

KREM, 2024, 3(1005): 63–81  
ISSN 1898-6447  
e-ISSN 2545-3238  
<https://doi.org/10.15678/krem.14672>

# Buying Behaviour of Generation Z with Reference to Cause-related Marketing

**Wojciech Kozłowski**

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Institute of Management and Quality Sciences, Michała Oczapowskiego 4/318, 10-720 Olsztyn, Poland,  
e-mail: [wojciech.kozlowski@uwm.edu.pl](mailto:wojciech.kozlowski@uwm.edu.pl), ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9146-510X>

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Suggested citation: Kozłowski, W. (2024). Buying Behaviour of Generation Z with Reference to Cause-related Marketing. *Krakow Review of Economics and Management / Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie*, 3(1005), 63–81. <https://doi.org/10.15678/krem.14672>

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This paper examines the prosocial behaviour among Polish consumers of Generation Z. The impact of cause-related marketing (CRM) campaigns on the purchase intention of Generation Z is studied within the framework of attribution theory and social identity theory.

**Research Design & Methods:** The research involved 407 individuals who participated in a between-subjects experiment. The experiment had a 2×2×4 design, with factors including product type (hedonic, utilitarian), donation magnitude (small, large) and cause category (environment, health, human-being, animal-welfare). Nonparametric tests were employed to test hypotheses.

**Findings:** The author finds empirical evidence that Polish Gen Z consumers are willing to buy products linked with social causes. The study further demonstrates the positive effect of consumer personality (attitude toward CRM, attitude toward helping and cause involvement) on CRM participation. The result of this study also shows that there is no direct causal relationship between the product type, cause category and donation size and the purchase intention of Gen Z.

**Implications/Recommendations:** Marketers should develop CRM campaigns linked with causes that are preferred by Gen Z consumers. In relation to marketing communication, successfully convincing them to purchase cause-related products involves a blend of authenticity and transparency, tangible impact of CRM efforts, social media engagement, and collaboration

with influencers who align with the cause and the values of Generation Z. It can strengthen their altruistic motivation and favourable attitudes toward socially responsible initiatives.

**Contribution:** Little is known about the prosocial behaviour of Polish Gen Z consumers. This study is intended to reduce this gap. The findings provide an understanding of the importance of consumer-cause identification and attitudes in cause-related marketing campaigns targeting Z consumers.

**Article type:** original article.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, cause-related marketing, purchase intention, prosocial behaviour.

**JEL Classification:** D01, D64, M31.

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## 1. Introduction

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a crucial strategic marketing tool, one that allows a company to signal its social responsibility and to achieve economic objectives through the participation of consumers in donations. Vrontis *et al.* (2020, p. 594) state that CRM “is the business partnership of a for-profit company with a nonprofit organisation to promote the former’s products and services and, at the same time, raise funds for a worthy cause”. It links company charitable giving with a consumer purchase of cause-related products to help a social cause. Buying such products is a type of prosocial behaviour.

This article analyses the prosocial behaviour of Generation Z (those born between 1995 and 2010). Casalegno, Candelo, and Santoro (2022, p. 1010) argue that Gen Z is more concerned with environmental and social issues than previous generations. Most studies on corporate social responsibility, including cause-related marketing research, focus on the prosocial behaviour of Generation Y (born in the years 1981–1995). However, little is known about how cause-related marketing campaigns affect Generation Z’s purchase intentions, particularly in Poland. Thus, this paper is intended to fill the gap.

The goal of the study is to determine the impact of CRM campaign elements and the personality of Polish Gen Z consumers on their purchase intentions. To help accomplish this goal, the following research questions were posed.

RQ1: Do consumers of Gen Z show prosocial behaviour in the context of a cause-related marketing campaign?

RQ2: Do CRM campaign characteristics – product type, donation size and cause type – determine the willingness of Gen Z consumers to buy cause-related products?

RQ3: Do Gen Z consumers’ psychographic characteristics – attitudes toward CRM campaigns and toward helping others, as well as cause involvement – determine their willingness to buy cause-related products?

The fundamental assumption of the study was that companies bear the cost of donations to social causes. This is the case of costless CRM strategy: in purchasing cause-related products, the buyer incurs no additional costs, expressed in the higher price of such products.

## **2. Conceptual Background and Hypotheses**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

To understand Gen Z consumers' decision-making process regarding cause-related products, this study relies on attribution theory (AT) and social identity theory (SIT). Attribution theory focuses on the question of how individuals explain what they do. Attribution is defined as a psychological, cognitive process used to identify the cause of a certain behaviour (Moharam, Elsamadicy & Negm, 2020, p. 21). In the context of cause-related marketing, attribution theory provides a conceptual basis for examining the attributions made by consumers to CRM campaigns based on both internal (consumer characteristic) and external factors (CRM campaign characteristics) to better understand consumers' responses to a CRM campaign (Kureshi & Thomas 2020, p. 500; Moharam, Elsamadicy & Negm, 2020, p. 21). It is assumed that in the case of positive motivational attribution, there will be a positive behavioural response to CRM initiatives.

Social identity theory holds that individuals identify themselves as a member of a distinct social group, i.e. they place themselves in the same social environment (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 59; Moharam, Elsamadicy & Negm, 2020, p. 20). Wong (2021, p. 391) argues that CSR initiatives influence the buying behaviour of Z consumers, which results from their profile characteristics. Generation Z members are socially aware and want to express their identity and belonging. Companies may help them define themselves through socially responsible actions (Narayanan, 2022, p. 907). Gen Z consumers share the values of corporate social responsibility and are sensitive to environmental and social issues (Casalegno, Candelo & Santoro, 2022, p. 1011). As a result, they identify themselves with socially responsible organisations and build their social identity by participating in cause-related marketing campaigns.

### **2.2. Purchase Intention**

Regarding the financial outcomes of cause-related marketing, purchase intentions (PI) have been the focus of at least two studies (Lafferty & Edmondson, 2014; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). PI is defined as a willingness to buy a given product in the future under certain conditions (Parengkuan, 2017, p. 11). It is expected that the greater the purchase intention, the greater the likelihood the purchase will be made.

Previous studies have presented a variety of independent variables that can impact the effects of cause-related marketing on PI (Zhang *et al.*, 2020; Fan *et al.*, 2022). Since Gen Z is environmentally and socially conscious, they are concerned with the internal and external CSR practices of the firms (Stec-Rusiecka & Warمیńska, 2022, p. 72) from which they purchase goods. In this context, it becomes important to determine whether Polish Gen Z consumers are willing to buy a cause-related product. The following null hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Generation Z customers who were “likely” and who were “not likely” to purchase cause-related products occur with probabilities of 0.500.

### **2.3. Product Type**

An important consideration in cause-related marketing is the product. Various products evoke different emotions, which accompany their purchase and use. Hedonic products are related to pleasure-oriented consumption and are not perceived in terms of “good choice” and “value for money”. Utilitarian products, on the other hand, are purchased for their functional characteristics to fill consumers’ functional, basic needs; and they are related to goal-oriented consumption (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998, p. 436; Goldsmith & Yimin, 2014, p. 80).

Some studies suggested that charitable giving works better for hedonic products. Linking such products with a charitable campaign is more effective due to the lower price flexibility of hedonic products, pleasure, and the guilt of buying them, and the “warm glow feeling” that comes with being prosocial (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998; Strahilevitz, 1999; Chang & Chu, 2020). Other studies have recommended the use of utilitarian products for cause-related campaigns. These can be linked with monetary promotions and eastern culture, in which individuals prefer utilitarian to hedonic products in CRM campaigns (Chandon, Wansink & Laurant, 2000; Fan *et al.*, 2022). It follows that the impact of the type of product on the effectiveness of a cause-related marketing campaign is not unambiguous. Based on this, the following null hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Product type does not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers in relation to cause-related products.

### **2.4. Donation Magnitude**

In a CRM campaign, donation size is defined as the amount of money a company pays to support a social cause. Some research shows that it does not matter how large the donation is to support the social cause (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005; Barone, Norman & Miyazaki, 2007). One explanation for the lack of donation effects is the small difference between a low and high CRM donation amount

(Bergkvist & Zhou, 2019). On the other hand, Moosmayer and Fulian (2010) and Strahilevitz (1999) argue that larger donations suggest more favourable attitudes towards a cause-related campaign than smaller ones, resulting in higher consumer willingness to buy a product. A large donation is not always beneficial and could have a negative impact on the consumer response to a CRM campaign. This is mainly explained by consumer skepticism, resulting from the assessment of the companies' motives to engage in charitable actions (Tsiros & Irmak, 2020; Chaabouni, Jridi & Bakini, 2021).

To summarise, studies show null, positive, and negative effects of increasing the donation amount on the effectiveness of a CRM campaign. This leads us to propose the following null hypothesis:

H3: Donation size does not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers in relation to cause-related products.

## 2.5. Cause Type and Cause Involvement

In a cause-related marketing campaign, the social cause may stimulate consumers to buy one brand, if it is valuable to them, instead of another. Most CRM campaigns refer to environmental, health, human-being and animal-welfare-related causes (Zhang *et al.*, 2020, pp. 5–9). The relationship between the social cause category and consumer behaviour is not unequivocal. Lafferty and Edmondson (2014, p. 1458) found that the cause category does not differentiate consumers' willingness to buy cause-related products. However, Fan *et al.* (2022, p. 353) argued that a CRM campaign should be linked with humanitarian rather than animal or environmental causes.

Assuming the definition of Zaichkowsky's (1985, p. 342) involvement, cause involvement is defined as the level of importance a person attaches to the cause, shaped by individual inherent needs, values, and interests. Given the personal nature of social causes, consumers may perceive their causes differently, thereby differentiating purchase intentions. Since most studies have confirmed that the greater the consumer involvement with the cause, the greater the effectiveness of a cause-related marketing campaign (Bester & Jere, 2012; Lafferty & Edmondson, 2014; Moharam, Elsamadicy & Negm, 2020, p. 21), the following null hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Cause type does not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers in relation to cause-related products.

H5: Cause involvement does not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers in relation to cause-related products.

## 2.6. Attitude towards CRM Campaigns and Attitude towards Helping Others

In cause-related marketing, attitudes are used as both an antecedent factor and a consequence. In this study, they were placed as an antecedent and affective construct. In affective understanding, attitude was defined as positive or negative emotions toward cause-related marketing campaigns and charitable behaviour.

In general, consumer attitudes towards corporate social responsibility are positive (Boccia, Malgeri & Covino, 2019, pp. 98–103). Therefore, consumers' favourable attitudes towards CRM and their positive impact on economic outcomes are expected. This validates findings in the literature (Natarajan, Balasubramaniam & Jublee, 2016; Rego & Hamilton, 2021). Both egoistic and altruistic values may affect consumers' willingness to buy cause-related products. Most studies confirm that people who accept altruistic, self-transcendence values are more engaged in prosocial behaviour expressed as the willingness to buy cause-related products than individuals who value self-enhancement, self-interest value (Lee & Kim, 2016; Baek *et al.*, 2020). The following null hypotheses were tested:

H7: Attitudes towards the CRM campaign do not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers.

H8: Attitudes towards helping others/a cause do not significantly differentiate the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers.

## 3. Methodology

An explanatory study was utilised. It presents an experimental design related to the intention to purchase a particular cause-related product. The study used a scheme  $2 \times 2 \times 4$  (product type  $\times$  donation size  $\times$  cause type) control variable. Two low-involvement and low-price items were selected. Chocolate praline was chosen as a hedonic (frivolous) product, and toilet cleaner as a utilitarian (practical) product. To determine the amount of the donation, the approach used by Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2005) was followed. The small donation size and large donation size were set at 6.3% and 12.5% of the regular price of both products, respectively. The social causes selected for this research represent all categories of social issues mentioned by Lafferty and Edmondson (2014). They were fitted with utilitarian and hedonic products based on functional compliance with the selected products (Table 1).

The target group of respondents were all members of Generation Z (age: 18–25). A non-probability sampling procedure with a chain referral technique called “the snowball” was applied. First, 40 university students in Poland completed questionnaires. They were then asked to distribute them among other students, relatives,

acquaintances, or friends, all of whom belonged to Generation Z. As a result of this procedure, 408 survey questionnaires were collected. After eliminating questionnaires that revealed dubious response patterns, 371 responses were included in the present study. 67% of respondents were female, 54% were employed and 94% of respondents had donated to charity in the previous year.

Table 1. Experiment Scheme

No. Questionnaire	Product Type	Product Category	Product Price	Donation Size	Social Cause	Product Cause Fit
1	utilitarian	toilet cleaner	10.99 PLN per 0.750 mln	0.70	natural environment preservation	high
2				1.40		
3				0.70	people with diabetes	low
4				1.40		
5	hedonic	chocolate praline	20.99 PLN per 200 g	1.30	hungry children	high
6				2.60		
7				1.30	battered animals	low
8				2.30		

Source: the author.

Each of the respondents received, at random, one of the eight questionnaires with the scenario of the fictitious CRM campaign linked with a printed, product-oriented advertisement and a set of questions. Fictitious brands were created to eliminate respondents' past and present experiences with a particular company and social cause, which could have had an impact on the results. The participants in the study were asked to provide their opinion on several statements. These concerned the purchase intention of advertised cause-related products, the importance of the social cause specified in the advertisement, the attitude toward cause-related marketing and helping a cause, as well as the consumer's experience of Generation Z in making charitable contributions.

The various measures were compiled into a questionnaire. A five-item, seven-point Likert scale was used to measure purchase intention, based on Hou, Du and Li (2008), and Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2005). Attitudes toward CRM campaigns and toward helping were measured using a four/five-item, seven-point Likert scale applied by Kropp, Holden and Levack (1999) and Webb, Green and Brashear (2000), respectively. A five-item, seven-point, bipolar adjectival scale was used to measure cause involvement (Grau & Folse, 2007).

Table 2. Validity and Reliability of Measures

Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Loading Average	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	KMO
Purchase intention	purchase 1	0.717	0.837	0.893	0.922	0.704	0.859
	purchase 2	0.831					
	purchase 3	0.876					
	purchase 4	0.872					
	purchase 5	0.888					
Attitude toward CrM campaign	attitude 1	0.848	0.837	0.856	0.954	0.805	0.892
	attitude 2	0.835					
	attitude 3	0.889					
	attitude 4	0.777					
Cause involvement	involvement 1	0.899	0.897	0.939	0.904	0.703	0.810
	involvement 2	0.916					
	involvement 3	0.896					
	involvement 4	0.920					
	involvement 5	0.855					
Attitude toward helping others	attitude H1	0.882	0.892	0.912	0.939	0.795	0.854
	attitude H2	0.896					
	attitude H3	0.895					
	attitude H4	0.893					

Notes:  $\alpha$  – Cronbach's alpha, CR – composite reliability, AVE – average extracted variance, KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test for sampling adequacy; significance < 0.001.

Source: the author.

Data were analysed using SPSS software. The analysis procedures took place in three stages. The first included an assessment of reliability and validity measures as well as sampling adequacy of the four constructs. Table 2 shows that all the model variables exceeded the recommended minimum values (Shrestha, 2021, pp. 5–6). Subsequently, the data were transformed for variables measured on a semantic differential scale and a Likert-type scale. In this case, responses were converted into nominal scales: declared favourable attitudes toward CRM (no/yes) and cause importance (low/high). The median value was used to classify respondents into these categories. The ultimate step was to examine the impact of CRM campaign characteristics and the consumer's personality on the purchase intention of cause-related products. A series of non-parametric tests (NPT) was performed to test null hypotheses. The NPT were selected based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. In each case, the  $p$ -value for the independent variable is less



than 0.001, indicating substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the variable adheres to a normal distribution.

### 4. Results and Discussion

A one-sample binomial test was conducted to assess the occurrence probabilities of two categories within Generation Z: potential customers who are “likely” or “not likely” to purchase cause-related products. The probability for both categories was set at 0.500. The results of the test revealed a *p*-value of less than 0.001, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (as indicated in Table 3). It was found that cause-related marketing is an effective CSR tactic that resonates with Generation Z, a fact that aligns with previous studies (Mall, 2022; Choudhary & Suresh, 2023). The frequency distributions depicted in Figure 1 illustrate the percentage of cases falling into each category of the variable. It is evident that among Generation Z customers in Poland, 66% demonstrate a willingness to purchase cause-related products. In comparison to findings from other studies, it is noteworthy that 89% of Australian (Premack, 2018) and 92% of American Gen-Zers (Cone Communications, 2017) express a preference for buying from companies that support social and environmental causes.

Table 3. Results of the One-sample Test

Categories of Gen Z Consumers	<i>n</i>	Observed Proportion	Test Proportion	Exact Significance (1-tailed)
Group 1 (purchase intention ≤ 4)	126	0.34	0.50	< 0.001
Group 2 (purchase intention > 4)	245	0.66		
Total	371	1.00	–	–

Source: the author.

The inclination towards prosocial behaviour among Generation Z aligns with the social psychological perspective encapsulated by social identity theory, which holds that individuals engage in such behaviour not only to maintain positive self-perceptions but also to establish their affiliation with distinct social groups.

The present study also examined the effect of design elements of CRM campaigns on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour. Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to determine the impact of product type and donation size on the purchase intention of cause-related products. The summary of the results for the H2 and H3 hypothesis tests is presented in Table 4. The results show a non-significant difference between both the purchase intention of hedonic and utilitarian products ( $Z = 0.457, p = 0.648$ ) and the purchase intention of cause-related

products linked with a low and high donation ( $Z = -1.680, p = 0.093$ ). The null hypotheses are supported at a 5% significance level.

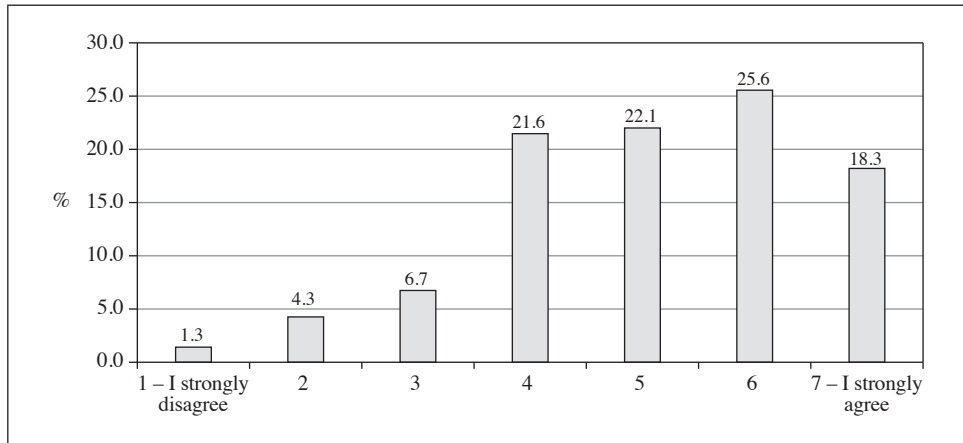


Fig. 1. Willingness to Buy Cause-related Product

Source: the author.

In other studies, some researchers recommend the use of utilitarian products, while others state that cause-related marketing campaigns related to hedonic products are more effective (e.g. Strahilevitz, 1999; Chandon, Wansink & Laurant, 2000; Chang & Chu, 2020; Fan *et al.*, 2022; Patel, Thomas & Bhatt, 2023; Schamp *et al.*, 2023). In contrast to that research, the result of this study provides evidence that there is no direct causal relationship between the type of product used in a campaign and the purchase intentions of Gen Z. My findings are in line with research by Silva *et al.* (2021), which shows that both frivolous and practical products impact the purchase intention of cause-related products.

Table 4. Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on the Effect of Product Type and Donation Size on Purchase Intentions of Cause-related Products

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable		<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Purchase intention	product type	utilitarian	182	188.54	34,313.50	16,737.50	0.457	0.648
		hedonic	189	183.53	34,692.50			
	donation size	low	188	176.98	33,271.50	15,505.50	-1.68	0.093
		high	183	195.27	35,734.50			

Source: the author.

Studies have also explored the effect of donation size. Conventional wisdom suggests that donation magnitude is one of the critical factors in a consumer’s decision to buy a cause-related product (Strahilevitz, 1999; Hajjat, 2003; Kureshi & Thomas, 2020). This study found that donation magnitude does not affect the purchase intentions of Gen Z, contradicting the findings of Patel, Thomas and Bhatt (2023). They revealed that smaller donation size (combined with vague donation message-framing) would not appeal to Generation Z while buying CRM-linked hedonic and utilitarian products.

The result of my research are also inconsistent with the findings of researchers such as Gerhardsson, Bergh and Thongpitaks (2021), as well as Barone, Norman, and Miyazaki (2007) and Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2005). A key explanation for the lack of impact of both variables on purchase intentions is the strong environmental and social sensitivity of Generation Z (Casalegno, Candelo & Santoro, 2022, p. 1011). Its interest and commitment to social causes contribute to the demonstration of pro-social behaviour through the purchase of cause-related products, regardless of the donation or product associated with the CRM campaign.

Table 5 shows that the results of the study supported hypothesis 4. A Kruskal-Wallis H tested whether the category of the cause (environment, health, human-being and animal-welfare) influenced purchase intention. It revealed that there is not a statistically significant difference in the dependent variable between the different causes ( $\chi^2(3) = 0.367, p = 0.9470$ ). These results are consistent with the studies of Lafferty and Edmondson (2014), who found that consumers considered the cause category irrelevant when purchasing cause-related products.

Table 5. Results of Kruskal-Wallis H Test Differences in Purchase Intentions Related to the Cause Category

Dependent Variable	Independent Grouping Variable	<i>n</i>	Sum of Ranks	Average Rank	$\chi^2$	df	<i>p</i>
Purchase intention	Cause:	371	–	–	0.367	3	0.9470
	– natural environment preservation	99	18,685.00	188.74			
	– people with diabetes	83	15,628.50	188.30			
	– hungry children	88	16,438.00	186.80			
	– battered animals	101	18,254.50	180.74			

Source: the author.

To evaluate the effect of the Gen Z consumer’s personalities on purchase intention, Mann-Whitney U tests were utilised. The results indicate a significant difference in prosocial behaviour between group consumers who differ in their attitudes towards cause-related marketing ( $Z = -7.888, p = 0.409$ ), willingness to help others

( $Z = 4.916, p \leq 0.001$ ) and the importance of the social cause exposed in the CRM campaign ( $Z = -6.963, p \leq 0.001$ ). Because the  $p$ -value is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypotheses (H6, H7 and H5) can be rejected, and the alternative hypotheses accepted. There is evidence of differences in purchase intention between the groups compared. As Table 6 shows, consumers with a favourable attitude towards CRM had a higher average rank of purchase intentions (216.24) than consumers with unfavourable attitudes (125.02), as did consumers who accept altruistic values (201.59) than consumers who do not (140.06) and consumers for whom the social cause exposed in a CRM campaign is more important (218.11) than less important (141.25).

Table 6. Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on the Effect of Consumer Personality on Purchase Intentions of Cause-related Products

Independent Variable	Variable Group	<i>n</i>	Sum of Ranks	Average Rank	Mann-Whitney U	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Declared favourable attitude toward CRM	no	123	15,378.00	125.02	7,752.00	-7.888	0.000
	yes	248	53,628.00	216.24			
Favourable attitudes toward helping others	no	94	13,166.00	140.06	8,701.00	4.916	< 0.001
	yes	277	55,840.00	201.59			
Cause importance	low	155	21,894.50	141.25	9,804.50	-6.963	< 0.001
	high	216	47,111.50	218.11			

Source: the author.

The results of this study were consistent with similar research: favourable attitudes toward CSR, including CRM initiatives, lead to greater purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers (Pandey, Chawla & Puri, 2020; Thomas, Bhatt & Patel, 2024). Studies also show that if customers are high in altruistic motivation, they are more likely to give to charity for a cause. These findings also concurred with other studies: consumer altruism is a key factor behind a CRM campaign's success (Wallace, Buil & Chernatony, 2017; Fan *et al.*, 2022).

Cause involvement is another factor that explains the purchase of cause-related products. This result confirms the finding of Maceli and Zafuta (2022) and Shin, Eastman and Li (2021) that Generation Z consumers are willing to buy products that embody their values and are personally relevant to them. Other studies also suggest that consumer response to a CRM campaign is more positive when the cause is important to them (e.g. Gerhardsson, Bergh & Thongpitaks, 2021). According to the social identity theory, to reinforce their self-concept, people will tend to be more participative in CRM campaigns and have a more favourable opinion of the social cause with which they identify. They may identify with different causes, so different CRM campaigns can also evoke different behavioural attitudes (Silva *et al.*, 2021).

Lafferty and Edmondson (2014, p. 1455) argue that cause involvement is often not the reason to donate to a worthy cause. In cause-related marketing campaigns, the consumer focuses on the product, while the social cause may stimulate a consumer to switch brands if it is worthy, but often the cause is not personally relevant to the consumer. When there is no cause-brand alliance, the personal importance of a cause plays a vital role in determining which cause will receive a donation. An incongruent match between cause and brand can stimulate negative associations and directly affect the evaluation of the alliance (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Hult, 2004, p. 514). For my research here, fictitious brands were created to eliminate a respondent's past and present experiences with a particular company. This may explain the positive impact of cause involvement on Gen Z purchase intention.

## 5. Conclusions

This study makes an important contribution to the existing literature on the impact of cause-related marketing on Gen Z buying behaviour in Poland.

The paper answers two main questions: first, whether Z consumers adopt pro-social attitudes and, second, how the design elements of a CRM campaign and the personality traits of Gen Z differ in their impact on purchase intentions. Studies have found that individuals belonging to this cohort value CSR activities and reward responsible companies. Gen Z consumers in Poland want to engage in charitable marketing initiatives by purchasing products from socially responsible companies. The results suggest that neither the cause of the social cause nor the size of the donation had an impact on consumers' purchasing intentions, providing a new perspective on the role of product type in cause-related marketing. It has been proven that there is no direct causal relationship between the type of product used in a campaign and the purchase intention of Gen Z. Studies also show that if the Z customers are high on altruism and connected with the cause, and have a positive attitude toward CRM initiatives, they are more likely to donate to a given cause.

Moharam, Elsamadicy and Negm (2020) argue that understanding target customers is a crucial factor in a CRM strategy's success. Members of Generation Z are increasingly considering their impact on society and the environment when making decisions (Narayanan, 2022, p. 905; MiŚOT Akademia, 2023). Thus, cause-related marketing, which involves a company aligning with social and environmental causes, stands as a compelling strategy for businesses targeting Gen Z consumers. To effectively convince them to purchase products linked with a cause, companies should adopt a purpose-driven approach, integrating CSR values with Marketing 5.0 strategy, which meets the values of Z consumers. This strategy can help build a strong image of a socially responsible brand, increase trust among Generation Z and build a lasting connection as well as loyalty with this group of socially responsible consumers.

Gen Z is looking for brands that contribute positively to society and align with their core values. Z consumers value authenticity and transparency in marketing communication and measurable outcomes of a company's activities (Reif *et al.*, 2019; MiŚOT Akademia, 2023; Neufeld-Wall, 2023, pp. 1, 41). Meeting these expectations can effectively motivate Gen Z to participate in a CRM campaign. In terms of attitudes toward a CRM campaign and altruistic motivation, previous studies show that consumers can be skeptical about the true motives of companies engaging in cause-related marketing (e.g., Chaabouni, Jridi & Bakini, 2021). Thus, to overcome skepticism and effectively engage Gen Z in cause-related marketing, marketers must assure the target market that their commitment to the given cause is not merely superficial or opportunistic marketing ploys, but an integral part of the charity embodied in their CSR strategy. Reaching consumers more successfully requires the development of cause-related marketing campaigns linked with social causes Gen Z consumers prefer. Educational campaigns that provide in-depth information about a cause could be a good way to strengthen Gen Z's altruistic motivation and favourable attitudes toward CRM as well as foster empathy and a deeper connection to the cause.

Marketers should also highlight prosocial actions using clear communication about supporting the cause, detailing their initiatives, and showcasing genuine changes resulting from their CRM efforts and the participation of Gen Z, the digital generation (Ismail, Nugroho & Rohayati, 2023, p. 123). It is the first to have grown up with global connectivity, facilitated by smartphones, tablets, smartwatches and heavy reliance on social media, which comes to us with powerful tools for Marketing 5.0. These media constitute an integral part of Gen Z's digital life along with Internet connectivity (Maceli, 2022, p. 46; Dutt, 2023, p. 1339). Therefore, the company should communicate with Gen Z through a social media platform, using generated content that showcases its commitment to a cause and interactive prosocial campaign, and engaging influencers who espouse the values of Generation Z and actively promote altruistic attitudes. This should enhance the reach and reliability of CRM messages and create a sense of community around the common good to make the world a better place.

The present study has limitations that should be considered in future studies. Firstly, low-value and low-engagement products were used. Because product type can impact CRM effectiveness, similar studies should be conducted with various products to see their impact on Gen Z's prosocial behaviour. Secondly, the results of this study might be influenced by selected causes. When the cause is well known or is of high importance to consumers, they have highly favourable attitudes towards the CRM campaign, which can lead to the purchase of products supporting a social cause. Thus, future research should consider other social issues. Another limitation is the sample, which comes from a single country, potentially influencing the results.

Other studies have shown that affective, volitional, and behavioural attitudes toward CSR, including CRM practices, can differ from country to country. In this case the collectivist nature of Poland may have influenced Generation Z consumers' reactions to cause-related marketing campaigns. It would therefore be reasonable to repeat these studies in other countries. Future studies could also compare different cultures and contrast the effect of the design elements of a CRM campaign on Gen Z purchase intentions. Finally, the results of the study could be influenced by donation size. In this study, there were no significant differences in donation sizes linked with the product used in a CRM campaign (6.3% vs. 12.5% of product prices). Gerhardsson, Bergh, and Thongpitaks (2020) examined different donation levels (0.13–32%; 1.88–67.5%; 2.5–40% of the price). They found that greater donation amounts lead to more positive CRM participation intentions.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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