accepted
	Within Groups	15642.454	98	159.617			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	155.511	2	77.755	.463	.631	Rejected
	Within Groups	16277.049	97	167.805			

The table 4 reveals the attitude of respondents on the basis of gender, as the significance value is 0.028. The value indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis, and it can be concluded that the level of attitude of the respondents and gender are significantly different. Also, based on educational qualification, the value (.631) at 5% significance level is significant, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the level of attitude of respondents and educational qualification do not differ significantly.

In figure 3, the difference in the attitudes towards CRM between genders is statistically significant (P = 0.028). Although the awareness is consistent throughout the sample, female respondents have higher mean attitude scores in comparison with the male respondents. This illustrates that gender is an important demographic moderator, in which emotional sensitivity would probably be a stronger positive motivation to cause-related effort.

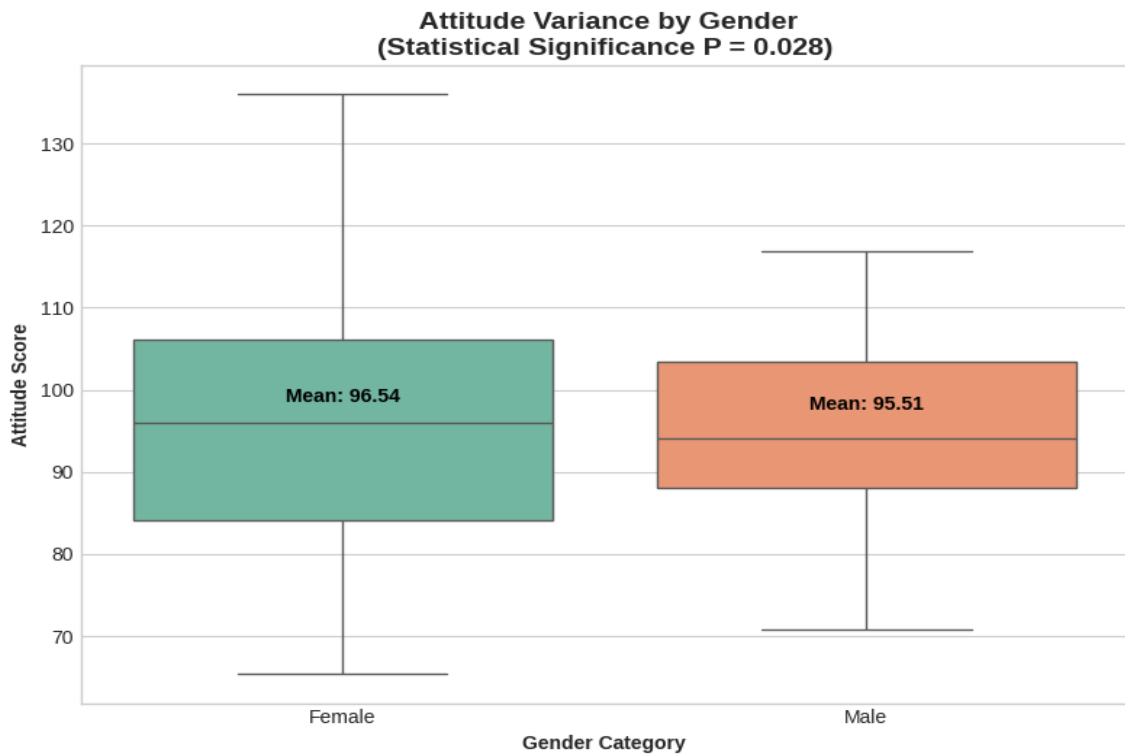


Figure 3. ANOVA visualization of attitudinal variance by gender

Relationship Between Awareness and Attitude

Table 5. Correlation between awareness and attitude

		Awareness	Attitude
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.549**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

(Significance level:5%)

As table 5 shows, the correlation between awareness and attitude of the respondents is significant at 05% significance level (0.549). Therefore, it is assumed that the awareness and attitude of the respondents have a strong positive relationship.

The figure 4 demonstrates that there is a strong, statistically significant, positive relationship ($r = 0.549$) between awareness and attitude, as in table 5. This increases the trend, proving that the better Gen Z respondents are aware of the cause marketing activities, the better their attitudes towards the brands will be, which supports the idea that conscious consumerism is based on cognition.

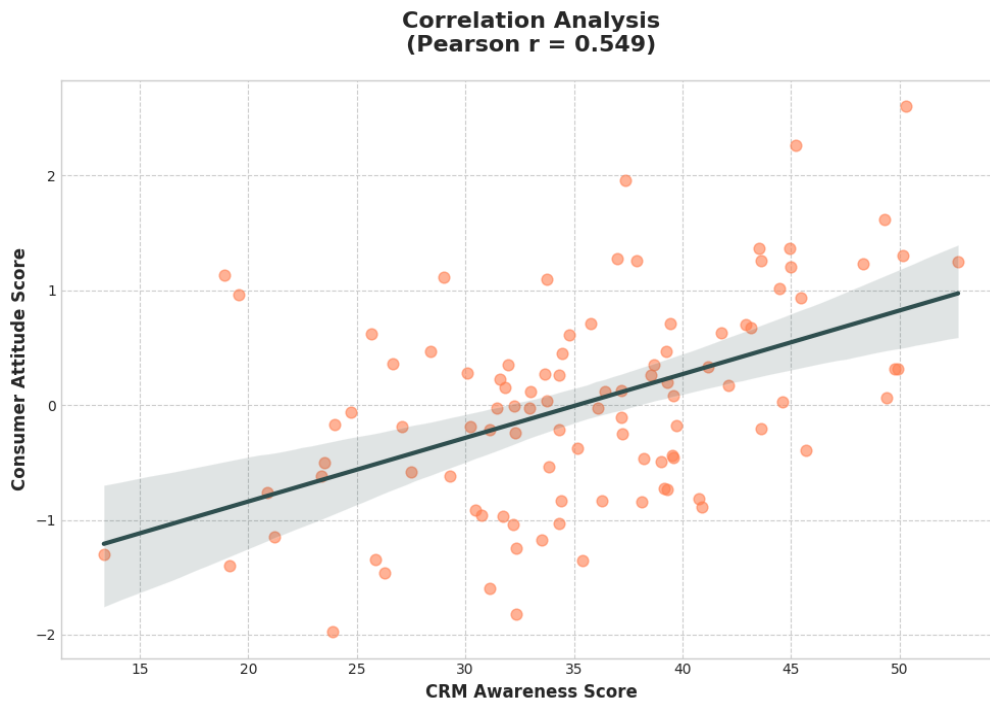


Figure 4. Correlation analysis of CRM awareness and consumer attitude

Table 6. Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.549 ^a	.301	.294	13.20815

The Regression Model Summary indicates a correlation (R) of .549, showing a moderate positive relationship. The R^2 of .301 reveals that 30.1% of the variance in Gen Z's attitude is explained by their level of awareness, as shown in table 6.

- a. **Dependent Variable:** Attitude
- b. **Predictors:** (Constant), Awareness

As a result, the regression model summary shows that 30% of the variance in the attitude ($R^2 = 0.301$) is explained by the level of awareness.

Table 7. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7361.227	1	7361.227	42.196	.000 ^b
Residual	17096.613	98	174.455		
Total	24457.840	99			

- a. **Dependent Variable:** Attitude
- b. **Predictors(constant):** Awareness

ANOVA table 7 ensures the significance of the regression model with a significant F-statistic ($P = 0.000$). So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	59.332	6.103		9.721	.000
awareness	1.029	.158	.549	6.496	.000

- a. **Dependent Variable:** Attitude
- b. **Independent Variable:** Awareness

Coefficient table 8 also reveals that the level of awareness has a significant positive effect on the level of attitude (P=.000)

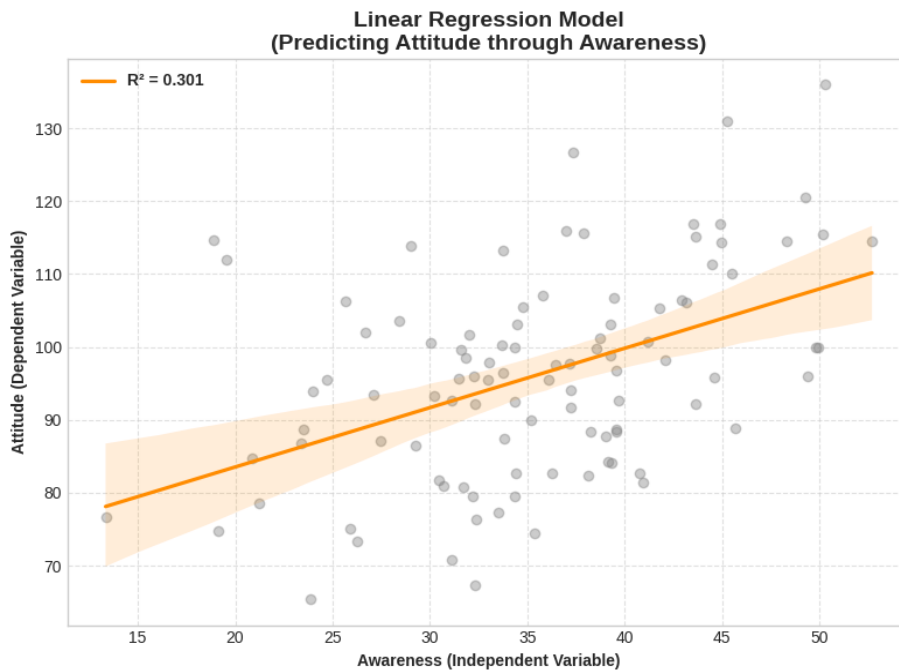


Figure 5. Linear regression model of awareness impacting consumer attitude

The figure 5 illustrates the functional relationship between CRM awareness and Gen Z attitudes. The model has an R^2 of 0.301, and this confirms that the awareness levels predict about 30% of the attitudinal variance. The significant positive slope (1.029) shows that increasing the level of knowledge influences the positive brand perceptions directly, and the importance of awareness in influencing the level of conscious consumerism cannot be overestimated.

The ANOVA model indicates that there is a variation in the level of awareness in terms of gender. The communication in the organization should be directed to the target customers who require awareness to lessen suspicion. Businesses must also focus on local causes and basic needs besides having nation-level CRM strategies. Awareness is critical in cause related marketing as customers would be more willing to contribute to the campaigns if they understand the relationship between the social cause being sold and their purchase [16]. There is also a significant influence of gender differences. The study by Rafiq & Subbulakshmi (2024) assumes that female customers are more empathetic and morally conscious of social issues compared to male consumers, and more inclined to support CRM efforts [7].

Due to the regression model summary, the businesses ought to interact more openly with their people through attractive strategies in enhancing awareness of CRM, since consumer needs and preferences are evolving rapidly. It is necessary to implement new and innovative approaches that make a huge impression on the awareness and attitude of Gen Z towards cause product choices when making purchase decisions. Provided that the consumers know more about the cause-related marketing practices, it will create conscious consumerism among the Gen Zers. The education level is one of the relevant factors, which determine the understanding and evaluation of the genuineness of cause-related efforts; Among them, the more educated a person is, the more likely they will investigate the transparency and effect measures before forming positive opinions [5].

Active CRM and customer evaluation are positive features that impact the company greatly and bring about congruency. Consequently, the social cause adopted by the company is associated with its product

propositions or the image of the advertised product. Efficient cause-related marketing can be used by local and global consumers. Cause marketing enables brands to have a significant influence on their reputation and customer retention by allocating resources and focusing on social problems. Correlation results indicate that the awareness and attitude of respondents towards cause-related products have a strong association.

Future research needs to investigate the impacts of social media activism and online participation on the relationship between awareness and perceptions of young consumers of cause marketing initiatives [4]. The analysis of the importance of platform-specific marketing strategies might give new knowledge about the use of awareness to create positive attitudes toward brands and intentions to purchase, as Gen Z consumers are forming opinions using online networks more often. Kozlowski, W. (2024) points out that they can be used by companies to advance the purpose-driven cause messaging, communicate with customers, acknowledge the achievements of the campaign aimed at raising awareness of the companies about their social endeavors, and increase awareness of their consumers about the companies. Social media communication should be youth-centered to achieve the success of the cause-related marketing campaigns. The preferences, aesthetics, and communication styles that are likely to attract Generation Z should be taken into consideration. Companies are to create content that would explain to Generation Z why the cause is important and why it requires support.

A study by Qiu et al. (2024) also showed that the skepticism and awareness of persuasion among consumers were triggered by AI disclosures that resulted in a more critical analysis of the sincerity and intent of the campaign [17]. The fewer consumers who believed the AI-generated content was warm and sincere, the less the brand opinion was expressed, and the donation intention. Nevertheless, the effects may result in a decrease in the perceived ad credibility, indicating that the disclosure framing may be effectively used to increase prosocial involvement and reduce negative attitudes. The CRM program shall be structured to create maximum preference to enable the clients to be more conscious and develop a congruent attitude towards Cause-Related products. Companies are expected to embrace CRM, a visible activity that has social roles and responsibilities, but achieve the motive of making profits.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The rural-urban divide, gender-based analysis, and socioeconomic analysis, which are demographic-specific studies, could be used in the investigation of youth awareness of cause marketing in Kerala. Psychographic and behavioural research can also be used to study the relationship between young values, attitudes, and cause marketing awareness, and the impact of public media on the youth awareness and attitudes. Although the effectiveness of different marketing channels, message framing, and brand-cause fit are the results of marketing strategy and its effectiveness studies, the cause-specific studies may be focused on environmental, social, or animal welfare causes. Longitudinal and experimental studies can be used to study the effects of cause marketing campaigns on the mindsets and behaviours of young people, as well as changes in the youth awareness and attitudes as time goes by. According to Patel et al. (2017), authenticity and openness in social media are essential when launching new cause marketing campaigns [6]. The latest digital tools allow telling the story of the cause immersively, which will further build brand trust and emotional resonance. Future studies on cause-related marketing (CRM) must include the demographic characteristics of the awareness, attitudes, and purchase intention of customers with socially conscious firms in reference to demographic parameters such as age, gender, and educational attainment. On the one hand, social awareness and digital activism of younger consumers, in particular, Gen Z, can display alignment with ethical and sustainability-oriented causes. However, traditional corporate philanthropy or brand reputation may be more significant to older cohorts [8]. Consequently, in the future, a research study should be done to determine how technological interactivity affects the perceptions of Gen Z customers regarding authenticity, cause awareness, and purchase intention. The analysis of the socioeconomic or cultural surroundings comments assists in interpreting the effects of cultural values and digital innovation on attitudes of Gen Z consumers towards the CRM initiatives.

LIMITATIONS

Despite the fact that this study is very insightful, it has some limitations, which have to be addressed in the general discourse. The research is specifically directed at Generation Z in Ernakulam District, Kerala, and this can limit the generalization of the results to other groups as well as other geographical areas. Also, the use of a convenience sample of 100 respondents and the possibility of the social desirability bias when the respondents can give the answers that can be viewed as socially acceptable could affect the validity of reported awareness levels and attitudes toward CRM. These limitations point to the fact that more diverse longitudinal studies should be done to confirm these trends.

CONCLUSION

The current research determines an important empirical connection between awareness and the formation of conscious consumerism among Generation Z in the Ernakulam district. Statistical observations show that awareness is a strong predictor of consumer behaviour, with a Pearson correlation of 0.549 and a regression model that shows that 30.1% of consumer attitude variance ($R^2= 0.301$) is directly forecasted by the level of knowledge being held by the respondent. Moreover, the results of the demographic moderator indicate that the level of awareness does not differ across the socioeconomic segments; however, gender plays a significant role in the attitudinal strength ($p = 0.028$), with the female consumers being more morally sensitive to CRM activities. Finally, to achieve success as a profit and social responsibility instrument, brands should not start providing campaigns on the national level but rather implement local and transparent campaigns that can meet the intellectual interests of highly educated young people. Raising awareness is not only the marketing objective but also the requirement for the establishment of trust that will transform intent into purchase behavior. Further research investigations need to increase the sample size to improve the extrapolation of such results in different geographical locations. The researchers are urged to use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test mediation between awareness and final purchase intention by the mediating effect of Brand Trust or Altruistic Attribution. Also, longitudinal research may investigate the effects of incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in CRM disclosures on consumer skepticism and long-term brand loyalty among new digital natives.

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